



ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2010  
BERGEN COUNTY ACADEMIES

SECURITY COUNCIL

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Dear Delegates:

Thank you for choosing to debate in the Security Council for AMUN 2010. We have key issues to address and there are resolutions to be made. We are excited to be working with you, and hope that you use this topic paper for preliminary research. We strongly advise to further your research based on your individual countries and their positions on the issues we will be debating. If you have any questions please email [iderah@bergen.org](mailto:iderah@bergen.org) or [jullev@bergen.org](mailto:jullev@bergen.org).

Sincerely,

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# TOPIC 1: THE SITUATION IN IRAN

## Background

### *History of Iran*

Iran is home to one of the oldest civilizations in the world; with settlements dating back to 4,000 B.C. Iran was first unified as a nation under the Cyrus the Great with his victory of the Medes Empire. This was the birth of Persia, which is what Iran was referred to as until 1935. Cyrus the Great's empire was the Achaemenid Empire, which was then followed by the Seleucid and Parthian Empires. One of the greatest empires was successor of the Parthian Empire, the Sassanid Empire, which ruled for over 1,000 years. The end of the Sassanid reign over Iran was a major turning point in Iranian culture and civilization. Up until that point the dominant religion in Iran was Zoroastrianism. The Islamic conquest of Persia in 631 – 656 brought Islam to Iran which eventually replaced Zoroastrianism as the dominant religion. The next major influence over Iran did not come until about a thousand years later with the Safavid dynasty. The Safavids made Iran a unified country once again, and they also declared Shia Islam as the official religion of Iran. The Safavids gained control in 1501. From 1501 to 1979 Iran was a monarchy ruled by Shahs.

### *Start of the Revolution*

The Islamic Republic of Iran, formerly known as Persia, traditionally had a monarchy with a parliament where the Shah had most of the power before the revolution in 1979. January 1978 marked the beginning of the end of Iran's traditional monarchy. This was when the first demonstration against the Shah broke out. The catalysts for these demonstrations were Iran's extreme income inequality, "qarbzadegi" westernization, SAVAK (repression of

dissident voices), and the Shah's underestimation of the opposition.

### *Causes of the Revolution*

The majority of the wealth in Iran was in the hands of a few elite, and all state contracts were awarded to multinational, rather than national, corporations. Most contracts involved infrastructure projects. While the multinational Corporations were reaping all the profits from their business ventures in Iran, the majority of Iran was not seeing these profits. The quality of life in an economic perspective was very low. On top of contracts being awarded to MNCs, Iran was also bringing in huge oil revenues. Yet the public did not see a change in their standard of living. The Shah was living a very extravagant life while the rest were struggling to make ends meet.

Another major cause of the revolution was that the majority saw Iran as becoming westernized. This did not sit well with the religious classes and the majority of Iranians. The Shah was perceived as a puppet of the West who did not follow Islamic ideals. "Gharbzadegi" westoxification became a huge rallying cry of the masses and led to the rise of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in exile. While being exiled in France, this gave Khomeini a major voice his grievances against the Shah and led to his rise.

SAVAK was the domestic security and intelligence service of Iran from 1957 to 1979. They were the most hated and feared organization. They placed political opponents under surveillance and repressed dissident movements. They were responsible for a lot of killings and disappearances. While SAVAK was one of the causes, another cause was the Shah's miscalculation

of these demonstrations and little by little more and more were coming out to the streets to protest.

### *Islamic Government*

Once the Islamic Revolution was successful in 1979, Khomeini set up the “Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists” (Veleyat e Fagih). This meant that the monarchy was now dead and the new theocracy was established with a fusion of some democracy. In the past Iran was always ruled by dynasties, which in turn protected Shiite Islam in Iran. However, the Shah was seen as corrupt and unIslamic. Khomeini imposed that Sharia (Islamic Law) was to be administered as the law of the land and who best to do it than the clergy. The clergy began to set up their ruling bodies.

