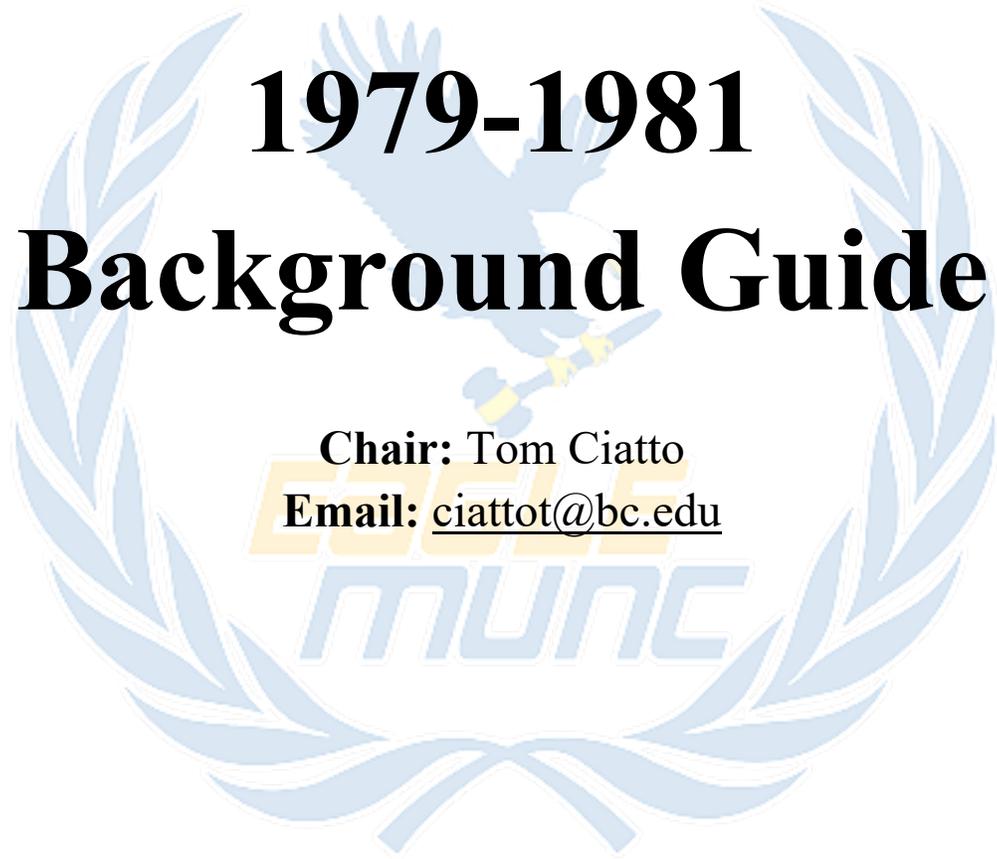


JCC: Ayatollah Khomeini's Cabinet, 1979-1981 Background Guide

Chair: Tom Ciatto

Email: ciattot@bc.edu



Letter From the Chair

Hello Delegates!

Welcome to EagleMUNC IX! My name is Tom Ciatto and I will be your chair for the Khomeini's Cabinet committee in the Joint Crisis Committee. I am currently a sophomore in the Carroll School of Management studying finance and business analytics with a potential computer science minor.

Originally from Boston, I currently live in Wayne, Pennsylvania, which is about 30 minutes outside of Philadelphia. I grew up a die-hard Boston sports fan, so it has been awesome being back in the area and I hope to get to more games once it is safe to do so. My favorite hobby is reading, but I also enjoy movies and listening to music, with my favorite artists being J.Cole, Post Malone, and Frank Ocean (so let me know if you are a fan too!).

I first heard about EagleMUNC via a family friend who goes to BC and was (supposed) to work in the Tunisian Revolution committee at EagleMUNC VIII. Having done Model UN in high school, I found a love of debate, compromise, and teamwork from MUN, and it has been a goal of mine to one day chair a committee. My favorite part of MUN was interacting with all the exceptionally intelligent and hard-working students, and I viewed every committee session as an opportunity to learn about unique topics while also seeing different opinions and arguments from the other delegates.

