Iranian Nuclear Crisis

Overview
Over the last decade, there have been negotiations and talks between western states and Iran to limit the amount of nuclear energy produced and the amount of nuclear mining that has been taking place over the last fifty years. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been producing nuclear power since 1967 after its’ first nuclear reactor went critical. While the Shah Reza Pahlavi announced in 1974 that through the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) the state would be producing over 23,000 megawatts of energy over the next twenty years. This included the construction of 23 nuclear power plants and the development of a full nuclear cycle. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the severing of US-Iranian ties with the seizure of the U.S embassy in Tehran, and the overall weakening of Iran’s relations with the west, the world stage has taken more notice of Iran’s nuclear capabilities.

In early 2015, the Iran Nuclear Deal Framework was nothing more than a preliminary framework agreement that was agreed upon by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 which includes the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Russia, and China (the P5 nations) as well as Germany due to its economic entanglement with the Iranian nuclear program and the adverse effects further sanctions could have on the German economy. On July 14th, 2015 the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was announced. The plan was a comprehensive agreement between Iran and the P5+1 as well as the EU based on the April 2015 framework. However, on May 8th, 2018 the United States President Donald Trump announced that the USA was withdrawing from the deal. After the United States’ announcement that it will be leaving the agreement France, Germany and the United Kingdom released a joint statement stating that the United Nations Security Council resolution endorsing the nuclear deal remained a “binding international legal framework for the resolution of dispute.” The withdrawal has caused concerns in Iran because of the impacts it will have on the economy with the possibilities of

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American sanctions being imposed once again. On May 17th 2018, the European Commission announced its’ intentions to implement the blocking statute of 1996 to declare the US’s sanctions against Iran illegal in Europe and ban European citizens and companies from complying with them.

Moving forward the issue at hand is how to proceed with the denuclearization of the region without the US’s support.

**Historical Context/Background**

In the current situation, the intentions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in regards to their nuclear program have been questioned. This section of the topic guide serves to explain this distrust by examining the turmoil of the region as well as the development of issues within Iran throughout its’ recent history. The sovereignty of Iran has come under fire multiple times since the turn of the 19th century. From 1804 to 1813, as well as 1826-1828 Iranians, at the time known as Persians, found themselves under siege by Imperial Russia over a territorial dispute. The first war ended in 1813 with the Treaty of Gulistan, which gave the debated territory of present day Georgia to Imperial Russia. The later war ended with the Treaty of Turkmenchay, which gave parts of present day Azerbaijan, and Armenia to Imperial Russia. This was just the beginning of the turmoil and instability that would plague Iran for the next centuries. Towards the end of the 19th century, in the Great Famine of 1870-1871, around 1.5 million people, nearly 25% of the total population, died of starvation.

After the famine, political instability began in the state from 1872 to 1905. Series of protests took place after the Qajar monarchs in power Naser-ed-Din and Mozaffar-ed-Din were selling land grants and concessions to foreign powers. The protests led to the Constitutional Revolution in 1905, which lasted until 1911 and resulted in the first Iranian constitution and the first national parliament of Iran in 1906. After the Qajar was defeated and forced to abdicate, Imperial Russia occupied northern Iran in 1911 on the pretense of maintaining and restoring order in the region. This would be the beginning of

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military presences in Iran for the years to come as well as the civil uprisings developing into movements against both the Qajar monarchy and all foreign invaders. During World War I, the United Kingdom occupied much of western Iran until 1921, during which a famine in occupied northern Iran killed between eight to ten million people.

Iran would bear witness to many more tragedies in the coming years, during the Persian Campaign in World War I, the Ottoman invasion of Iran in the Middle Eastern Theatre. Iran would suffer two known genocides and subject to mass murders. The Assyrian Genocide took place from 1914-1920, which was the systematic murdering of Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire and in Iran, whereas the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1917 murdered Iranian Assyrians and Armenians. The Iranian population faced mass murder at the hands of the Ottoman troops that were crossing the Northwestern border of Iran during World War I. After the carnage, the Iranian Cossack Brigade, Iran’s military force, began a British supported military coup in February of 1921 known as the Persian coup d’état. The Qajar dynasty was overthrown and the former general of the Cossack Brigade, Reza Khan became the Prime Minister of Iran. He was later declared the new monarch in 1925 taking on the title Reza Shah.

