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Iran's gift to British people – Sailors home

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5th April, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Iran's gift to British people – Sailors home

The fifteen British sailors and marines who were held captive for nearly two weeks in Iran have arrived back in the UK. They left Iran early Thursday aboard a commercial flight bound for London. Their departure ends a standoff between Iran and Britain which had the potential to escalate into a serious diplomatic crisis. The release of the sailors comes a day after Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad personally intervened. He said his gesture was a "present to the British people". In a televised event in Tehran, Iran's leader personally met and shook hands with each of the hostages. His government even arranged for them to be fitted with tailor made suits. A spokesperson for Britain's Foreign Office said the move was a huge surprise.

In London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed "profound relief" over the peaceful end to the 13-day crisis. He said in a message to the Iranian people: "We bear you no ill will." He also said Britain had a deep respect for Iran and its long and proud history. The two countries must now think about how mutual relations will progress. They are already at loggerheads over Iran's nuclear programme and Britain's role in Iraq. There are fears of a repeat of this crisis, especially as the boundaries between Iranian and Iraqi territorial waters are so unclear. Nevertheless, the release is seen as a victory for diplomacy. The U.S. cautiously welcomed Iran's move, although The White House said "it was unfortunate that [the hostages] were ever taken in the first place."

WARM-UPS

1. HOSTAGE: You have just been released after being held by another country for 13 days. Talk to the other "hostages" in your class about your time spent in captivity.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

sailors / being help captive / Iran / diplomatic crises / gestures / shaking hands / relief / bearing ill will / respect / pride / mutual relations / nuclear programmes

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. DIPLOMATS: You are the boss of your country's diplomatic services. You need many new diplomats to work overseas. Which of these people would be good and why? Rank them – 10 = would be excellent diplomats; 0 = these people should stay at home.

- politician
- football player
- chat show host
- history professor
- journalist
- English teacher
- police officer
- psychiatrist

4. CRISES: Brainstorm a list of countries in which there are conflicts or crises. With your partner(s), talk about how to resolve them.

5. IRAN: Walk around the classroom and find out as much information as you can about Iran. Talk to many other students. After you have finished, sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. What was new and interesting for you?

6. QUICK DEBATE: Have this quick debate with your partner(s). Students A think Iran was right; students B think Britain was right. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

7. DPLMACY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with diplomacy. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Fifteen British sailors sailed into London after being held captive. T / F
- b. Their being held captive nearly led to a serious diplomatic crisis. T / F
- c. Iran's president took the hostages shopping to buy new suits. T / F
- d. Britain's Foreign Office expected the early release of the hostages. T / F
- e. Tony Blair said he was profoundly relieved over the release. T / F
- f. Tony Blair said Britain bore the Iranian people no bad feelings. T / F
- g. The maritime borders between Iran and Iraq are very unclear. T / F
- h. Washington welcomed the hostage release with open arms. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| a. captive | impasse |
| b. bound | made to measure |
| c. standoff | Regardless |
| d. intervened | prudently |
| e. tailor made | animosity |
| f. profound | headed |
| g. ill will | heartfelt |
| h. at loggerheads with | hostage |
| i. Nevertheless | locking horns |
| j. cautiously | stepped in |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. held | into a serious diplomatic crisis |
| b. a commercial flight | Iranian and Iraqi territorial waters |
| c. the potential to escalate | tailor made suits |
| d. fitted with | ill will |
| e. the move was | loggerheads |
| f. Tony Blair expressed | captive for nearly two weeks |
| g. We bear you no | welcomed Iran's move |
| h. They are already at | bound for London |
| i. the boundaries between | "profound relief" |
| j. The U.S. cautiously | a huge surprise |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Iran's gift to British people – Sailors home

The fifteen British sailors and marines who were _____ captive for nearly two weeks in Iran have arrived back in the UK. They left Iran early Thursday _____ a commercial flight bound for London. Their departure ends a _____ between Iran and Britain which had the potential to _____ into a serious diplomatic crisis. The release of the sailors comes a day after Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad _____ intervened. He said his _____ was a "present to the British people". In a televised event in Tehran, Iran's leader personally met and shook hands with each of the hostages. His government even arranged for them to be _____ with tailor made suits. A spokesperson for Britain's Foreign Office said the move was a _____ surprise.