I am very much looking forward to seeing the ideas you all will bring to our committee. At the time our committee begins, Iran is at an extremely impressionable point in its history. After a tumultuous revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini has just instituted his Islamic theocracy and is rolling out his policies in the country. As members of his cabinet, it will be up to you to voice your opinion about the trajectory of the country while balancing delicate issues such as gender roles, Islamic tradition, and foreign threats. Being in the JCC, you are also in the unique

JCC: Ayatollah Khomeini's Cabinet, 1979-1981

circumstance of a) having the opportunity to utilize portfolio powers to institute your ideas and b) have direct interaction with the adjacent cabinet of President Jimmy Carter (the other JCC committee). Since all of your actions will have immediate consequences, you can expect lively and high-stakes debates, as all of you must think quickly on your feet to respond to crisis updates or the decisions of President Carter's Cabinet.

I am very excited to and can barely wait to begin the committee and see all the work you will do. Whether this is your first crisis committee or your last one, I will do my best to make sure debate is energetic and everyone can voice their opinions. The rest of my team and I have worked hard to get this committee together and we hope you will enjoy everything we have in store for you! Best of luck in preparations and feel free to email me at ciattot@bc.edu with any questions you may have! Looking forward to seeing all of you in March!

Best,
Tom Ciatto

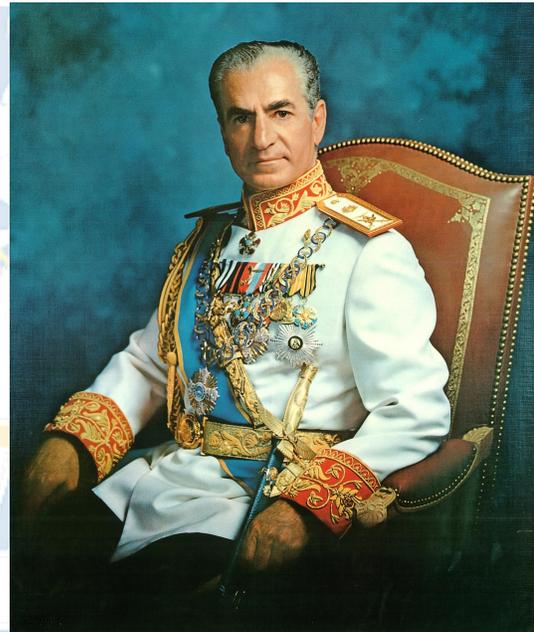


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Background Information

The 1979 Iranian Revolution sent shockwaves around the world. On the surface, Iran appeared to be prospering under the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, also known as Mohammad Reza Shah. Iran had developed rapidly; its GDP and per capita income rose dramatically between 1959 and 1976, as did its literacy rate.¹ Iran was also backed by the United States, a true military juggernaut. Thus, it came as a great surprise to many when Mohammad Reza Shah abruptly fled the country and an Islamic theocracy took his place. Yet, to truly understand the realities of the Iranian Revolution and the American-Iranian strife that followed, one must begin their analysis decades earlier.

Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh was beloved by the Iranian people during his tenure. Elected in 1951, he established a range of social and economic policies that benefited the Iranian public; however, his most consequential action was nationalizing the Iranian oil industry.² The Iranian oil industry was legitimized with the discovery of a massive oil field in southwestern Iran by Great Britain in the early 19th century.³ In 1908, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was founded, which gave the British exclusive rights in the region⁴. Henceforth, Great Britain played a large role in the Iranian oil industry, to the ire of



¹ Iranian Statistical Centre, *National Census of Population and Housing*, 1956, 1966, and 1976.

² Wu, Lawrence, and Michelle Lanz. "How The CIA Overthrew Iran's Democracy In 4 Days." NPR. NPR, February 7, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/01/31/690363402/how-the-cia-overthrew-irans-democracy-in-four-days>.

³ Electricpulp.com. "Encyclopædia Iranica." RSS. Accessed August 1, 2020. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/anglo-persian-oil-company>.

