

*The Secretariat of the Fifteenth  
Annual Virginia International  
Crisis Simulation Presents:*

**Khamenei's Special Cabinet  
2010**

*Chaired by Peter Slag*

VICS XV

Welcome Leaders and Dignitaries of Iran!

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the Virginia International Crisis Simulation XV! My name is Peter Slag and I am a first year at UVa from Richmond, Virginia. I plan on majoring or minoring in some combination of politics, economics, and environmental thought and practice. I have been involved in Model UN since high school and have been an active member in IRO since I arrived at UVa. I'm also involved in University Democrats and the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society here on Grounds. In my free time I enjoy having a good time with friends, playing futbol, Sporting, and watching Scrubs. Feel free to send me any questions or comments, and I'll see you at VICS XV!

You have chosen to be among the most powerful and influential figures in the Islamic Republic of Iran at a time when political crisis and foreign hostility threaten the stability and security of the entire country. Riots, political violence, and threat of economic sanctions and military strikes are commonplace, and Iran's governing structure appears unable to effectively react to political and geostrategic challenges.

In an attempt to stabilize the situation and regain political order, the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has called together the leaders of Iran's disparate governing institutions and political power centers. Khamenei's intent is to concentrate influence and form an emergency executive cabinet, comprised of these selected leaders and wielding immense executive authority. In addition to arbitrating and determining domestic and foreign policy, this cabinet is also charged with creating a solution regarding the fractured political system. I would urge you to think of this committee as generally outside the restrictions of Iran's political institutions, and understand that public and media access can be determined by the cabinet and its members.

As participants, you will be expected to represent the political factions, government institutions, and constituencies of your respective political figure in these negotiations. Your position papers should explain what interests you are representing, why you are representing them, and solutions that would suit those political interests (which include a your figure's own ambitions).

Sincerely,

Peter Slag

VICS XV

## Country Profile

### Geography

Iran is a country that covers over 1.6 million square kilometers between the Arab Middle East and South and Central Asia. It is bordered by Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkmenistan and has large coastlines along the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea.<sup>1</sup>

### People

Iran has a population of over 66 million, growing at less than 1% per year due to falling fertility rates and negative net migration. Average life expectancy in Iran is 71 years, which is slightly higher than the regional average. Persians are the dominant ethnic group, comprising 51% of Iran's population. Azeris make up 25% and Kurds, Arabs, and Gilaki are also significant minorities. 77% of adult Iranians are literate, and there is a literacy gap between men and women, as only 70% of women are considered literate. This is largely a historical vestige, however, and as education becomes more available to younger girls and women this gap will continue to close. Iran is 89% Shia Muslim and 9% Sunni Muslim, with the rest composed of Bahai, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity. Iran is one of only four countries in which a majority of people practices Shia Islam.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Middle East: Iran." *CIA World Factbook*. 2009.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Economy

Iran's gross domestic product is about \$335 billion (around \$5,000 per capita), or a bit larger than the gross regional product of metropolitan Washington, DC. The largest sectors of the economy are petroleum and natural gas production and export. The state is funded almost entirely by oil and gas revenue. The Iranian government plays a huge role in the economy, creating and enforcing price controls,



taxes, and subsidies that limit private sector activity. As a result, Iran has a large informal economy that provides goods and services without regulation. Inflation and unemployment are prevalent and restrict economic development.<sup>3</sup>

## Government

Iran is the world's only major theocracy. Iran's government has a unique structure that includes secular and religious, elected and appointed, military and civilian institutions. The Iranian parliament (Majles) is a legislative body of 290 elected representatives that debates policy, writes laws, and confirms presidential

<sup>3</sup> "Middle East: Iran." *CIA World Factbook*. 2009.