In London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed "profound _____ " over the peaceful end to the 13-day crisis. He said in a message to the Iranian people: "We _____ you no ill will." He also said Britain had a deep respect for Iran and its long and _____ history. The two countries must now think about how mutual relations will progress. They are already at _____ over Iran's nuclear programme and Britain's role in Iraq. There are fears of a _____ of this crisis, especially as the boundaries between Iranian and Iraqi territorial waters are so _____. Nevertheless, the release is seen as a victory for diplomacy. The U.S. _____ welcomed Iran's move, although The White House said "it was _____ that [the hostages] were ever taken in the first place."

fitted
aboard
personally
held
huge
escalate
gesture
standoff

unclear
bear
repeat
unfortunate
proud
relief
cautiously
loggerheads

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Iran's gift to British people – Sailors home

The fifteen British sailors and marines _____ for nearly two weeks in Iran have arrived back in the UK. They left Iran early Thursday _____ bound for London. Their departure ends a standoff between Iran and Britain which had the potential _____ serious diplomatic crisis. The release of the sailors comes a day after Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad personally intervened. _____ was a "present to the British people". In a televised event in Tehran, Iran's leader personally met and shook hands _____ hostages. His government even arranged for them _____ made suits. A spokesperson for Britain's Foreign Office said the move was a huge surprise.

In London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair _____ over the peaceful end to the 13-day crisis. He said in a message to the Iranian people: "We _____." He also said Britain had a deep respect for Iran and its long and proud history. The two countries must now think about _____ progress. They are already at loggerheads over Iran's nuclear programme and Britain's role in Iraq. There _____ this crisis, especially as the boundaries between Iranian and Iraqi _____ unclear. Nevertheless, the release is seen as a victory for diplomacy. The U.S. cautiously welcomed Iran's move, although The White House said "it was unfortunate that [the hostages] _____ first place."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'stand'** and **'off'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "DIPLOMACY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about world crises and diplomacy.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• captive• bound• escalate• gesture• event• huge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• relief• ill• proud• loggerheads• unclear• place
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DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What do you think of the release of the sailors?
- c) Do you believe the sailors entered Iranian waters?
- d) Do you think relations between Iran and the U.K will improve from now?
- e) What did you think of President Ahmadinejad's present to the British people?
- f) Do you think the end to this standoff is a success for diplomacy?
- g) How would you feel if you were taken hostage by another country?
- h) Do you think the sailors are heroes?
- i) Do you think President Ahmadinejad is a hero?
- j) What questions would you like to ask President Ahmadinejad and Prime Minister Blair?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the Iranian people will be happy that Tony Blair wishes them no ill will?
- c) How do you think Britain and Iran should sort out the difficulty in understanding where the maritime borders between Iran and Iraq.
- d) How different do you think this crisis would have been if the sailors were American and not British.
- e) The USA has been holding Iranian sailors captive for many months. Do you think America should now release them?
- f) What do you think the British sailors did every day while they were in captivity?
- g) What questions would you like to ask President Ahmadinejad?
- h) What do you think might have happened if the sailors were put on trial and imprisoned in Iran
- i) Who was right and who was wrong in this standoff?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

DIPLOMATS:

There are many conflicts in the world that need resolving. You and your partner(s) are expert diplomats. Discuss your ideas for resolving these conflicts. Choose one of these Israel/Palestine, Zimbabwe, Darfur, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan (or one you prefer).

The conflict _____

	Your ideas
The background	
The people	
The problems	
The solutions	
Why one side should accept the solutions	
Why the other side should accept the solutions	
The future	

After you have finished, make a presentation of your ideas to the class / other groups.

Ask questions when you listen to the other groups and give feedback on their presentations.

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Iran's gift to British people – Sailors home

The fifteen British sailors and marines who were held (1) _____ for nearly two weeks in Iran have arrived back in the UK. They left Iran early Thursday (2) _____ a commercial flight bound for London. Their departure ends a (3) _____ between Iran and Britain which had the potential to escalate into a serious diplomatic crisis. The release of the sailors (4) _____ a day after Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad personally intervened. He said his (5) _____ was a "present to the British people". In a televised event in Tehran, Iran's leader personally met and shook hands with each of the hostages. His government even arranged for them to be fitted (6) _____ tailor-made suits. A spokesperson for Britain's Foreign Office said the move was a huge surprise.