⁴ Electricpulp.com, "Encyclopædia Iranica"

many in Iran, as Great Britain leveraged its power to siphon much of the profit away. Mossadegh hoped that retaking control of the precious resource would allow Iran to reinvest the profits into its people. The British were furious, and as relations deteriorated due to the nationalization, Iran solicited aid and assistance from the United States. The U.S., under President Harry Truman, attempted to act as a mediator and mend relations, since they believed an unstable Iran would benefit Iran's geographic neighbor and America's geopolitical rival, the Soviet Union.⁵

The British were displeased with Mossadegh rising to power and placed sanctions on Iran in an attempt to remove him from power. Great Britain was determined to oust Mossadegh by nearly any means possible, and subsequently, British officials began to develop a more concrete plan to depose Mossadegh. The British then approached the United States about instigating a coup d'état, but the Truman administration declined as they were in a lame-duck period.

However, the Eisenhower administration willingly joined in the British endeavor.⁶

British and American officials met two weeks after Eisenhower's inauguration and



officially devised a plan, known as AJAX, to overthrow Mossadegh and install Fazlollah Zahedi as prime minister.⁷ The Americans would play a pivotal role via the CIA, which would implement an anti-Mossadegh propaganda campaign, led by Kermit Roosevelt Jr., in Iran. The United States and Great Britain wanted to insert Fazlollah Zahedi, a general and statesman, as prime minister after removing Mossadegh; however, the true

⁵ Electricpulp.com. "Encyclopædia Iranica." RSS. Accessed June 15, 2020. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/coup-detat-1953>.

⁶ Electricpulp.com. "Encyclopædia Iranica."

⁷ Electricpulp.com. "Encyclopædia Iranica."

aim of the coup was to put more power in the hands of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi which would effectively end the democratic system in Iran. The United States and Great Britain wanted Shah Pahlavi, a western sympathizer, in power to reverse many of the economic policies enacted by Mossadegh, most notably the nationalization of the oil industry. On August 19, 1953, pro-Zahedi supporters, backed by the CIA, gathered in southern Tehran and began overwhelming Mossadegh supporters. The protestors even went so far as to attack Mossadegh's home, causing Mossadegh and some of his colleagues to flee. Mossadegh and his advisors eventually surrendered, officially ending his reign as Iranian prime minister. The 1953 Iranian coup permanently strained relations between Iran and the United States. The Iranian people saw through the facade of this coup and recognized what it was: an international government interfering in the affairs of their nation and illegitimately deposing their elected prime minister. Since then, the coup reverberated across the Middle East and set the blueprint of other U.S. efforts to overthrow governments using the CIA.⁸

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was born on October 26, 1919, in Tehran.⁹ His father, Reza Shah Pahlavi, was the first modern Shah in Iranian history, taking the throne in 1925. The term "Shah" is Persian for "king of kings" and is an honorary title that is granted to the monarchs of Iran. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi succeeded his father on the throne in September of 1941; however, he lost most of his power after the election of Mohammad Mossadegh as prime minister.¹⁰ After the coup, Shah Pahlavi gained near-absolute power as new Prime Minister Zahedi was merely a figurehead. The period following the coup was one of great economic

⁸ Bezhan, Frud. "Aftershocks Of Iran's 1953 Coup Still Felt Around The World, 60 Years Later." RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, August 19, 2013. <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-coup-mossadegh-cia-60th-anniversary/25076552.html>.

⁹ "Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi." Historic Personalities of Iran: Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Accessed August 1, 2020. http://www.iranchamber.com/history/mohammad_rezashah/mohammad_rezashah.php.

