

# Polis – "Hello" sailors?

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There is no greater hypocrisy than the great British public getting into a moral lather about cheque book journalism. And now the unwashed masses have been joined by armchair generals like Max Hastings in their condemnation of the British sailors who are profiting from their ordeal at the hands of the Iranians. It is as if it was the sailors not the Revolutionary Guards who were guilty of something. Millions of people will pay to read exclusive stories extracted by money paid by popular TV companies, magazines or newspapers. And yet while it is alright for sport-stars, C List celebrities like Jade Goody, and criminals like Jeffrey Archer to be paid, it is somehow indecent that the members of our poorly-paid armed forces should choose to make money by recounting their adventures in Iran. They have already spoken at some length so it is not as if they are hiding information from the public. The Ministry of Defence has agreed to it. So why can't people lighten up and save their moral outrage for something truly horrible such as child poverty, teenage gun crime or the refereeing of Uriah Rennie? Top civil servants, spies, politicians, even Generals and other members of the Great and the Good will make money from newspapers for publishing their memoirs or writing Op Ed articles. Behind this lurks, of course, the despicable sentiment that somehow the sailors should have remained silent and refused to co-operate with the Iranian propoganda charade. What poppycock. I would love to see how long Max Hastings would have held out when blindfolded with someone clicking a gun trigger behind his head. What a nasty piece of work this sad old duffer has become. The last thing that the Middle East needed right now was a bunch of B Movie heroes turning what was a trivial event in to a full-blown crisis by refusing to play along with their captors. The sailors are out. The diplomacy worked. We may have lost a little face but sacrificing a little pride for the cause of peace is hardly a major blow to Britain's long-term interests. We have more important things to argue with Iran about – such as nuclear weapons. No doubt brave Max Hastings will volunteer to take them out single-handedly from his cottage in Wiltshire?

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