

**SICASMUN**



**THE UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY COUNCIL**

# Topic: The US-Iran Issue

## Introduction

### The Iranian Nuclear Program

With the help of the USA's Atoms for Peace program, Iran set up its nuclear program in the 1950s and western support continued until the 1979 Iranian Revolution, after which the new government continued nuclear research, uranium mining and enrichment independently. Iran's first nuclear power plant was finished in September 2011, with considerable aid from Russia's Rosatom agency.

In November 2011, the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) reprimanded Iran, after a report that described Iran's efforts towards developing nuclear weapons. Iran rejected the report and criticized IAEA for "pro-western bias", threatening to cease co-operation with the association. Iran's nuclear program has received widespread international criticism and questioning since 2003 as Iran has failed to report its enrichment activities and comply with the rules set by IAEA.

In 2006, The United Nations Security Council demanded Iran to cease its nuclear enrichment activities with Resolution 1696 and after Iran failed to comply, the Security Council imposed sanctions, cutting off nuclear cooperation and freezing assets of key agencies and officials. In addition to existing sanctions, the USA, European Union and a number of other countries have imposed a strict embargo on Iran, banning certain military imports, investments in oil and export of refined petroleum products, as well as banking & insurance transactions with the country. Iran continues to insist that the nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes, to reduce energy dependence on petroleum and consistently supports creating a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East.

### Iran's Foreign Relations

Israel has recognized Iran's potential nuclear capabilities as a serious threat, and relations between the two countries have moved to open hostility. All diplomatic and economic links between the two countries have been severed and Iran does not recognize Israel as a country, referring to it as the "Zionist regime." Both countries have threatened the other with war. Israel is suspected of having assassinated Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, an Iranian Nuclear Scientist in January 2012. With increasing tension and war threats, a grander amount of assassinations can be foreseen.

Relations with Iran's neighboring countries (Afghanistan, Armenian, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan) are varied.

Despite very close cultural similarities, Afghanistan's relations with Iran have fluctuated in modern times, due to water control fights and the fact that along the border lies the main trafficking routes for drugs such as: heroin, opium and morphine.

Azerbaijan and Iran have good relations between themselves; both have embassies present in each other's capitals.

Iran-Iraq relations have been turbulent since the war they fought in the 1980s. However, bilateral relations have improved since the fall of Iraq's former president Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Iran-Pakistan relations are complex, driven by Pakistani geo-political aspirations, religious affiliations and Iran's good relations with India.

Iran and Turkey cooperate in a wide variety of fields that range from fighting terrorism and drug trafficking, and promoting stability in Iraq and Central Asia. Iran and Turkey also have very close trade and economic relations.

Iran was the first nation to recognize Turkmenistan's independence. Since then, the two countries have enjoyed good relations and have cooperated in the economic, infrastructure, and energy sectors. On the other hand, Their Caspian Sea territorial boundaries are a cause of tension between the two countries. Iran's Islamic theocracy and Turkmenistan's secular dictatorship also prevent the development of a closer friendship.

The United States of America since 1995 has had an embargo on trade with Iran. According to many experts (for example Chief Editor of the Russian National Defence magazine, Igor Korotchenko) due to nuclear facilities and Iranian threats, a war between the United States and Iran is imminent.

Many of European Union member countries such as the United Kingdom or Ireland have closed down their embassies and consulates. In UK's example, in November 2011 a group of Iranian protesters stormed two Embassy compounds destroying the premises as well as burning government papers and setting fire to the British Flag.

As well as UN sanctions, a considerable amount of nations have imposed sanctions upon Iran, those countries include: Australia, Canada, the European Union, India, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland and the United States of America. The sanctions have a serious impact on Iran, as it now mainly relies on China as a partner.

### **Recent Sanctions on Iran and its effect**

After inconclusive negotiations this spring, the international community has increased pressure on Iran, through UN Security Council resolutions 1696 and 1737, to halt all enrichment. Previous sanctions froze the assets of key contributors to the program, restricted nuclear-related

supplies/technology, imposed an arms embargo, etc. However, in June, Iran declared that it would not halt enrichment until the sanctions were lifted and failed to accept the Russo-American proposition that would allow Iran to continue some enrichment in exchange for surrendering all currently-enriched material. Iran has also threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, a vital trade corridor. Because of these threats, the European Union instituted an oil embargo against Iran in July; in addition, the US subjected all importers of Iranian oil to American sanctions (with exemptions for some countries, including China.) In early September, Canada expelled its Iranian embassy, saying that it views the government of Iran as the most significant threat to global peace and security in the world today. Similarly, Israel continues to threaten air strikes and demand harsher treatment for Iran before it reaches the one of immunity in which its progress will be impossible to halt.