¹⁰ "Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi."

prosperity in the country. Oil revenues skyrocketed from \$34 million in 1954 to \$20 billion in 1977.¹¹ While post-coup Iran prospered economically, the country still struggled to be peaceful. The coup was unpopular not just because Mossadegh was well-liked, but also because it eliminated labor unions, professional associations, and all independent political parties.¹² Frustration surrounding the coup boiled to the surface in 1963 after the Shah unveiled his reform platform, known as the White Revolution. Shah Pahlavi's platform for modernization included six key agenda policies: (1) Land reform, (2) Sale of some state-owned factories to finance the land reform, (3) Enfranchising women, (4) Nationalization of forests and pasture, (5) Formation of a literacy corps, and (6) Institutions that are dedicated to profit-sharing for workers in the industry.¹³

The policies of the White Revolution were not universally accepted by Iranians, as the clergy and Islamists of the country were particularly vocal against the policies as they modernized Iran. The most vocal of these opponents of the White Revolution was Ayatollah Khomeini. Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini, known to the West as Ayatollah Khomeini, was born in 1908 and was the son of a prominent Islamic religious scholar.¹⁴ Due to his father's deep Islamic knowledge, Khomeini, a Shiite Muslim, quickly became very well versed in the Qur'an and became a very prominent cleric in Iran. Being a well-respected cleric, his voice and opinion carried weight, especially with the religious community. Khomeini was particularly vocal against expanding rights for women and the fact that many of the policies broke away from traditional

¹¹ Abrahamian, Ervand. "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution." JSTOR. Accessed June 15, 2020. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3011417.pdf>.

¹² Abrahamian, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution"

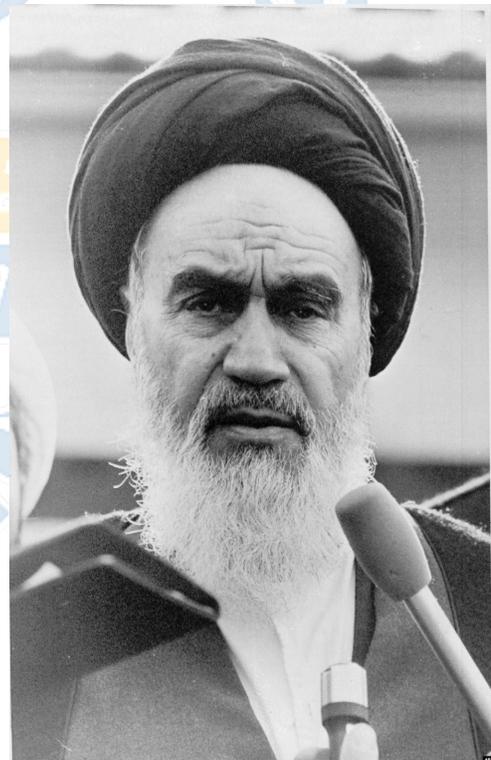
¹³ "The White Revolution in Iran." Iran Review. Accessed June 15, 2020. <http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/The-White-Revolution-in-Iran.htm>.

¹⁴ "Ayatollah Khomeini Returns to Iran." History.com. A&E Television Networks, February 9, 2010. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ayatollah-khomeini-returns-to-iran>.

Islamic beliefs. His criticisms did not go unchecked, as his opposition led to his exile to Turkey in 1964.¹⁵ Ayatollah Khomeini's opposition to the White Revolution helped build his following and started to lay the groundwork for the eventual revolution. Further, a widening wealth gap contributed to growing discontent in the country. In 1973-74 the richest 20% of people in Iran accounted for 55.5% of expenditure and the poorest 20% accounted for only 3.7% of expenditure, which shows that prosperity was heavily unequal in Iran at this time.¹⁶

As Iranians grew frustrated with the government, their feelings were exacerbated due to repeated abuses by the Shah's secret police, known as SAVAK. The United States and Israel helped the Shah create SAVAK in 1957, and it was soon used to target any group that opposed the Shah, particularly any political or media outlets that openly criticized the Shah. The group quickly expanded and by 1977, the secret police had 5,300 full-time agents located all over Iran targeting those who attended universities, were involved in civil service, or worked at large industrial plants.¹⁷ Similar to SAVAK, the Resurgence Party group targeted any opposition and tightened control over the intelligentsia and the urban working class.¹⁸ The Shah's inability to build a strong social base led to the eventual Iranian Revolution.

Iranians were displeased with the Shah as he has accumulated too much power. However, there was a



¹⁵ "Ayatollah Khomeini Returns to Iran."

¹⁶ "February 1979: Ayatollah Khomeini Returns To Iran From Exile,"

¹⁷ United Nations. "Iran: Information on SAVAK." Refworld. Accessed June 15, 2020. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6aaa724.html>.