appointments. The President (currently Mahmud Ahmedinejad), who is also popularly elected, appoints a cabinet, and administers policy (particularly economic policy). The Supreme Leader is the true executive, with commander-in-chief powers, control of foreign policy, and religious authority. The Assembly of Experts, a popularly elected group of religious scholars, determines the succession of the Supreme Leader and monitors his leadership. The Expediency Council is a body made up of both secular and religious leaders that officially has the responsibility of reconciling disputes between the Majles and Guardian Council, but has a more important role as an advising committee to the Supreme Leader. The Guardian Council is the body that vets candidates for elected offices and checks legislation for compliance with Islamic laws and principles. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard (military) also exercises substantial political influence. Basij Militia serves as a police force that enforces Islamic code, but also uses force to suppress unfavorable political activity. The Revolutionary Guard also has substantial influence over oil and gas reserves, which it protects.<sup>4</sup>

### **Historical Context** **The Iranian Revolution**

In the late 1970s Iran experienced tremendous political turmoil as religious conservatives vigorously opposed the policies and rule of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The Shah, who had been in power since 1941, was widely

<sup>4</sup> "Middle East: Iran." *CIA World Factbook*. 2009.

perceived as corrupt and beholden to Western interests, particularly those of the United States and Israel. Since ascending to the throne at age 22, the Shah was an adamant supporter of western-style modernization. He sought to create policies that provided widespread education, technological innovation and upgrade, and aligned Iran's foreign policy with the United States.<sup>5</sup> However, these policies were implemented in ways that created large inequalities between Iran's urban elites and middle class, and the farmers and workers of rural Iran. Repression and corruption also played large roles in the Shah's political agenda, which fostered a rapid decline in his popularity and laid the groundwork for a conservative reaction.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, an exiled religious leader living in Paris, became the symbolic leader of Iran's religious reaction. Dissent spread beyond the most conservative segments of Iranian society to a broad majority. Industry workers and oil field operators dealt the biggest blows to the Shah's power and stability when they shut down factories and cut off the Iranian economy's lifeblood, oil production. Foreign powers like the United States and Europe pushed the Shah to solve the conflict in any way that would restart Iran's oil production and export.<sup>6</sup>

Continuing protests, many of which were chaotic and violent, created tremendous domestic

<sup>5</sup> "Pahlavi Dynasty." *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia* 6, (2003): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> "Iranian Revolution." *History in Dispute*: 15, (2003): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

pressure and displayed the breadth and energy of religious and conservative dissenters. Later, a group of Islamist students took over the American embassy in Tehran, holding the Americans inside as hostages. After Jimmy Carter failed to rescue them using both diplomatic and military efforts, Khomeini was seen in both the US and Iran as a stout force of opposition to US influence. The US replied with economic sanctions and other policies of opposition to the new Iranian regime. Many experts point to this hostage crisis as the point at which the relationship between Iran and the US turned adversarial.<sup>7</sup>

In 1979 the Shah fled Iran to Egypt, leaving the Prime Minister, a more democratic figure, to calm the situation. However, later that year Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran and demanded a new government. The rule of the Shah and Prime Minister collapsed as Khomeini seized political power and legitimacy and appointed new ministers. The Iranian Revolution was complete as Khomeini set about creating new theocratic institutions, formally called the Islamic Republic. This new form of government integrated hierarchical structures of the Shia establishment into legislative, administrative, and judicial institutions.<sup>8</sup>

Several bodies and organizations were involved in the rise of this reactionary movement. Although there was a wide array of opposition groups, including

<sup>7</sup> "Islamic Republic of Iran." Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World 2, (2004): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> "Islamic Republic of Iran." Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World 2, (2004)

constitutionalists, Marxists, and Islamists, the power of Khomeini and the Shia establishment transformed the movement to a predominately Islamist movement. The Islamic Republican Party was formed once Khomeini returned from exile as a consolidation of local religious and protest groups and served as the political base of the Iranian Revolution. The Revolutionary Council and Assembly of Experts of Constitution were formed in 1979 to begin establishing new Islamic law and governing institutions.

