Correspondence

Dear Editor:

Mr. Carter committed an unbelievable series of fiascos vis-a-vis Iran.
First. He failed to condition his consent to the creation of the United Na-
tions Factfinding Committee on release of the hostages and their safe exit
from Iran. Instead of employing this simple negotiation technique, in ex-
change for something the Iranians greatly wanted, he eagerly signed first
without any such protective stipulation, hoping naively that everything
would work out all right.

Second. Having missed that early and easy chance, Mr. Carter could have
invoked the centuries-old international doctrine of retaliation in kind by im-
pounding the Iranian diplomats in their Washington, D.C., embassy and
giving them the same treatment as accorded our hostages by Iran, while look-
ing to the early exchange of hostages. Instead of engaging in this justifiable
retaliation which the nations of the world would have approved, Mr. Carter
rushed all of the Iranian diplomats home. He thus gave up tremendous bar-
gaining power that could quickly have resolved the crisis.

Third. After winning the unanimous World Court judgment that the
seizure was illegal under international law, Mr. Carter chose to go it alone
instead of asking the U.N. Security Council, representing all of the many
nations in the U.N., to enforce the judgment under Article 94 of the United
Nations Charter.

Fourth. Having missed all of these opportunities, and under heavy criti-
cism, Mr. Carter then, in desperation and in violation of representations to
our allies, made an abortive military invasion of Iran and a rescue attempt
which most experts agree had little or no chance of success, at least not
without very heavy loss of life. This military invasion was a flagrant violation
of international law, and not justified retaliation, as the impoundment of the
Iranian diplomats in the Washington, D.C., Iranian embassy would have
been. Indeed the illegal invasion, which made the U.S. a highly culpable
violator of international law, comparable to the Iranians’ own violation,
could have triggered an unwanted war.

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