Currently, though Iran refuses to alter its position, the country is suffering as a result of the sanctions. Oil exports have been reduced by 20-30% and the value of the currency is now only 60% of what it was a few years ago. This sudden change forces the UN to decide whether sanctions are an ethical means of persuasion as they have huge consequences for a nation's citizens as well as its politics.

The west, especially United States of America has criticized Iran of secretly producing nuclear weapons in their own territory, a charge which is denied by Iran. The controversy over Iran's nuclear programs centers in particular on Iran's failure to declare sensitive enrichment and reprocessing activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Enrichment can be used to produce uranium for reactor fuel or (at higher enrichment levels) for weapons. Iran says its nuclear program is peaceful, and has enriched uranium to less than 5%, consistent with fuel for a civilian nuclear power plant. Iran also claims that it was forced to resort to secrecy after US pressure caused several of its nuclear contracts with foreign governments to fall through. After the IAEA Board of Governors reported Iran's noncompliance with its safeguards agreement to the UN Security Council, the Council demanded that Iran suspend its nuclear enrichment activities while Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has argued that the sanctions are "illegal," imposed by "arrogant powers," and that Iran has decided to pursue the monitoring of its self-described peaceful nuclear program through "it's appropriate legal path," the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Also, the international community is worried about double standards of Israel as they "neither accept nor deny" the presence of nuclear weapons in their territory. Israel has also threatened to launch their nuclear missile pointing at Iran if they cross the "red line".

Quite suddenly, it seems, Iran's economy is in serious trouble. In recent days, the country's national currency has fallen to record lows against the U.S. dollar. On October 1st alone, the value of the Iranian rial declined by some 17 percent, collapsing to 34,700 to one American dollar. (It has since reportedly fallen still further). All told, the rial has lost more than 80 percent of its worth over the past year. The massive devaluation has exacerbated an already-dire fiscal situation in Tehran. Growing international pressure on the Iranian regime over its nuclear program has caused a massive spike in inflation in recent months. Officially, the Iranian government has said that national inflation stands at some 25 percent, but informed estimates suggest the true rate could be as much as double that figure. Unemployment has also soared, with an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 Iranians- between 2 and 3 percent of the country's overall labor force of 26.3 million having lost their jobs in the past year.

## **Diplomatic Efforts taken to resolve the Issue**

### **1. EU-3 (France, Germany and the United Kingdom)**

France, Germany and the United Kingdom (the EU-3) undertook a diplomatic initiative with Iran to resolve questions about its nuclear program. On 21 October 2003, in Tehran, the Iranian government and EU-3 Foreign Ministers issued a statement known as the Tehran Declaration in which Iran agreed to co-operate with the IAEA, to sign and implement an Additional Protocol as a voluntary, confidence-building measure, and to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities during the course of the negotiations. The EU-3 in return explicitly agreed to recognize Iran's nuclear rights and to discuss ways Iran could provide "satisfactory assurances" regarding its nuclear power program, after which Iran would gain easier access to modern technology. Iran signed an Additional Protocol on 18 December 2003, and agreed to act as if the protocol were in force, making the required reports to the IAEA and allowing the required access by IAEA inspectors, pending Iran's ratification of the Additional Protocol.

Under the terms of the Paris Agreement, on 14 November 2004, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator announced a voluntary and temporary suspension of its uranium enrichment program (enrichment is not a violation of the NPT) and the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, after pressure from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany acting on behalf of the European Union (EU, known in this context as the EU-3). The measure was said at the time to be a voluntary, confidence-building measure, to continue for some reasonable period of time (six months being mentioned as a reference) as negotiations with the EU-3 continued. On 24 November, Iran sought to amend the terms of its agreement with the EU to exclude a handful of the equipment from this deal for research work. This request was dropped by European Authorities.