The Revolutionary Guard and Basij militia were also formed in the same period to provide military power and legitimacy and suppress opponents of the revolution with threats and violence, respectively. These institutions served not only as agents of the Revolution, but soon became the parts of the Islamic Republic, fully institutionalized and in control of Iran. In this new system, Khomeini ascended to the position of Supreme Leader, a position that gave him leadership of both Shia Islam in Iran and the Iranian state.<sup>9</sup>

### **Iran-Iraq War**

The Iranian Revolution substantially changed the regional dynamics of the Middle East. Particularly affected was the relationship between Iran and its neighbor to the west, Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein. Hussein saw the new Iranian regime as weak and vulnerable to military invasion. He also saw that Iran's resources and location would immeasurably increase Iraq's influence and wealth.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Furthermore, Hussein was worried that the Iranian Revolution would inspire Iraqi Shiites to overthrow his government. Khomeini saw the Shia populations of the Middle East as repressed and underrepresented, especially in Iraq under the Sunni Ba'ath party.<sup>10</sup>

Military conflict started when Iraqi forces invaded Iran in 1980. The conflict lasted 9 years, costing 500,000 lives and around \$1 trillion USD. The conflict also strained Iranian-US relations even more, because the US supported Iraq with large amounts of money and weapons. During wartime, Khomeini was also able to tighten his grip on Iranian politics and media, limiting the influence of reformers.<sup>11</sup>

### **Khamenei and Ahmedinejad**

In 1989, following the somewhat inconclusive end of the Iran-Iraq War and the death of the Supreme Leader and figurehead of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic faced a political transformation. Ayatollah Rajsanjani, then the Speaker of the Majles, emerged as the leading political figure in Iran.<sup>12</sup> However, the Guardian Council appointed Ayatollah Khamenei, a conservative figure, as the new Supreme Leader. Khamenei has remained a low-key political leader compared to the power allotted

to his position.<sup>13</sup> Presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami were largely responsible for domestic and foreign policy through the 1990s and 2000s until 2005. Khatami attempted to make reforms during his term that would liberalize the economy and provide more political and civic freedoms.<sup>14</sup>

Khatami's efforts were largely unsuccessful and most of his changes were undone by President Ahmedinejad, who took office in 2005, with the support of Khamenei. Ahmedinejad's term marked a sharp conservative turn in Iranian politics. Both the President and Supreme Leader publicly and aggressively pointed to the US and Israel as evil forces. Conspiratorial theories and absurd accusations became the norm in political speeches by both leaders. This attitude, along with Iran's lack of cooperation regarding the Iraq War and Iran's nuclear program, made Iran a primary adversary of the US under the Bush administration, which included Iran in the "axis of evil". To some degree, this has carried on into the new US administration.<sup>15</sup>

Ahmedinejad's presidency has also been marked by mismanagement of the economy. Oil revenues have fallen and fluctuated over the course of his term, causing unpredictability in government budgets and commodity prices in Iran. Restructuring of

<sup>10</sup> "Iran-Iraq War." Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East 4, (1996): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> "Hashemi Rafsanjani." Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East 4, (1996): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> "Ali Sayyed Khamene'i (1939-)." Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World 2, (2004): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> "Islamic Republic of Iran." Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World 2, (2004)

<sup>15</sup> "American-Iranian Relations." History in Dispute 14, (2003): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

subsidies and other government involvement in the economy has left many Iranians with declining standards of living and forced them to turn to informal and illegal markets for livelihood. Ahmedinejad's public rivalry with the US and developed world in general have also led to intensified sanctions and travel restrictions that further limit opportunities for many Iranians. This rivalry has also caused many Iranians to fear military confrontation with the US and Israel, which would prove exceedingly costly.<sup>16</sup>

These factors have all contributed to the rise of an opposition movement. Iran's population has a large segment of young, educated, and urban citizens who see Ahmedinejad's policies as economically unsound, diplomatically confrontational, and political insane.<sup>17</sup> Until recently, many of these voters chose not to participate in Iranian politics, seeing it as a lost cause. Ahmedinejad also maintains a large bastion of support in Iran's central plateau. Seen as a workingman with religious and conservative values, many poorer rural and small town voters vehemently support Ahmedinejad and the current regime under Khamenei.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Mahmoud Ahmedinejad Biography." Biography.com. 2009. <http://www.biography.com/articles/Mahmoud-Ahmadinejad-...> (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Takeyh, Ray. Interview by Bernard Gwertzman. *Opposition Ferment and Fragment in Iran*. Council On Foreign Relations, 21 Dec. 2009.

<sup>18</sup> "Mahmoud Ahmedinejad Biography." Biography.com. 2009.