During World War II, when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union and broke the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact thus severing relations between the two nations, this adversely affected Iran. Iran was still under control from the Soviet Union (formerly Imperial Russia) and had declared neutrality in the conflicts of World War II. After the severing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Iran was invaded by a joint mission involving the USSR and the United Kingdom in the Anglo-Soviet Invasion of Iran. Reza Shah was forced to abdicate from the throne and his son Mohammed Reza Pahlavi took over. During his reign until the end of the war, Iran was a conduit for British and American aid being sent to the Soviet Union, which brought more western influences into the region. At the end of the war, at the Tehran Conference in 1943 the Allied Big Three issued the Tehran Declaration. This declaration guaranteed post-war independence for Iran as well as reinforcing its physical boundaries. However, when the war did finally end, Soviet troops remained in Iran and pro-Soviet Groups formed two puppet states in northwestern Iran. The Soviets did not properly leave Iran until the promise of oil concessions came in May of 1946. The two puppet states were overthrown in the Iran Crisis of 1946 and the oil concessions were revoked.
With the end of World War II came the beginning of the Cold War and the beginning of Iranian American relations. In 1951 Mohammed Mosaddegh was appointed the Prime Minister of Iran. He nationalized the Iranian petroleum industry and oil reserves, which strengthened his popularity among the citizens as well as the economy of Iran. In 1953, the United Kingdom and the United States of America cooperated with the former Shah Mohammed Reza Phalavi to overthrow the Prime Minister. The Iranian coup d’état was the first time the United States had overthrown a foreign government during the Cold War and would make the beginning of Iranian American tense relations. The reinstated Shah became increasingly autocratic and more and more like a sultan. This transformation plunges Iran into a phase of controversial close relations with the United States and other foreign governments. The American backed Shah turned Iran into a fully secular state, and is accused of committing arbitrary arrests and torture through the secret police. In 1967 Iran’s first nuclear reactor, supplied and funded by the United States of America, goes critical and forces the Iranian Parliament to ratify the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1970.

In 1973, after years of power abuse by the Shah, a spike in global oil prices had the Iranian economy flooding with foreign currency. The sharp increase caused double-digit inflation and the Iranian economy began to crumble under rampant corruption and large amounts of waste. There were large projects underway to modernize the country but they were sidelined by the economic recession in 1975 and 1976. Unemployment rates were sky high especially among young people who had moved to the cities of Iran in search of jobs during the economic boom of the early 1970’s before the inflation took hold. There were rampant protests against the Shah’s regime and the 1979 Revolution, later known as the Islamic Revolution began. It actually began in January of 1978 with the first large demonstrations against the Shah. The Shah was put into exile in 1979 and Ruhollah Khomeini worked to form a new government. Iran officially became an Islamic Republic in April of 1979. In November of 1979, after news of the United States accepting the former exiled Shah into the US for treatment of cancer, there was a hostage situation. 52 American diplomats were held hostage for 444 days, which helped to pass the constitution, suppressed moderates and radicalized the revolution. The group who seized the American Embassy and held the hostages are called the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam’s Line. The revolutionaries used the premise that the United States and Great Britain had been responsible for the removal of the nationalist opponent to the Shah, who had been a legitimately elected official. They wanted Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the former exiled Shah to be returned to Iran for trial and exile. When the United States
refused and negotiations as well as a rescue attempt proved unsuccessful. The hostages were finally set free after the Algiers Accords.

Iran’s relationship with the West was severely strained after the hostage situation and the nuclear projects in Iran were halted. Neighboring Iraq invaded Iran in 1980 and after the Iranian forces drove the Iraqi army out, the Iranian army sought out to conquer Iraq. The War would continue until 1988 after a truce was mediated by the United Nations. After the war, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani the fourth president of Iran, made moves to strengthen the economy and was later removed by moderate reformist Mohammed Khatami who wanted to move the state in a democratic direction. In January of 1984 the United States added Iran to its’ list of state sponsors of terrorism and imposed massive sanctions on Tehran where the embassy was seized.