In February 2005, Iran pressed the EU-3 to speed up talks, which the EU-3 refused to do so. The talks made little progress because of the divergent positions of the two sides. In early August 2005, after the June election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as Iran's President, Iran removed seals on its uranium enrichment equipment in Isfahan, which UK officials termed a "breach of the Paris Agreement" though a case can be made that the EU violated the terms of the Paris Agreement by demanding that Iran abandon nuclear enrichment. Several days later, the EU-3 offered Iran a package in return for permanent cessation of enrichment. Reportedly, it included benefits in the political, trade and nuclear fields, as well as long-term supplies of nuclear materials and assurances of non-aggression by the EU (but not the US). Mohammad Saeedi, the deputy head of Iran's atomic energy organization rejected the offer, terming it "very insulting and humiliating" and other independent analysts characterized the EU offer as an "empty box".

Iran resumed its Uranium enrichment program and the effort was a diplomatic failure.

### **2. P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, United States)**

The P5+1 is a group of countries which in 2006 joined the diplomatic efforts with Iran in regard to its nuclear program. The term refers to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany, namely China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the

United States. China, Russia, and the United States joined the three EU3 countries in June 2006 to offer another proposal for comprehensive negotiations with Iran.

The first session of fresh negotiations went well, with delegates praising the constructive dialogue and Iran's positive attitude. Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said, however, that Iran had been given a "freebie", a charge that was sharply rebutted by Barack Obama. In the lead up to the second round of negotiations, and in what may foreshadow a significant concession, an unnamed senior U.S. official hinted the United States might accept Iran enriching uranium to 5% so long as the Iranians agreed to tough international oversight of the process. The U.S. shift was reportedly made for the pragmatic reason that unconditional demands for zero enrichment would make it impossible to reach a negotiated deal. Netanyahu had insisted a few days before that he would tolerate no enrichment, not even to the 3% required for nuclear power.

In a shift on the Iranian side, members of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps urging Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to maintain a policy of keeping uranium enrichment at or below 20%. The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton felt compelled to make a special visit to Netanyahu, partly to keep him from again voicing his negativity and opposition to the negotiations. At the meeting, which included Avigdor Lieberman, Ehud Barak and Shaul Mofaz, the Israelis demanded a guaranteed timetable for cessation of all uranium enrichment by Iran, the removal of all enriched uranium, and the dismantlement of the underground facility at Fordo. Otherwise, they said, Iran would use the talks to buy time.

The talks were ultimately a failure cause by blame game played by countries and ultimately resulted in boycotting of negotiations by countries like Iran and USA. Hence, a proper dialogue over the issue resulting in acceptable solutions by all countries has not been established.

## **Bloc Positions**

### **1) Israel**

Israel vehemently opposes Iran's nuclear program, arguing that it is an immediate and severe threat to the safety of the Jewish people and the global community. Therefore, Israel is prepared to do anything necessary to shut down the program. The United States, as Israel's ally, also opposes Iran and has imposed extensive sanctions, but does not agree with the —red-line|| that Israel has designated. Consequently, the US is under pressure from Israel to declare complete support of Israel and its hardline position.

### **2) The United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom supports halting the Iranian nuclear program, but not through violence.

### **3) Russia and China**

Russia and China oppose the current sanctions on Iran. China, Iran's current largest trading partner, has even gone so far as to defy the oil embargo.

### **4) Iran**

Iran resolutely maintains that its actions are legal under the NPT and therefore that the international community is unjustified in demanding the dismantling of its nuclear program. It

sees IAEA inspections as affronts to its sovereignty, stating, the Iranian nation will not succumb to bullying, invasion and the violation of its rights.

## **5) USA**

1957: The United States and Iran sign a civil nuclear co-operation agreement as part of the U.S. Atoms for Peace program.

September 1967: The United States supplies 5.545 kg of enriched uranium, of which 5.165 kg contain fissile isotopes for fuel in a research reactor. The United States also supplies 112 g of plutonium, of which 104 g are fissile isotopes, for use as start-up sources for research reactor.

1970s: Under the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, plans are made to construct up to 20 nuclear power stations across the country with U.S. support and backing. Numerous contracts are signed with various Western firms, and the German firm Kraftwerk Union (a subsidiary of Siemens AG) begins construction on the Bushehr power plant in 1974.

1983: International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors inspect Iranian nuclear facilities, and report on a proposed co-operation agreement to help Iran manufacture enriched uranium fuel as part of Iran's "ambitious program in the field of nuclear power reactor technology and fuel cycle technology." The assistance program is later terminated under U.S. pressure.