### Topic 1: Current Political Crisis

Since the 1979 revolution there have been substantial reformist movements in Iran. However, the political dominance of Ayatollah Khomeini as a result of the revolution and the Iran-Iraq War pushed these reform movements out of any meaningful political power. Moreover, a conservative Shia judiciary subdued modest reform movements during the 1990s. However, during his first term in office, president Mahmoud Ahmedinejad was seen as responsible for economic stagnation and showmanship and confrontations with the West. Ahmedinejad's actions as an international figure were criticized by many sides for a variety of reasons.<sup>19</sup>

Some thought that his anti-Semitic and Anti-West remarks eroded his credibility and the credibility of the regime; others vehemently disagreed with the remarks themselves. Many reformers felt that Ahmedinejad drew too much attention to himself and to Iran, decreasing Iran's efficacy in covertly influencing conflicts like the Iraq War and becoming a nuclear power. Other critics focused on Ahmedinejad's economic policies, which simultaneously cut subsidies and limited private sector growth. Support reform was quite broad, but also dispersed and diverse. However, the election of 2009 presented an opportunity for Iran's opposition and reform groups to coalesce around one candidate.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "Mahmoud Ahmedinejad Biography." Biography.com. 2009.

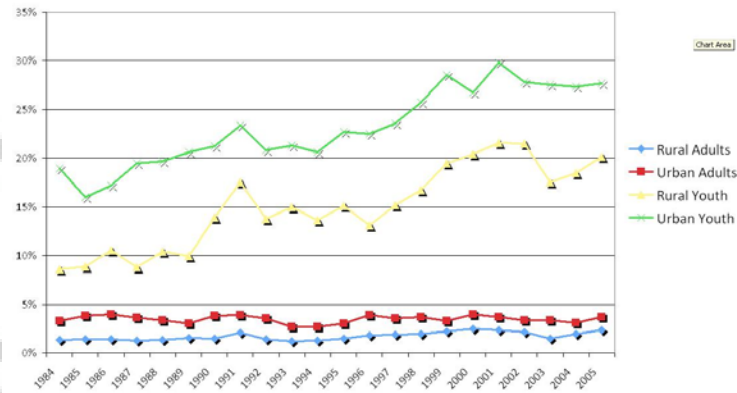
<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

As in all elections in Iran, the Guardian Council vetted and screened out most of the candidates, leaving only five: three reformers and two conservatives, one of which was Ahmedinejad. Originally, reformers seemed to gravitate towards former president Khatami, believing that a second term as president would give him a second chance to make meaningful reforms. However, Khatami dropped out of the race a few months before the election and endorsed his long time friend and fellow reform candidate, former prime minister Mir Hossein Mousavi.<sup>21</sup>

Mousavi was a harsh critic of Ahmedinejad's populist economic policies and pointed to the poor condition of the Iranian economy. Under Ahmedinejad the inflation had rose to 25%, and unemployment figures varied from 12% to 30% without jobs. Many Iranians perceived and were troubled by their dependence on government subsidies, the majority of which were funded by oil revenues, which were falling. Mousavi proposed a certain degree of privatization, allowing small businesses to emerge, cutting subsidies, and selling government assets. Mousavi also pointed to the blossoming informal markets that were emerging in the shadow of government control. He advocated privatization as a way to subvert that informal economy, which was unregulated, inefficient, and

sometimes dangerous.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 2. Unemployment among Men in Iran  
Source: Household Expenditure and Income Survey, 1984-2005.



Ahmedinejad's media policies had also become unpopular, often seen as stifling, melodramatic, and inflammatory. Many Iranians thought his status as a high-profile challenger to the West threatened Iran's security and undermined Iran's ability to avoid the scrutiny of the international community. Mousavi proposed that domestic media be opened, allowing private groups and individuals to own media entities. He also thought that censorship and regulation should be decreased to allow for more public dialogue, and that government media should be toned down from its state of boisterous propaganda. Most importantly, Mousavi stated that Ahmedinejad's adversarial role with the United States and international community eroded Iranian sovereignty and influence. Mousavi claimed that his presidency would take a more conciliatory role with the international community without

