



FREE AT LAST



Newly Inaugurated President Ronald Reagan raises his glass in a toast during a luncheon at the Capitol Tuesday to announce that planes carrying the Americans held hostage in Iran had left that country. (AP)

Reagan takes oath, asks era of renewal

WASHINGTON—Ronald Wilson Reagan, summoning his countrymen to "an era of national renewal," was sworn in Tuesday as the 40th president of the United States at almost the same time as the dramatic release of 52 American hostages in Iran.

The bloodless end to the galling hostage crisis, which had preoccupied a nation for 444 days, made Reagan's inauguration day more special than almost anyone had hoped it could be.

Within minutes of taking office, Reagan had signed an executive order clamping a tight freeze on federal hiring, signed the nominations of his Cabinet choices, and assured Congress of his willingness to cooperate during his term in office.

The new president gave a hostage-related toast at a Capitol Hill luncheon early in the afternoon. "I have been given a tag line — a get-off line that everyone

wants," he said. "The planes bearing our prisoners left Iranian air space ... so we can all drink to this one."

Reagan and his wife then went outside to review several military color guards before boarding a limousine for the inaugural parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. The beaming Reagans stood for a time in the open-top car and returned the waves of the cheering throng assembled along the roadway.

In his inaugural speech, Reagan promised "an era of national renewal" at home and restraint but never surrender abroad.

Reagan did not mention the hostages in the 20-minute inaugural address, which he directed to "this breed called Americans," whom he described as the heroes of the land.

"With all the creative energy at our command, let us begin an era of national renewal," he told (Continued on Page 4, Col. 1)

Compiled from AP and UPI

Laughing, crying and hugging each other, the 52 American hostages flew out of Iran to freedom Tuesday.

After 444 days of captivity, the hostages left Tehran with taunts of "Down with America" ringing in their ears.

Their freedom was exchanged for \$8 billion in Iranian assets that until Tuesday had been frozen in the United States.

Their jetliner landed at a U.S. air base in Athens, Greece, four hours after leaving Iran for a refueling stop before flying on to Algiers.

From Algiers, the Americans were to fly to Rhein Main AB near Wiesbaden, West Germany. There they will be greeted Wednesday by former President Jimmy Carter, who worked until the last minutes of his administration Tuesday to secure their release.

Swiss Ambassador to Iran Erik Lang, who saw the hostages at Tehran airport, said two of them appeared to have difficulty walking but that all appeared to be in good condition.

He said many of the Americans were acting almost like children — falling all over one another while laughing, crying and hugging each other.

In Algeria, the country that was the intermediary in the negotiations between the United States and Iran for the hostages' release, U.S. negotiators led by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher were waiting to greet the hostages.

From Algiers, two U.S. Air Force C-9 hospital planes were to fly the hostages to Germany, where a U.S. military hospital decked out in yellow ribbons was prepared to receive them. The 4,000-mile, zig-zag journey was expected to end in Wiesbaden at dawn Wednesday, European time.

Carter and former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, in new

'... the planes bearing our prisoners (have) left Iranian air space and they're now free of Iran ... we can all drink to this one ...'

— Ronald Reagan.

roles as newly inaugurated President Ronald Reagan's envoys, were to leave for Wiesbaden Wednesday to greet the hostages on behalf of a rejoicing nation.

Plans had called for the three Algerian planes — one with the hostages and two carrying Algerian mediators and their luggage — to refuel in Ankara, Turkey. In a last-minute change that surprised both U.S. and Turkish officials, the planes flew to Greece instead.

Reagan announced the hostages' freedom at a luncheon in Washington after his inauguration. "The plane carrying the hostages just left Iranian airspace and the 52 Americans are now free of Iran," Reagan told the cheering luncheon guests.

Greek Defense Ministry sources said that when the Algerian planes left Iranian airspace, U.S. air force jets from Turkey escorted the craft until they reached Greek airspace, then turned back.

Release of the Americans touched off celebrations and the sound of sirens and bells across the United States.

Officials at the state and local levels organized celebrations and observances in Florida, Idaho, Maryland, California, Tennessee, Ohio, Michigan and elsewhere.

Streets were festooned with fresh yellow ribbons to replace those that had faded during the (Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

Carters go home, private citizens now

PLAINS, Ga. (UPI) — The Iranian hostage crisis settled only minutes after his presidency ended, Jimmy Carter arrived home as a private citizen Tuesday to the cheers of a crowd of his neighbors.

At the invitation of President Ronald Reagan, Carter will return to Andrews AFB in Washington Wednesday (Thursday, Far East time) to travel to Wiesbaden, West Germany, to greet the hostages.

Carter, wearing a raincoat against a drizzle, told the cheer-

ing, whistling hometown crowd: "Just a few moments ago ... I had received word officially for the first time that the aircraft carrying the 52 American hostages had cleared Iranian airspace on the first leg of the journey home and that every one of the 52 hostages was alive, was well and free."

"I doubt if at any time in our history more prayers have reached heaven."

Carter worked against the clock in the last days and minutes of his (Continued on Page 3, Col. 3)