In 1992 the American congress passes the Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act that prohibited the transfer of controlled goods or technology that could contribute to the advancement of weapons in Iran. This was just one of the many sanctions that would be made against Iran in an attempt to prevent the development of more nuclear energy sites. In 1996 the US placed sanctions to penalize foreign and U.S investments over 20 million dollars in Iran’s energy sector. By August of 2002 it is discovered that Iran has built new nuclear facilities in Natanz and Arak. In September 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors adopts a resolution that calls for Iran to suspend any and all enrichment and reprocessing of nuclear energy activities. Iran would be required to declare any and all materials relevant to its’ uranium enrichment program and allow IAEA inspectors to conduct environmental samplings at any location. These conditions must be met by Iran on October 31st 2003.

Iran agrees to meet the demands and the European foreign ministers debate deals with Iran to suspend the uranium-enrichment activities and ratify additional protocols that force Iran to declare its nuclear activities. While optimistic in the beginning, by 2004 the IAEA was criticizing Iran for failing to meet the standards or cooperate with the IAEA inspectors. The Paris Agreement was
the next reinforcement in an attempt to halt the enrichment processes in Iran. This process prevented Tehran from being referred to the UN Security Council. Despite efforts from Russia to prevent the use of the nuclear energy to develop nuclear weapons Iran begins to produce uranium hexafluoride and causes the IAEA to adopt a resolution finding Iran in noncompliance with its safeguard agreements. Because the nature of Iran’s nuclear activities cannot be deemed peaceful, the UN Security Council is made aware of the situation. In 2006 the first of numerous UN resolutions are passed regarding Iran and their nuclear project (See the list below) and after the Security Council declares that Iran must suspend its enrichment related activities, Iran declares that it will stop voluntarily implementing the protocols and other non-legally binding inspection procedures.

In June of 2006 China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (P5+1) proposes a framework agreement to Iran that offers incentives for Iran to halt its enrichment programs. Iran rejects the proposal but did acknowledge that the package contained elements that may be useful in later negotiations. The Security Council imposes sanctions on Iran that year through Resolution 1737. This began a long line of resolutions being passed and IAEA talks with Iran. In 2007 the United States released an unclassified summary of a new National Intelligence Estimate on Iran’s nuclear program, claiming that the state could have nuclear weapon capabilities between 2010 and 2015. Iran continues to develop its nuclear program and more resolutions are passed. There does not seem to be any progress in finding a solution to the problem as relations between Iran and the West continue to deteriorate.

**Current Situation**

The Iran Nuclear Deal Framework was a preliminary agreement reached in 2015 between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the P5+1 Nations as well as the representatives from the European Union. The negotiations have been a product of the long debated Iranian nuclear program and it was announced in April of 2015 that the eight parties had in fact reached an agreement. On July 14th, 2015 the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the eight states was announced. The Joint Plan limits Iran’s enrichment capacity, forbids the construction of new enrichment facilities, and allows Iran to conduct research within an agreed upon scope. It also requires the implementation of monitoring through the IAEA, the exportation of spent fuel rather reprocessing, and also eliminates the various sanctions posed against Iran. However, in May of 2018 the United States announced that it would be leaving the agreement. The withdrawal comes from President Trump’s belief that the deal is toothless and that he will not participate in a deal that does not alleviate the problem.

**Questions and Things to Consider**

This topic guide serves as a base for your overall understanding of the situation. This should not be your only research. These questions are meant to help you when you are researching your own country and developing your ideas. Also, when researching the
most current events as well as other news articles about the withdrawal of the US and the response of the other P5+1 nations, remember to read everything with an eye for bias. Choose sources that are as unbiased and most reliable as possible.

- How does the United States leaving the Nuclear Deal affect the other P5+1 Nations?
- In what ways does leaving the Deal free up the options for action for the United States?
- What would be the reactions to some of these possibilities by the other involved nations?
- In what ways is the framework sufficient in solving the problem of Iran’s nuclear program? In what ways does it fall short? How would your country view these aspects and what would their responses be?
- What holes in the program would your country think need filled first? Stronger security? Stricter sanctions? Or would your country see the deal as too harsh?

**Further Research**

As you may have noticed, throughout the Topic Guide there are several bolded words. Below I have listed some sources for you to do further reading on some of these topics as they are important to the discussion but could not be summarized in a way that would give you full understanding of it.