¹⁸ United Nations. "Iran: Information on SAVAK."

mirage of hope for many in Iran. President Carter was just elected in the United States on the promise that he would make human rights a key component of American foreign policy. If anyone had the power and leverage to reign in the Shah, it would be the Shah's foremost backer. Yet, while on a visit to Tehran on December 31, 1977, U.S. President Jimmy Carter praised the Shah and described Iran as "an island of stability in one of the most troubled areas of the world." With those words, President Carter had reinforced the image of America as an imperialist hypocrite concerned with only its own gain in the eyes of many Iranians.¹⁹ Tensions reached a tipping point in March of 1978 when Iranians took to the streets to protest against the Shah. Anger was directed towards the Shah's secret army, the SAVAK due to their harassment of the public through killings, torture, and mass detentions.²⁰ Just as emotions became contentious in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini was moved to France, where with a greater media outlet he was able to rally his base against the Shah.²¹ Khomeini's platform centered around Islam, giving his supporters a common rally point, something the Shah lacked. Uprising then began to spring up around Iran, with the protests driven by students at universities as well as Islamists who supported Khomeini's criticisms of the Shah. Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was removed from power through a non-violent revolution, one of the few instances in history in which that occurred. The Shah fled Iran in January 1979 and Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile to lead the new Islamic Republic. Under the title of Supreme Leader, Khomeini instituted an Islamic theocracy in Iran and began to roll out his traditionalist agenda.

¹⁹ Maloney, Suzanne, and Keian Razipour. "The Iranian Revolution-A Timeline of Events." Brookings. Brookings, February 7, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/01/24/the-iranian-revolution-a-timeline-of-events/>.

²⁰ Maloney "The Iranian Revolution-A Timeline of Events"

²¹ "The Iranian Revolution (1977-1979)." ICNC. Accessed June 15, 2020. <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/iranian-revolution-1977-1979/>.



Protest in Tehran in support of Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, January 1979²²

The Iranian Government

Following the Iranian Revolution, the government that formed was a blend of presidential, parliamentary, and theocratic elements. Formed through the 1979 constitution, the Iranian government has a democratically elected president and legislature, known as the Majlis. The legislative body is bicameral and has similar functions to traditional Western-style legislative bodies, able to enact any law that is within the confines of the established constitution. The Majlis is prohibited from passing any law that would violate the constitution or traditional Islamic practices. The President of Iran is the highest-ranking government official in Iran. The president's responsibilities include serving as the head of the Majlis, the power to declare national emergencies, and the ability to issue executive orders. The president also plays a prominent role in establishing Iran's foreign policy and represents Iran when engaging in summits with other world leaders. However, unlike presidents in Western-style democracies, the

²² Thomas Erdbrink, "The Iran Revolution at 40: From Theocracy to 'Normality,'" *The New York Times*, February 10, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/10/world/middleeast/iran-revolution-40.html>.

power of both the Majlis and the president are limited due to the role of the Supreme Leader, a uniquely Iranian position.

The Supreme Leader is the head of state and ultimate authority on political and religious matters in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini is the first Supreme Leader in Iranian history, and his rule will set the precedent for future Supreme Leaders. Khomeini believes that the government must establish stability in both political and religious affairs, and the only way to achieve this is to have one overarching leader in control. The powers of the Supreme Leader are numerous, with the most influential being the commander in chief of the Iranian armed forces, the ability to veto laws, and appointments to the judicial system.

The theological power of the Supreme Leader is derived from the famous story from Shiite Islam of the twelve imam descendants of Mohammed. After the final imam went into hiding around the 9th century C.E., Shiites believe that the imam will return one day as a messiah. Building off of the story, Ayatollah Khomeini argued that the Supreme Leader should serve as a replacement for the twelfth imam until his return comes to be. The Supreme Leader must be chosen from the clergy and will serve as the guiding religious figure in Iran.