In London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed "profound relief" (7) _____ the peaceful end to the 13-day crisis. He said in a message to the Iranian people: "We bear you no (8) _____ will." He also said Britain had a (9) _____ respect for Iran and its long and proud history. The two countries must now think about how mutual relations will progress. They are already (10) _____ loggerheads over Iran's nuclear programme and Britain's role in Iraq. There are fears of a repeat of this crisis, especially as the boundaries between Iranian and Iraqi territorial waters are so unclear. Nevertheless, the release is seen as a (11) _____ for diplomacy. The U.S. cautiously welcomed Iran's move, although The White House said "it was unfortunate that [the hostages] were ever taken in the first (12) _____."

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) captive | (b) captivate | (c) captivity | (d) caption |
| 2. | (a) abroad | (b) aboard | (c) departure | (d) terminal |
| 3. | (a) stand up | (b) stand down | (c) stand still | (d) standoff |
| 4. | (a) comes | (b) coming | (c) becomes | (d) became |
| 5. | (a) jest | (b) jester | (c) gist | (d) gesture |
| 6. | (a) with | (b) by | (c) out | (d) in |
| 7. | (a) under | (b) out | (c) over | (d) in |
| 8. | (a) sick | (b) ill | (c) poorly | (d) injured |
| 9. | (a) depth | (b) long | (c) depths | (d) deep |
| 10. | (a) at | (b) in | (c) of | (d) with |
| 11. | (a) beat | (b) winner | (c) victory | (d) victorious |
| 12. | (a) time | (b) place | (c) incidence | (d) happening |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about Iran and its relations with other countries. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. CRISES POSTER: Make a poster about the different crises around the world. Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the hostages. Write about what they did every day, what they worried about, etc. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to one of the hostages. Give him/her three pieces of advice about his/her career. Ask him/her three questions. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. T f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| a. captive | hostage |
| b. bound | headed |
| c. standoff | impasse |
| d. intervened | stepped in |
| e. tailor made | made to measure |
| f. profound | heartfelt |
| g. ill will | animosity |
| h. at loggerheads with | locking horns |
| i. Nevertheless | Regardless |
| j. cautiously | prudently |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. held | captive for nearly two weeks |
| b. a commercial flight | bound for London |
| c. the potential to escalate | into a serious diplomatic crisis |
| d. fitted with | tailor made suits |
| e. the move was | a huge surprise |
| f. Tony Blair expressed | "profound relief" |
| g. We bear you no | ill will |
| h. They are already at | loggerheads |
| i. the boundaries between | Iranian and Iraqi territorial waters |
| j. The U.S. cautiously | welcomed Iran's move |

GAP FILL:

Iran's gift to British people – Sailors home

The fifteen British sailors and marines who were **held** captive for nearly two weeks in Iran have arrived back in the UK. They left Iran early Thursday **aboard** a commercial flight bound for London. Their departure ends a **standoff** between Iran and Britain which had the potential to **escalate** into a serious diplomatic crisis. The release of the sailors comes a day after Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad **personally** intervened. He said his **gesture** was a "present to the British people". In a televised event in Tehran, Iran's leader personally met and shook hands with each of the hostages. His government even arranged for them to be **fitted** with tailor made suits. A spokesperson for Britain's Foreign Office said the move was a **huge** surprise.

In London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed "profound **relief**" over the peaceful end to the 13-day crisis. He said in a message to the Iranian people: "We **bear** you no ill will." He also said Britain had a deep respect for Iran and its long and **proud** history. The two countries must now think about how mutual relations will progress. They are already at **loggerheads** over Iran's nuclear programme and Britain's role in Iraq. There are fears of a **repeat** of this crisis, especially as the boundaries between Iranian and Iraqi territorial waters are so **unclear**. Nevertheless, the release is seen as a victory for diplomacy. The U.S. **cautiously** welcomed Iran's move, although The White House said "it was **unfortunate** that [the hostages] were ever taken in the first place."

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a 2 - b 3 - d 4 - a 5 - d 6 - a 7 - c 8 - b 9 - d 10 - a 11 - c 12 - b