<sup>21</sup> Worth, Robert. "Both sides claim victory in presidential election in Iran." *New York Times*, 12 June 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/13/world/middleeast/13i...> (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>22</sup> Altman, Alex. "Iran's Challenger: Mir-Hossein Mousavi." *TIME Magazine*, 12 June 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1904194,...> (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

backing down on policies like the nuclear program.<sup>23</sup>

Mousavi also supported a reform of Islamic code. Ahmedinejad's presidency saw a crackdown on those who did not strictly abide by Sharia law, particularly women, regarding dress and public behavior. Mousavi saw these aspects of Islamic law as outdated, and suggested that certain specifications for dress and behavior be changed to allow for more individual choice and expression. Mousavi also criticized the rampant violence of the Basij militia against those who did not follow Sharia law, using the strictest interpretation.

As the campaign went on Mousavi benefitted from the political endorsement and tacit support of former president Khatami and one of Iran's highest-ranking clerics, Ayatollah Rafsanjani. A series of televised debates made clear the differences between Ahmedinejad and Mousavi, as they exchanged a flurry of accusations and criticism, both personal and political. Although Ahmedinejad held a substantial lead through much of the campaign (according to somewhat unreliable polling), Mousavi appeared to gain momentum as the election approached. Crowds of supporters took to the streets during Mousavi's rallies, displaying green garments and flags, the color that became symbolic of the reform movement.<sup>24</sup>

Mousavi appeared to have strong support in Iran's urban areas, especially Tehran, where middle class moderates seemed eager for a change. Ahmedinejad still held a tight grasp over Iran's rural areas, where voters were poorer, more religious, and more dependent on government subsidies. These demographic splits exemplify the divisions present not just in this election, but in Iranian politics and Iranian society.

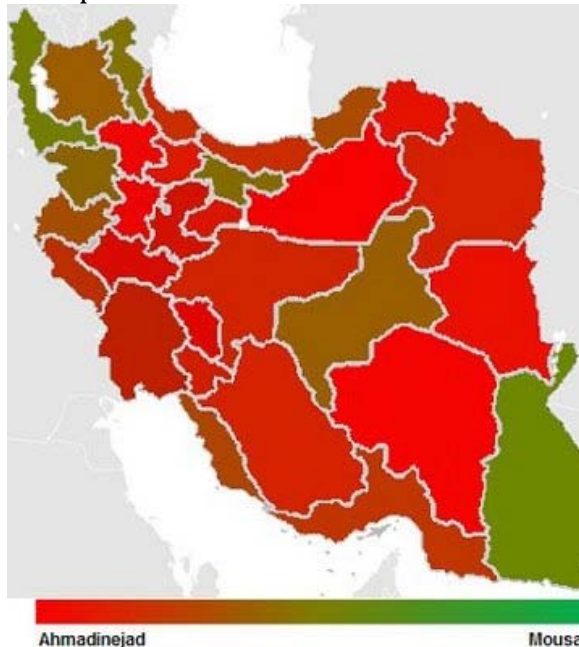
The election took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2009. The turnout was massive, estimated at 85% of all eligible voters and the results emerged over the next few days. Ahmedinejad was announced the winner with 62% of the vote to Mousavi's 34% by Iranian media on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>. However, Mousavi and other reform figures claimed that the result was caused by massive ballot fraud, and claiming that as many as 14 million ballots had gone missing. Mousavi also urged his supporters to demonstrate and put pressure on the Guardian Council and Supreme Leader to investigate allegations of fraud. In doing this, Mousavi shifted the energy and anger of the reform movement to the ruling clerics, in addition to Ahmedinejad and the political conservatives. Khamenei expressed his support for Ahmedinejad's victory, and although he did publicly support reviewing the results, his intentions seemed focused on maintaining Ahmedinejad's

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<sup>23</sup> "Ahmedinejad Defends Iran's Nuclear Program." Xinhua News Agency (2009): History Resource Center, Gale Resources (Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Altman, Alex. "Iran's Challenger: Mir-Hosseini Mousavi." *TIME Magazine*, 12 June 2009.

triumph.<sup>25</sup>



The post-election demonstrations were on a massive scale. Tens of thousands rallied in the streets of Tehran daily. At first they were largely peaceful, but as time went on they became more obstructive and violent. The government deployed Basij militia and police to put down protests, and they often used violent techniques, even firing live ammunition into the crowds. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, Mousavi spoke at a rally in Tehran attended by hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Iranians. "Death to the dictator" and other aggressive chants were common, exhibiting the immense dissatisfaction with current Iranian leadership, not limited to Ahmedinejad.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Worth, Robert. "Both sides claim victory in presidential election in Iran." *New York Times*, 12 June 2009.