January 29, 2002: U.S. president George W. Bush speaks of an "Axis of evil" gathering Iran, Iraq and North Korea during his State of the Union Address.

June 2005: U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei should either "toughen his stance on Iran" or fail to be chosen for a third term as the agency's head. Following a one on one meeting between Rice and ElBaradei on June 9, the United States withdrew its opposition and ElBaradei was re-elected to his position on June 13, 2005.

March 2006: The U.S. National Security Strategy decried Iran, stating that "Iran has violated its Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards obligations and refuses to provide objective guarantees that its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes." The term "objective guarantees" is understood to mean permanent abandonment of enrichment.

June 30, 2007: U.S. Congressional Representatives Mark S. Kirk and Robert E. Andrews proposed a bill to sanction against any company or individual that provides Iran with refined petroleum products. The plan is to pressure Iran over its nuclear program from December 31, 2007.

September 22, 2012: The United States Senate overwhelmingly passed a resolution by a vote of 90-1 which reaffirmed American efforts to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. The resolution also said that the use of containment regarding a nuclear-capable Iran is not an option.

Conclusion: The U.S. had had helped Iran in starting its nuclear program under the Atoms for Peace program. But then the politics changed and today the U.S. wants Iran to suspend its program and come on the negotiating table. U.S. maintains the view that Iran is enriching

Uranium for weapon development, whereas, Iran maintains that whatever it is doing is for energy generation and medical research. Iran's point of view looks justified because as a sovereign state it holds the rights to take necessary steps to improve the living conditions and standards of its people. But at the same time the allegations that Iran's nuclear program is linked with that of North Korea's and might trigger an arms race in the Middle – East is another major point of concern. Also taking into account the latest statements by the respective heads of states of Israel and Iran, the main motive behind Iran's nuclear program comes under scanner.

## **6) Asian Nations**

- Japan – Japan has strong concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program. Japan wants a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the issue. It has reduced its oil imports from Iran by over 40%.
- India – India stands on political crossroads. Its increasing collaboration with the U.S. and its historic closeness with Iran have put it on a difficult road. India being a non-signatory to the NPT has expressed its concerns about the possibility of another nuclear weapon-armed state in its neighborhood with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stating that he was against Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. India urged international diplomacy to solve the Iranian nuclear row but added that it could not "turn a blind eye to nuclear proliferation in its neighborhood."
- Pakistan - Pakistan adopted a policy of neutrality, and played a subsequent non-belligerent role in easing the tension in the region. In 2009, Abdul Qadeer Khan, a leading architect of the Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, boasted that he helped Iran in its nuclear program in an effort to "neutralize" Israel's power in the Middle East by advising Iran to use the same supply network he had established to support Pakistan's nuclear weapons program in the 1970s. Khan also claimed that he did so with the permission of Pakistan's government, contradicting his confession in 2004 that he had acted on his own. In 2010, the Pakistan's then foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi had argued that Iran had "no justification" to pursue nuclear weapons, citing the lack of any immediate threat to Iran, and had urged Iran to "embrace overtures" from the United States. Qureshi had also observed that Iran had signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and should respect the treaty.

## **7) Non – Aligned Movement**

On 16 September 2006, in Havana, Cuba, all of the 118 Non-Aligned Movement member countries, at the summit level, declared their support of Iran's right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in their final written statement.

## **Questions to Consider**

1. How can we tell if Iran is planning to produce nuclear weapons rather than nuclear power?
2. How should the UNSC deal with threats from Israel to attack Iranian nuclear sites, and threats from Iran to close the strait of Hormuz and attack Israel?
3. Who should determine if a country has the right to possess nuclear weapons? Is further UN action a violation of Iran's national sovereignty?



4. Are the sanctions justified? Have they worked? Are they the most effective way to force Iran to change?
5. What are some risks of taking action against Iran? Is there danger of a large-scale conflict involving multiple nations? If so, how can the UNSC prevent it?
6. What stance should the UNSC take to achieve its goals in regards to non-proliferation?
7. How does your country's relationship with Iran and with nuclear technology in general affect your standpoint on the Iranian nuclear program?
8. What steps can the United Nations Security Council take to ensure that Iran's nuclear program complies with international law and remains under the purview of the IAEA?
9. How does Iran's nuclear program affect the Middle East region and the international community?
10. Have past UNSC resolutions had any success in regards to the Iranian nuclear program?