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U.S. aborts attempted rescue of hostages 8 soldiers die in plane crash during operation; reports are sketchy

United Press International
WASHINGTON — A daring effort to rescue 53 U.S. hostages in Tehran ended in tragedy even before it began when two U.S. military aircraft collided on a remote Iranian desert, killing eight Americans, the White House said today.

The ground crash also injured a number of Americans who apparently were preparing to stage a helicopter raid on the U.S. embassy grounds to rescue the hostages. The rest of those involved in the abortive mission immediately were airlifted to prevent possible Iranian retaliation.

White House Press Secretary Jody Powell said President Carter took "full responsibility for the decision to attempt the rescue" of the hostages, captive for 174 days, and declared "the nation is deeply grateful to the brave men who were preparing to rescue the hostages."

Later, Iran's military leadership, in a radio bulletin in Tehran, claimed Iranian aircraft pursued the U.S. force and two U.S. aircraft "carrying a number of CIA agents and U.S. Marines" collided, caught fire and crashed near Tabas, a town in the desert Khorsan province about 300 miles east and just south of Tehran.

The Iranian government repeatedly has warned the United States not to attempt a military rescue lest harm befall the hostages.

In Tel Aviv, Israeli Radio reported the United States used an Egyptian air base as a staging area, and flew at least three troop-carrying C-130 Hercules transports in the mission.

The radio report was based on the monitoring of air traffic.

The first word in Iran of the effort came in a Tehran Radio broadcast announcing

the White House said "a military attempt to release the American hostages in Tehran failed due to a technical fault."

The White House said the action "was not motivated by hostility toward Iran or the Iranian people and there were no Iranian casualties."

The mission apparently was scrubbed before it began. Powell said Carter ordered the rescue effort canceled because of "equipment failure," and in the subsequent efforts to withdraw the American raiding force, a C-130 collided with a helicopter, killing the eight men.

White House sources said the "equipment failure" announced by Powell was the failure of an aircraft engine. It was not immediately clear whether that failure was in any way connected with the ground crash. Powell said the injured Americans "are

being given medical treatment and are expected to recover."

Sara Rosen, mother of hostage Barry Rosen, accused Carter of "trying to kill" the hostages.

"It's a terrible thing," the distraught woman sobbed in a telephone interview with UPI at her Brooklyn apartment. "He had no business doing it. He's trying to kill them."

Details of the mission were sketchy. Carter apparently had personally approved the project to establish a staging area in the Iranian desert from which to dispatch the choppers on a lightning strike mission to free the hostages.

Powell did not release details of the incident. He did not say when the crash occurred, when the actual rescue operation had been scheduled to take place, or how many Americans were involved in the effort.

Powell said Carter "deeply regrets" the death of the American crewmen and "accepts full responsibility for the decision to attempt the rescue."

Carter was in the White House throughout the evening, meeting with top military and diplomatic advisers.

The president retired for the night after Powell announced the aborting of the raid in a conference call with UPI, the Associated Press, Reuter and Agence France Presse.

"Preparations for this rescue mission were ordered for humanitarian reasons to protect the national interests of this country and to alleviate international tensions. The president accepts full responsibility for the decision to attempt the rescue."

"The United States continues to hold the government of Iran responsible for the safety of the American hostages. The Un-

ited States remains determined to obtain their safe release at the earliest possible date."

The Iran task force at the State Department notified the hostage families early today.

In San Diego, Dorothea Morefield, whose husband is a hostage, told UPI: "We had so hoped the entire situation would end without any death. Now we have eight dead and they are just as important as the hostages. We just hope it doesn't lead to anything worse."

Does she support Carter's decision? "Only he has all the information and he has to make these decisions. We have to accept them if he thought this was best and if he thought the hostages were endangered. We have to get them out without anymore lives being lost."

CS council approves concerts

By TIM JASEK
City Reporter

A summer concert series to include the Houston Pops Orchestra was agreed to Thursday by the College Station City Council.

Jody Bates of the Brazos Valley Arts Council requested \$3,375 from the city's hotel-motel tax fund to assist her organization in producing the six summer concerts.

The remaining \$7,485 needed for the concert series will be provided by the BVAC.

The Pops, known for their style of contemporary music, will perform at the Oaks Park June 22. Bluegrass, jazz and folk music will also be part of the series which lasts from June 1 to August 17.

The council also agreed to grant money from its hotel-motel tax revenue to promote six athletic events including the Southwest Regional Women's Fastpitch Tournament on May 1-3.

Money was also granted to special events such as the annual July 4th celebration at Bee Creek Park.