The first action that was taken was the function of the Supreme Leader who was Ayatollah Khomeini. The role of Supreme Leader was created by the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the highest ranking political and religious authority of the nation, in accordance with the concept of Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists. He is in charge of many aspects of the government and social life. Socially, he appoints the head of the national radio and television network, the major religious foundations, and the preachers in city mosques. Politically he appoints the commanders of the armed forces, members of the national security councils, the chief judge and prosecutor, and the six Islamic jurists of the Guardian Council.

The Guardian Council is comprised of six Islamic Jurists, which are the “conscience of the present needs and the issues of the day” who are appointed directly by the Supreme Leader. The remaining six are jurists who specialize in law and are elected by the Majlis (Parliament), and they are nominated

by the Chief Judge. Their purpose is to interpret the constitution, supervise elections, and approve candidates for the Assembly of Experts, the Presidency, and the Parliament.

The Assembly of Experts is a body composed of 86 (mujtahids) Islamic scholars in charge of supervising, electing, and dismissing the Supreme Leader. Members are first screened by the Guardian Council, and then approved to run for elections who are elected by the people. They are required to meet for at least 2 days annually.

The Majlis (Parliament) is a unicameral national legislative body of Iran. The Parliament initially started with 270 seats and now entails 290. They are elected by the people and a small handful of seats are reserved for religious minorities: such as Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. However, Bahais are a minority who are not represented and can not hold positions of power. They are elected to 4 year terms. They can dismiss cabinet ministers by a vote of no confidence, and can impeach the President for misconduct in office. Once laws are passed by the Parliament they are then ratified by the Guardian Council.

The office of the President is the highest popularly elected official of Iran. However, the President is still subordinate to the Supreme Leader. The president is responsible for the "functions of the executive", such as signing treaties, agreements etc. with other countries and international organizations; the national planning and budget and state employment affairs; appointing ministers, governors, and ambassadors subject to the approval of the parliament. Unlike many other countries, in Iran the president does not have full control over foreign policy, the armed forces, or the nuclear policy of the Iranian state, which are

under the control of the Supreme Leader. He is elected to a four year term and can not serve more than two terms.

A very influential organization in Iran is the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. It was founded after the Iranian revolution, because the standing army was not seen as trustworthy to the revolution. The foundation of the army was ideologically motivated. Like many young Iranians during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, Iran's current president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was a member of the Revolutionary Guards. Many western countries such as the US, UK, etc. have declared the Iranian Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization. They control a lot of important aspects of the country. They control a large part of the economy by being awarded big government contracts. They are also in charge of internal and border security.

#### *Iran's Nuclear Program*

Iran's nuclear program has been a hot topic of discussion. A little overview by Gregg Bruno's research entitled "Iran's Nuclear Program" for the Council on Foreign Relations:

Iran's leaders have worked to pursue nuclear energy technology since the 1950s, spurred by the launch of U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace program. It made steady progress, with Western help, through the early 1970s. But concern over Iranian intentions followed by the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 effectively ended outside assistance. Iran was known to be reviving its civilian nuclear programs during the 1990s, but revelations in 2002 and 2003 of clandestine research into fuel enrichment and conversion raised international concern that Iran's

ambitions had metastasized beyond peaceful intent. Iran has consistently denied allegations it seeks to develop a bomb. Yet many in the international community remain skeptical. Despite a U.S. intelligence finding in November 2007 that concluded Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003, Bush administration officials continue to warn that Iran seeks to weaponize its nuclear program. Nonproliferation experts note Iran's ability to produce enriched uranium continues to progress but disagree on how close Iran is to mastering capabilities to weaponize.

#### *Past Security Council Resolutions*

- ♦ July 31, 2006: Security Council demands Iran suspend uranium enrichment by August 31, 2006 or face possible economic, and/or diplomatic sanctions. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8792.doc.htm>.
- ♦ March 3, 2008: Security Council tightens restrictions on Iran's proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities, increases vigilance over Iranian banks, and has states inspect Iranian cargo. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9268.doc.htm>.
- ♦ September 27, 2008: Security Council reaffirms earlier resolutions regarding Iran's Uranium enrichment, and calls on the country to comply with obligations 'fully and without delay'. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9459.doc.htm>.