<sup>26</sup> "Iran stepping up effort to quell election protest." *New York Times*, 24 June 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/25/world/middleeast/25i...> (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

Khamenei and other government officials warned that such a rally was illegal, but that seemed to inspire even more fervor. More and more well respected political leaders began to come out in support of election reviews and political compromise. However, the Basij militia and police were able to subdue all but the most intransigent protesters, lifting some of the pressure from Khamenei and other leaders.<sup>27</sup>

Thousands of protesters (exact numbers are unknown) were detained in the days following the election and many have remained imprisoned. Footage of arrests, beatings, and even deaths has circulated widely, creating a widespread and angry reaction to the regime's repressive behavior. Youtube, cell phone cameras, and international radio served as important forums for the protesters, where they shared information and stories. These tools broadened the audience and made the actions of both the protesters and the regime visible.

International groups also staged protests after the election in cities all over the world, however the outcry over the repression of protests and holding of detainees has sparked even larger outcry from the international community, including governments, human rights groups, and grassroots organizations. Controversy also erupted when a large prison facility, Evin, used to hold political detainees was found to keep prisoners in squalid conditions.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Athanasiadis, Iason. "Iran's jails: an inside view." *GlobalPost*, 16 Dec. 2009,

Despite these popular demonstrations and outcry, the result of the election has stood, and the current regime continues to maintain order through repression and violence. State media in has also been part of the regime's repressive tactics, using anti-west propaganda and attacking reform figures.<sup>29</sup>

For now, it appears as though Iranian politics have calmed somewhat, with Khamenei and Ahmedinejad still firmly entrenched with religious conservatives and in control of the government. However, the undercurrents of unrest remain, as shown by the most recent protests during the Shia holiday of Ashura in December. Again thousands of protesters took to the streets of Tehran, eliciting a violent reaction from police and Basij militia. Reformers in all levels of the Iranian government and Shia establishment also support the broad base of pro-reform voters and demonstrators. Given these factors, it is unlikely that Iran's political status quo will last much longer.<sup>30</sup>

### **Topic 2 &3: Nuclear Program and International Tension\***

Iran's nuclear program was initiated in 1957 with the help of the United States and Eisenhower administration's Atoms For Peace program. The program was intended to provide materials and expertise to

countries that wanted to develop nuclear energy for civilian use. The Shah obtained a small reactor from the United States and also founded a nuclear research center in Tehran. Iran continued receiving nuclear materials through the 1960s, and also engaged in trading information and nuclear materials with France and Germany. The Shah's nuclear ambitions included the capacity to generate 23,000 megawatts of electricity using nuclear reactors, but also the capacity to build nuclear weapons. These ambitions were somewhat tempered by Iran's signing of the Nuclear Non-proliferation treaty in 1968.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, the Shah's desire to create nuclear weapons persisted, and led to withdrawal of US support for Iran's nuclear program in 1974. France and Germany, who had companies building reactors in Iran, were also pressured to shut down those projects. After the 1979 Revolution, the United States and other Western powers became more concerned with Iran's nuclear capabilities and ambitions. Because the US no longer had diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic, they used more hard-line and anticipatory tactics to deal with these ambitions. Deals between Iran and Argentina, China, and Russia involving nuclear materials were cancelled by the United States in an effort to prevent Iran from gaining the

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/middle-east/091214/...> (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> "Mahmoud Ahmedinejad Biography." Biography.com. 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Worth, Robert. "Police are said to have killed 10 in Iran protests." *New York Times*, 27 Dec. 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/28/world/middleeast/28i...> (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Bruno, Greg. "Iran's Nuclear Program." Council On Foreign Relations (2009): [http://www.cfr.org/publication/16811/irans\\_nuclear\\_pro...](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16811/irans_nuclear_pro...) (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