The council unanimously voted to allow the Brazos Valley Development Council to continue its Moderate Rehabilitation Program established last year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The program helps low-income renters develop housing, finding landlords, aiding them financially and finding eligible families. The BVDC also assists renters with housing payments.

Jane Kee, community development planner, said the program should "reduce the emphasis on new construction," by allocating \$1,000 to \$5,000 per low-income housing unit.

The Council passed an ordinance ordering the extension of Southwest Parkway from Texas Avenue to the East Bypass unanimously.

A public hearing on the allocation of fees for the project will be at a later date, the council agreed.

A recommendation that nearly \$3,000 be spent on proper identification cards for all city employees was tabled after a disagreement between council members as to which bid should be accepted.



Good goo

Keith Nubill, a Texas A&M student majoring in animal science, takes a break for his favorite exer-

cise — blowing bubble-gum. Nubill says the gum is good for his jaws, even if it does stick to his face.

Photo by Jamie Freeman

Volcano's re-emergence revives northwest town

United Press International
LONGVIEW, Wash. — When it's quietest time at the Weyerhaeuser mill, the workers head down to the Wood Shed Lounge to rinse the sawdust out of their clothes.

They're looking for beer, but lounge owner Denny Bauman is pushing his latest concoction, a \$1-a-glass concoction of pink champagne, vodka and 7-Up, named the "St. Helens Blast," for the erupting volcano. The figures is the best thing that ever happened to the city of 30,000.

Bauman's target is not the mill workers but the tourists expected to flock to southwest Washington this summer for a glimpse of an active volcano — Mount St. Helens.

"Longview's always been a one-way road to nowhere — just a place you pass on the way to the beach or to Seattle or Portland," he said.

"Now, people are going to say, 'Hey, look at that stop and see the only volcano in the U.S.A. that's still spitting!'"

Bauman is not alone in his optimism. From state officials to hot dog vendors, nearly everyone in a 50-mile radius of the volcano sees it as a potential tourist bonanza for an area heavily dependent on the lumbering and wood products industries.

When Mount St. Helens awoke a month ago, belching steam and ash after more than a century of rest, the highways instantly filled up with rubberneckers from as far away as Canada and Arizona.

With scientists predicting the eruptions could go on for months or years, the proprietors hope the best is yet to come.

"We look on it as a tremendous opportunity for a tourist attraction," said Tom Manning, director of the Longview Chamber of Commerce. "We're going to try to capitalize on it, frankly."

"We've had calls from as far away as Chicago. They ask, 'Can you really see the volcano from Longview?' We tell them yes and ask when they're coming."

Over at Kelso, which is 35 miles from the mountain — 3 miles closer than Longview, they are past the talking stage. The Kelso Chamber of Commerce has printed up 10,000 new tourist brochures with a picture of the erupting volcano on the cover.

"We are picking up a tremendous load of these volcano watchers, as we call them," said Judy Bornstedt, the chamber's director.

If the weather is cloudy, not an unusual event in the Pacific Northwest, Mrs. Born-

stedt is ready to sell the color Mount St. Helens photographs she snapped after driving her snowmobile a mile from the peak.

"Sometimes people travel a long way," she explained. "We don't want anyone to have to go away disappointed."

Even the merchants in the small towns closer to the volcano have good feelings about Mount St. Helens. There's hardly a store without a good stock of T-shirts that read, "Helen is Hot" or "I Survived the 1980 Eruption."

The U.S. Forest Service is gearing up for a big year at the Mount St. Helens recreation area, which last year drew more than 280,000 campers, climbers, fishermen, boaters, hikers and picnickers.

A dangerous eruption of a major lava, hot rock or gases still is a major concern of scientists. But Longview Chamber of Commerce director Manning said such an event would have to wipe out most of southwest Washington before it endangered the tourist business.

"I feel if that volcano started acting up in a vicious manner," he said, "we'd have so many people here, we wouldn't know what to do with them."

Russians denounce U.S. attempt

United Press International
MOSCOW — The Soviet Union, in its first public reaction to the U.S. effort to rescue the hostages in Iran, today called the mission an "armed provocation against the republic of Iran."

The state-controlled radio said President Carter had accepted responsibility for "this military adventurism," and said the collision between the two U.S. planes took place "at a secret military airfield."

"On April 24, Carter's administration carried out an armed provocation against the Republic of Iran," the radio broadcast said.

The matter is unprecedented adventure undertaken by Washington under the disguise of not intending to use military measures in the American-Iranian conflict.

The official Tass news agency reported the rescue mission, without comment, in a brief dispatch from New York.

The U.S. embassy in Moscow refused to comment when asked if the Soviet Union had been contacted about the rescue mission.