**Be sure to look at the UN Resolutions and how they affected the situation. Each of them is listed below and should be looked at. Think about what has already been proposed when thinking about solutions.**

- Nuclear Threat Initiative Iran
  - [https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/iran/](https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/iran/)
- Atomic Energy Association of Iran
  - [https://www.aeoi.org.ir/Portal/home/?45799/%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%BE%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B1%DA%98%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%85%DB%8C](https://www.aeoi.org.ir/Portal/home/?45799/%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%BE%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B1%DA%98%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%85%DB%8C)
- Treaty on Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- International Atomic Energy Agency
  - [https://www.iaea.org/](https://www.iaea.org/)
- Arms Control Association

**UN Resolution Regarding Iran and Its’ Nuclear Program**
United Nations Security Council Resolution 1696
- Passed on 31 July 2006. Demanded that Iran suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and threatened sanctions. Invoked Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to make that demand legally binding on Iran.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1737
- Passed on 23 December 2006 in response to the proliferation risks presented by the Iranian nuclear program and, in this context, by Iran's continuing failure to meet the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors and to comply with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1696 (2006). Made mandatory for Iran to suspend enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and cooperate with the IAEA, imposed sanctions banning the supply of nuclear-related materials and technology, and froze the assets of key individuals and companies related to Iran's nuclear and missile programs. It established a committee to monitor sanctions implementation.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747
- Passed on 24 March 2007. Imposed an arms embargo and expanded the freeze on Iranian assets, welcomed the proposal by the permanent five members of the Security Council plus Germany for resolving issues regarding Iran's nuclear program.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1803
- Passed on 3 March 2008. Extended the asset freezes and called upon states to monitor the activities of Iranian banks, inspect Iranian ships and aircraft, and to monitor the movement of individuals involved with the program through their territory, impose travel restrictions on sanctioned persons, and bar exports of nuclear- and missile-related dual-use goods to Iran.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1835
- Passed 27 September 2008, reaffirmed the preceding four resolutions, the only one of the seven not to invoke Chapter VII.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929
Passed on 9 June 2010. Banned Iran from participating in any activities related to ballistic missiles, tightened the arms embargo, travel bans on individuals involved with the program, froze the funds and assets of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, and recommended that states inspect Iranian cargo, prohibit the servicing of Iranian vessels involved in prohibited activities, prevent the provision of financial services used for sensitive nuclear activities, closely watch Iranian individuals and entities when dealing with them, prohibit the opening of Iranian banks on their territory and prevent Iranian banks from entering into relationship with their banks if it might contribute to the nuclear program, and prevent financial institutions operating in their territory from opening offices and accounts in Iran. The resolution passed by a vote of 12–2, with Turkey and Brazil voting against and Lebanon abstaining. A number of countries imposed measures to implement and extend these sanctions, including the United States, the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, South Korea, and Russia.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929
Passed on 9 June 2011. This resolution extended the mandate of the panel of experts established by Resolution 1929, that supports the Iran Sanctions Committee for one year.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2049
Passed on 7 June 2012. Renewed the mandate of the Iran Sanctions Committee’s Panel of Experts for one year.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2105
Passed 5 June 2013. Renewed the mandate of the Iran Sanctions Committee’s Panel of Experts for one year.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2159
Passed 9 June 2014. Renewed the mandate of the Iran Sanctions Committee’s Panel of Experts for one year.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231
Passed 20 July 2015. Endorsed the Iran Nuclear Deal and lifted all previous sanctions on Iran provided that Iran remains in compliance with its responsibilities in the nuclear deal.
Canisius College
Model United Nations
40th Annual Conference

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2231.pdf
Sources

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- BBC, Why is the Iranian Nuclear Deal Important, http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/33520341/iran-nuclear-deal-why-is-it-so-important
- Iran Chamber Society, History of Iran, http://www.iranchamber.com/history/islamic_revolution/islamic_revolution.php
- Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Functions, https://www.aeoi.org.ir/Portal/home/?45799/%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%BE%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B1%DA%98%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%85%DB%8C
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2049, 

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2105,  

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2159, 

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 , 
https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2231.pdf