

# 《(阿亚图拉的客人)》

## 图书基本信息

书名：《(阿亚图拉的客人)》

13位ISBN编号：9781843544951

10位ISBN编号：1843544954

出版时间：2004-12

出版社：Atlantic Books

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页数：464 页

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### 内容概要

In 1979, the Ayatollah Khomeini's followers abducted fifty-two American citizens and held them hostage for 444 days. The crisis that followed is a watershed in modern history. Acclaimed author Mark Bowden tells this shocking and unforgettable story through the eyes of the hostages, their Iranian captors and the American special operations soldiers and pilots who tried to end the crisis with one swift, violent strike. "Guests of the Ayatollah" is the epic account of the first American showdown with Islamist fundamentalism.

Signature  
Reviewed by Philip Caputo  
With Iran fingered in the latest National Security Assessment as America's number one enemy, Mark Bowden's new book is particularly timely. *Guests of the Ayatollah* chronicles the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by student militants, who held 66 American staffers hostage from November 1979 till January 1981, seizing this nation's attention in the process. In the aftermath of 9/11, with wars raging in Iraq and Afghanistan, that event seems to belong to the remote past, but as Bowden points out, it was "America's first confrontation with Islamo-fascism," while the hostages (who were released alive) were "the first victims of the inaptly named War on Terror." Although some may dispute those points, his portrayal of the hostage takers and their fanatical devotion to establishing a religious utopia could easily apply to members of al-Qaeda and other Muslim terrorist groups. Bowden's analysis of militant Islam is clear, current and dead-on. The government of Iran, now as then, is a theocracy with a secular face, combining, he writes, "ignorance with absolute conviction." Anyone who thinks a nuclear-armed Iran could be dealt with through Cold War – style containment should read this book. *Guests of the Ayatollah* is, however, no academic tome, but a briskly written human story told from every conceivable point of view: the captives and their captors; President Carter's inner circle and Carter himself, struggling to negotiate a release and finally ordering an extremely risky rescue mission; the soldiers of Delta Force, whose audacious attempt failed; Iranian political figures under the thumb of the glowering Ayatollah Khomeini; and a cavalcade of diplomats, journalists, secret agents and barmy peace activists, some of whose actions bordered on treason. The cast of characters would do justice to a 19th-century Russian novel. At more than 650 pages, this wheel-block of a book sometimes suffers from the flaw of its virtues—its scope and ambition. Readers may have difficulty keeping track of who's who, and where they are, as the narrative shuttles among dozens of people in dozens of locales. With detail piled upon minute detail, the passages describing the hostages' ordeal often grow tedious. Bowden, whose *Blackhawk Down* recounted the American disaster in Somalia, seems most at home when he turns to the meetings leading up to Carter's fateful decision and to the Delta Force mission itself and its agonizing failure. He puts you there, in the Persian desert with Delta Force and its commander, the charismatic and mercurial Col. Charlie Beckwith. All in all, *Guests of the Ayatollah* is a monumental piece of reportage, deserving a wide readership. Philip Caputo is the author of 13 books, most recently *Acts of Faith* and *Ten-Thousand Days of Thunder*.

The 1979 seizure by Iranian "students" of the U.S. embassy and the kidnapping of its diplomats was more than a national humiliation. It was arguably the most flagrant violation ever of modern international diplomatic law. The popular Bowden (*Black Hawk Down*, 1999; *Killing Pablo* 2001) recalls the episode, detailing the invasion of the embassy, the abuse meted out to the captured diplomats and several CIA officers, and President Jimmy Carter's dilemmas and decisions during the protracted year-plus crisis. The revolutionary milieu from which the kidnapers emerged is reflected in Bowden's portrayals of the student-jailers, for whom the temptation to interrogate, berate, and beat the Americans exceeded any interest in academics. Bowden keeps tension high while tracking the Americans' defiance of or acquiescence to their tormentors. Some Americans defended their dignity throughout the ordeal, which included mock executions, while others curried favor with their captors. Certainly few readers will remain neutral about the individual dramas. Bowden also details the failed rescue attempt, which resulted in further national exasperation. Bowden's work may gain additional attention from the current crisis over Iran's suspected atom bomb project.

# 《(阿亚图拉的客人)》

Gilbert Taylor

length: (cm)23.4

width:(cm)15.6

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## 作者简介

MARK BOWDEN is the bestselling author of Killing Pablo, Finders Keepers and Black Hawk Down, which was made into a successful film by Ridley Scott. He is a national correspondent for the Atlantic Monthly.

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