President takes blame for failure

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Carter said today he scrubbed the "carefully planned operation" that he said would have had "an excellent chance at success" to rescue 53 U.S. hostages because of "equipment failure" on a helicopter slated to participate in the rescue mission.

He expressed "deep regret" at the death of eight American crewmen in the crash of two U.S. aircraft on a remote desert in Iran.

In a nationally broadcast statement from the White House, a grim-faced Carter said plans for the military rescue began shortly after the hostages were seized Nov. 4.

He said he waited until now until it became clear that previous non-military efforts were getting nowhere.

"It was my decision to attempt the rescue operation," Carter said. "It was my decision to cancel. The responsibility is fully my own."

He said the United States will continue to "pursue every possible avenue" to secure the release of the hostages, and he pleaded with both the American people and the nation's allies for support.

Carter said the carefully planned mission had an "excellent chance of success."

He said the would-be raiders "were all volunteers, all highly trained."

"This rescue attempt had to await my judgment," he said. "The steady unravel-

ing of authority in Iran made an early release highly unlikely.

"I made a decision to set" the rescue plan in operation, he said. "In the aftermath, we continue to hold the government of Iran responsible for the safety of the hostages."

Carter said in his brief remarks that the support of U.S. allies would be even more important — now that the rescue mission had failed — for a peaceful solution to the hostage problem.

Carter, who did not add much to the details of the dramatic story, said "other information will be made available to the American people when it is appropriate to do so."

He expressed "deep regret" at the eight deaths and the injuries, but said: "We are convinced that if the rescue operation (had been able to proceed) it would have been successful."

Carter said when he determined that "the early release was highly unlikely, I made a decision to commence the rescue operation... this was a necessity and a duty."

Carter said the rescue operation "was feasible. This complex operation had to be the product of intensive planning... however, a resolution of this crisis through negotiation and with the voluntary cooperation of Iranian officials" did not appear possible.

Reactions vary to Carter's plan

United Press International
The mother of one of the American hostages in Iran accused President Carter today of "trying to kill" the hostages, and she and family members of the other hostages expressed fear the Iranians might now harm the captives.

Sara Rosen of New York, mother of American hostage Barry Rosen, sobbed during a telephone interview and said of Carter's decision to attempt a rescue of the hostages, "He had no business doing it."

"He should have waited a little bit longer until it simmered" in Tehran, she said. "He's trying to kill them."

The White House said an attempt to rescue the 53 American held in Iran was canceled by President Carter because of "equipment failure." As U.S. forces were withdrawing, two American planes collided on a desert airfield in Iran, killing eight airmen and injuring others.

Mrs. Rosen's son was the press attache assigned to the U.S. Embassy when it was taken over by Iranian militants Nov. 4.

Dorothea Morefield of San Diego, wife of hostage Richard Morefield, said of Carter's decision: "Only he has all the information and he has to make these decisions. We have to accept them if he thought this was best and if he thought the hostages were endangered."

Mrs. Morefield, whose husband was the consul general at the U.S. Embassy, said she hoped the Iranian militants would not take reprisals against the hostages.

Several of the family members of other hostages contacted by UPI did not know of the rescue attempt and refused to comment until hearing from the State Department, but all expressed fear for the hostages' safety.

Mrs. Louisa Kennedy, wife of embassy commercial and economic officer Morehead Kennedy, said she was "appalled" by

the abortive rescue attempt and can only "hope and pray" the hostages will not be hurt as a result.

Mrs. Kennedy, contacted in London, is currently on a visit to Western European capitals to seek support for obtaining the hostages' release.

Judy Haessly of Milwaukee, an aunt of hostage Kevin Hermening, said, "Right now I'm very scared about the whole situation and would like to know more about it. How much do the Iranians know about this and how are the militants going to react, that scares me."

Richard Gallegos of Denver, father of hostage Marine Cpl. Billy Gallegos, said, "I really weren't expecting anything like this. I just hope there won't be any retaliation on the hostages from a thing like this."

Sen. Charles Percy, R-Ill., said he was informed about the abortive mission about 12:30 a.m. today by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

"I frankly think the risk was too high," Percy said of the rescue attempt.

"The chances of losing the hostages and the military men was simply something we couldn't afford, particularly at a time when the allies appeared to be pulling behind us," Percy said. "It is a tragic loss for the country."

Sen. Henry Jackson, D-Wash., a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he was notified of the operation at about midnight Thursday.

"I was advised merely that the mission had failed," Jackson said. "I regret that result. In the meantime, we have to reassess our situation, to determine the course of action that we are to follow."

Rep. John Anderson, R-Ill., now an independent candidate for president, said he was "profoundly disturbed" by the aborted attempt.