\*Topics 2 and 3 are combined in this guide for the sake of brevity and clarity

necessary materials to create or research nuclear weapons.<sup>32</sup>

The Iran-Iraq War added another incentive for Iran to continue its nuclear program and increase its weapons capabilities. This became especially clear to the regime when the United States began to aid Iraq with funds and weapons. However, unlike the programs under the Shah, Khomeini and then Khamenei worked to keep Iran's nuclear ambitions low profile, concealing facilities and often denying progress or capabilities to the international community. By avoiding the scrutiny of the United States and other international regulatory bodies, Iran has been able to construct a number of facilities for research and building both civilian and military nuclear weapons and generators.<sup>33</sup>

Within Iran there are a wide array of opinions on the nuclear program. Although there are many reformers, mostly young, more secular, urbanites, who see Iran's nuclear program, at least in its present form, as unnecessary and controversial at best, and at worst, divisive and dangerous. However, most mainstream political debate is supportive of a nuclear program. The disagreements are with regard to international cooperation and the purpose of the nuclear program.<sup>34</sup>

Ahmedinejad, Khamenei, and conservatives have a record of uncooperative behavior with the international community and have spoken routinely of countering the

threat posed by the nuclear capability of the US and Israel.<sup>35</sup> Mainstream reformers, like Mousavi and Rafsanjani, advocate a more subtle and diplomatic approach, hoping that by cooperating with the international community, Iran can develop nuclear technology for civilian and weapons use. Both factions see nuclear technology as a way to expand Iran's energy infrastructure and to increase Iran's regional and global influence.

In 2002, an Iranian opposition group revealed information about Iran's nuclear program, raising international concerns about safety and Iran's intentions. The United States Department of State pushed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to tighten regulations and increase the intensity of inspections in Iran. Iran signed onto additional agreements that allowed the IAEA more authority in its inspections, and for a brief period, halted all enrichment activity in Iran. During this period the European Union engaged in negotiations with Iran in an attempt to dissuade them from creating a weapons program.<sup>36</sup>

Europe's interest was particularly acute because Iranian weapons could potentially reach Greece and Eastern Europe. Israel has even more pressing concern, as religious tension with the current Iranian regime has built up since the 1980s. Israel has taken a more aggressive approach, maintaining an arsenal of nuclear weapons ready to strike Iran. Israel, as a small country is

<sup>32</sup> Bruno, Greg. "Iran's Nuclear Program." Council On Foreign Relations (2009): [http://www.cfr.org/publication/16811/irans\\_nuclear\\_pro...](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16811/irans_nuclear_pro...) (accessed Jan. 1, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Mahmoud Ahmedinejad Biography." Biography.com. 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Bruno, Greg. "Iran's Nuclear Program." Council On Foreign Relations (2009)

immensely concerned that an Iranian nuclear strike could all but wipe Israel out. A new conservative administration in Israel has escalated tensions further, as a preemptive strike by Israel on Iran's facilities seems much more possible.<sup>37</sup>

This period of negotiation and accord following the 2002 agreements was short-lived, as it became clear that Iran was once again enriching uranium and building its nuclear infrastructure in 2006. Iran has cited the provision in the Non-proliferation Treaty that all signatories have the right to pursue nuclear energy for civilian purposes, and have hidden weapons ambitions behind that provision. However, the Congressional Research Service points to the type of heavy water reactor being built and the number of centrifuges used as proliferation concerns. Furthermore, the Central Intelligence Agency has gained information about secret facilities set up to create weapons grade materials. The most recent information was with regard to enrichment and weapons testing facility outside the holy city of Qom.<sup>38</sup>

This information, coupled with Iran's public and provocative missile tests, have created broad international opposition to Iran's nuclear program. Although the United States has imposed economic and other sanctions on Iran since the Iranian Revolution, the United Nations Security Council passed a package of sanctions and other restrictions on Iran in 2008, which have been renewed twice. Europe has also

proposed an incentive package to pull Iran into negotiations and cease enrichment of nuclear materials. Iran has remained uncooperative on most fronts. The IAEA inspectors face harassment and restricted access, and Iran consistently conceals information about its facilities.<sup>39</sup>

The United States, under the Obama administration, has sought to reengage with Iran about its nuclear program, but without much success, resulting in a proposal for new sanctions, introduced by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.<sup>40</sup> However, China and Russia have been reluctant to sign on for more intense sanctions, making the new proposal's future uncertain.