As for the cabinet, the roles are appointed by the President, but the Supreme Leader has final say over all appointments. The President is the chairman of the cabinet, but the leader is the Prime Minister. The difference between the President and the Prime Minister is the former is the second-highest ranking government official and the latter is the third-highest ranking government official and presides over the legislature. Formed on February 11, 1979, Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, who was appointed by Khomeini, officially created an interim cabinet following the establishment of the Iranian Republic. Consisting of 18 cabinet positions and 27 members, the cabinet contains several essential positions such as the minister of foreign affairs,

minister of health, and minister of agriculture. While all decisions are at the discretion of either the President or Supreme Leader, the members of the cabinet still have the responsibility of charting and determining the best course of action for the Iranian government.

Current Domestic Issues

Topic 1: Unrest Post-Revolution

While the Iranian Revolution was initially popular, the outcome of the revolution led to divisions within Iran. Certain individuals began to view the revolution as an Islamic fundamentalist power-grab and believed that Ayatollah Khomeini was simply trying to consolidate power for himself.²³ To establish sharia law, Khomeini reversed many Pahlavi-era reforms, especially hindering the rights of women in Iran by abolishing the Family Protection Act. Abolishing this law reversed the minimum marrying age from 18 to 9 years-old.²⁴ This was a stark reversal of the progressive policies implemented by Mossadegh, as Iran was one of the most modern states in the Middle East pre-revolution. But under Khomeini, Iran returned to a more traditional society. To ensure and maintain power, Khomeini's regime created the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which was a combination of loosely organized militias. The purpose of the Revolutionary Guard was to prevent an overthrow of power to reinstate the Shah, similar to the coup of 1953, and to enforce the Supreme Leader's new policies.²⁵ The Revolutionary Guard also was used to target and eradicate any pro-Shah or leftist opposition groups. Additionally, the Hezbollah party, meaning the Party of God, were crucial to Khomeini's consolidation of power as they attacked anti-Khomeini demonstrators and targeted any press outlets that were critical of the Supreme Leader. This conservative shift was deeply alarming to

²³ 28, Updated on April, and James Regan. "Iran after the Revolution." History 101. Accessed June 27, 2020. <https://www.history101.com/iran-after-the-revolution/>.

²⁴ Regan, "Iran after the Revolution"

²⁵ Regan, "Iran after the Revolution"

many in Iran, particularly those revolutionaries who favored democracy or communism over Islamic theocracy, as well as the Shah's former supporters.

This discontent eventually led to violence in some regions of Iran starting in 1979, particularly the regions of Khuzistan, Kurdistan, and Gonbad-e Qabus. The fighting occurred between Marxist guerrilla fighters and pro-revolutionary forces, highlighting the additional threat of communism in the country. The most prominent of the communist forces in the country is the Iranian People's Fedai Guerillas (IFPG), led by Ashraf Dehghani. The IFPG was heavily opposed to the newly formed Islamic Republic and played an influential role for the opposition in the conflict in Kurdistan in 1979. The other powerful communist groups in the country were the Organization of Iranian People's Fedaian, which the IFPG defected from, and the Organization of Working-Class Freedom Fighters.

Delegates will be tasked with trying to develop a solution to the unrest in the country while managing the diverse views of the population. They will be required to find a balance between the Islamic foundation of the new republic with the demands of large swaths of the population. Issues such as women's rights, communism, suppression of the opposition, and Khomeini's role as a leader will be the focus of debate. Additionally, delegates will have to decide on the vehicles used to deal with the unrest. Will they continue to deploy the Revolutionary Guard to suppress opposition or will they decide to pursue a different avenue? The delegates will be in a precarious position, as Khomeini's grip on power is not yet solidified but he gains strength daily as his allies secure more power for him and his cabinet.