#### **Current Situation**

##### *Nuclear Program*

The current state of Iran's nuclear program is still up for question. While some questions have been answered they are still a few important questions left. The current stated mission of Iran's nuclear program by

Ahmadinejad is Iran's unalienable right to peaceful nuclear power. While this might seem okay to some, it worries others that Iran can soon have the capability to mobilize their nuclear program. Especially, Israel's close proximity to Iran and Ahmadinejad's remarks about the state of Israel has left Israel and its allies on edge. In a February 2009 press interview,

IAEA Director Mohamed ElBaradei said Iran has low enriched uranium, but "that doesn't mean that they are going tomorrow to have nuclear weapons, because as long as they are under IAEA verification, as long as they are not weaponizing, you know." ElBaradei continued that there is a confidence deficit with Iran, but that the concern should not be hyped and that "many other countries are enriching uranium without the world making any fuss about it". (Fareed Zakaria)

#### *Elections of June, 2009*

The 2009 presidential election in Iran was held on June 12, 2009. The Guardian Council had narrowed the list of candidates down to 4, which were; Mahmoud Ahmadinejad running under the Abadgaran party, Mir-Hossein Mousavi running under the Independent Reformist party, Mohsen Rezaee running under the Independent Conservative party, and Mehdi Karroubi running under the Etemad-e-Melli party. It was very highly contested election. Before the election picked up steam Ahmadinejad was the perceived front runner. However as time went on Mousavi became the perceived front-runner and Ahmadinejad the underdog. There was a very high turnout of 85%. The final official results that were declared by the Interior Ministry declared Ahmadinejad the winner by a landslide. Ahmadinejad received around 62% of the vote and the runner-up Mousavi only managed around

34%. The following day Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, congratulated the country on a very high turnout and blessed the results.

After these results were declared, Tehran broke out in an uproar. For the week following the results mass demonstrations in favor of Mousavi were beginning to take shape. The numbers of demonstrators were beginning to match the revolutionary demonstrations of 1979. Many in the streets were frustrated with the results and began to accuse the government of fraud. There were accusations of voting irregularities; polling stations closing early, Ahmadinejad winning by huge margins in Mousavi's home province, Mousavi election observers being kicked out of certain polling stations, and the speed of the count of almost 40 million votes. During the demonstrations the volunteer Basij began using brute force and even opening fire on the crowds. One girl, Neda Soltani was shot and killed while she was watching the demonstrations because her car could not get through the crowds. Khamenei outlawed the demonstrations and he was the one who ordered the violent and brutal crackdown. As a result, currently nineteen people have died. Another aspect of the crackdown was the virtual blackout of international media. All foreign reporters were kicked out of Iran. Only the state run media of Iran was professionally covering the incidents. Also, many members of the opposition were being arrested and taken away from their homes in the middle of the night.

#### **Key Players**

##### *United States*

The United States is strongly opposed to Iran's nuclear ambitions, but wants to solve the problem with diplomatic talks, not military action.

### *France and the United Kingdom*

France and the United Kingdom are, like the United States, opposed to Iranian development of a nuclear program, and would like to find a way to prevent it.

### *Russia and China*

Neither Russia nor China are opposed to Iran's use of nuclear power for energy, but they do not want Iran to obtain nuclear weapons.

### **Questions to Consider**

- 1) Does your nation believe the elections were a fraud?
- 2) Should the UN intervene to stabilize the situation in Iran regarding the elections, or should we let the people decide for themselves?
- 3) Should Iran be able to directly enrich their own Uranium, or in other words obtain "nuclear power"?
- 4) Do you think the IAEA should have more searches of Iran's facilities?
- 5) Do you think the Iranian government should be held responsible for the death of the innocent protestors?
- 6) Should the Iranian government be able to kick out foreign reporters if they are a UN member state?