### **Committee Format**

This committee will be composed of 10 to 15 of Iran's most powerful political and religious figures from a wide array of governing institutions. Each member will represent the body that they belong to as well as the political faction they favor. The committee will serve to concentrate executive authority, so there is no need to be concerned about political approval from bodies outside this cabinet.

The default debate format will be moderated caucus, punctuated by unmoderated caucuses to write proposals and debate informally. The committee has the ability to create several documents:

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<sup>39</sup> Bruno, Greg. "Iran's Nuclear Program." Council On Foreign Relations (2009)

<sup>40</sup> "Clinton: Iran sanctions should target elite." *New York Times*, 11 Jan. 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/01/11/us/politics...> (accessed Jan. 11, 2010).

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<sup>37</sup> Bruno, Greg. "Iran's Nuclear Program." Council On Foreign Relations (2009)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

-Directives: command executive actions (through agencies, the military, etc)  
 -Communiqués: messages sent to foreign governments, international organizations, etc  
 -Press release: public statements to be given to the press and published  
 -Political agreements and contracts: documents that can arrange for changes in government, creation of coalitions, new positions, etc (these don't have a set purpose or format, but can be used to make agreements between political factions)  
 These documents will be passed by a majority (plus one) vote.

### Members

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei<br>Supreme Leader                     | 11. Mojtaba Hashemi<br>Special Adviser                      |
| 2. Mahmoud Ahmedinejad<br>President                             | 12. Mohsein Rezaei<br>Special Advisor                       |
| 3. Ayatollah Akbar Rafsanjani<br>Head of the Expediency Council | 13. Mohammad Jafari<br>General<br>Revolutionary Guard       |
| 4. Mohammad Khatami<br>Former President                         | 14. Ayatollah Abbas Vaez-Tabasi<br>Holy Estates<br>Director |
| 5. Mir Hossein Mousavi<br>Former Prime Minister                 | 15. Ayatollah Ebrahim Yazdi<br>Islamic Scholar              |
| 6. Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati<br>Head of the Guardian Council      | 16. Medhi Ghazanfari<br>Minister of<br>Commerce             |
| 7. Ayatollah Mahmoud Sharoudi<br>Head of the Judiciary          | 17. Manouchehr Mottaki<br>Minister of<br>Foreign Affairs    |
| 8. Ali Larijani<br>Speaker of the Majles                        | 18. Heyder Moslehi<br>Minister of<br>Intelligence           |
| 9. Reza Bahonar<br>Deputy Speaker of the Majles                 | 19. Kamran Daneshjoo<br>Minister of<br>Science              |
| 10. Saeed Mortazavi<br>Prosecutor<br>General                    | 20. Ayatollah Mohammad Momen<br>Guardian Council            |
|   | 21. Gholamhossein Elham<br>Guardian Council                 |
|   | 22. Ayatollah Gholamreza Rezvani<br>Guardian Council        |
|   | 23. Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel<br>Expediency<br>Council         |
|   | 24. Hassan Habibi<br>Expediency<br>Council                  |
|   | 25. Mohammadi Reyshahri<br>Expediency<br>Council            |

**For Further Research:**

- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/share/d/spl/hi/middle\\_east/03/iran\\_power/html/](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/share/d/spl/hi/middle_east/03/iran_power/html/) Interactive site by the BBC that diagrams and explains Iran's political structure.
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/middle\\_east/2009/iran/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/2009/iran/default.stm) The BBC's homepage for Iran's political crisis. Lots of links to more specific articles.
- <http://countrystudies.us/iran/99.htm> Explanation and history of Iran's recent foreign policy provided by the Library of Congress.
- <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16811/> Council on Foreign Relations webpage on Iran's nuclear program.

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