Topic 2: Economic Reforms

Before the revolution, the Shah attempted to impose several economic reforms, which were heavily criticized by the Islamic elite as a thinly-veiled effort to “Westernize” Iran. The Shah was successful in attaining a growing economy, as Iran grew at double the rate of most Third World Nations from 1960-1977, all while inflation was low and income and investment rose.²⁶ Despite this growth, there was a massive wealth disparity between the wealthy and middle/lower classes. This wealth gap was a prominent force that drove Shah Pahlavi out of power. Now in power, Khomeini and his cabinet must consider how to restructure the economy so that it adheres to their image of an Islamic society. In the 1979 Constitution, it states that it is the responsibility of the newly formed government to “achieve the economic independence of the society, uprooting poverty and deprivation, and fulfilling human needs in the process of development while preserving human liberty.” Khomeini, in adherence to the Shiite tradition, is a staunch supporter of individual property rights and the private sector, both of which Shah Pahlavi alienated with his economic policies.²⁷ Khomeini and his colleagues initially had no real economic agenda upon coming to power, they simply wanted to undo the policies of the Shah. The only pillar they emphasized was the desire to wane off of the economic dependency on foreign nations.²⁸ Thus, this cabinet must develop Khomeini’s economic agenda from the ground-up.

Oil has been and continues to be the primary economic industry of the state of Iran, but the agricultural and manufacturing sectors have continued to lag. Despite the strength of oil exports, the turmoil of the Iranian Revolution caused the oil industry to become extremely fragile. Oil production has dropped substantially since Khomeini’s rise to power, with output

²⁶ “The Revolutionary Economy.” The Iran Primer. Accessed June 28, 2020. <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/revolutionary-economy>.

²⁷ Amuzegar, Jahangir. “The Iranian Economy before and after the Revolution.” JSTOR. Accessed June 28, 2020.

²⁸ Amuzegar, “The Iranian Economy before and after the Revolution”

declining by 4.8 million barrels per day, which constituted 7% of world production at the time.²⁹ Production dropped significantly due to wide-spread strikes in Iranian oil fields. In recent months, global demand for oil soaring coupled with the slash in production has caused a steep price jump in oil costs and triggered a new oil shock.³⁰ A sense of panic soon has begun to sweep economically advanced nations, as they fear that Iran may inspire other Middle Eastern nations to revolt and become Islamist nations, furthering the instability in the region caused by the Iranian Revolution.³¹

Delegates will debate whether to nationalize industries and banks, discuss the creation of five-year socio-economic plans, and determine how to manage Iran's lucrative oil industry. As pressure mounts to ramp up production, delegates will be tasked with trying to mend the relationships with the workers on strike. Delegates should also look to be in contact with other Middle Eastern nations with massive oil industries to devise a plan on how to create enough supply to meet the global oil demand. Delegates will have to decide on how best to diversify the economy. Additionally, delegates will have to balance between pure capitalism and Islamic tradition, as the Iranian Constitution of 1979 emphasizes how the economy is simply a means to bring about life and prosperity for all in the community. An additional problem may be on the horizon if America decides to leverage its economy to pressure Iran through sanctions, Khomeini may be forced to choose whether to sacrifice the Iranian economy or suffer a very public defeat and give in to American demands.

Current Foreign Policy Issues

Topic 3: Relations with the United States

²⁹ Gross, Samantha. "What Iran's 1979 Revolution Meant for US and Global Oil Markets." Brookings. Brookings, March 5, 2019.

³⁰ Graefe, Laurel. "Oil Shock of 1978-79." Federal Reserve History. Accessed June 28, 2020. https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/oil_shock_of_1978_79.

³¹ Graefe, "Oil Shock of 1978-79"



President Carter and Mohammad Reza Shah raising a toast to Iran on New Year's Eve, 1977³²

The end of the Iranian Revolution occurred as Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi fled Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini assumed power. Opponents of Shah Pahlavi held strong animosity towards the United States due to their support of the Shah during his reign. Supporters of Khomeini viewed the United States as the main driver of the issues that precipitated the Iranian Revolution, and this hostility towards the U.S. began to permeate throughout the country. Additionally, a major part of the new Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini's platform is anti-United States rhetoric, as he referred to the country as "the Great Satan." This sentiment originated long before Khomeini rose to power, as his exile in 1963 was partially due to his intense criticism of the Shah's relationship with the United States.³³ The fall of the Shah's regime dealt a particularly hard blow to the United States' foreign policy agenda, and they may not accept such a setback without resistance.

³² "At the Tehran Palace on New Year's Eve," Fine Art America, 1977, <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/at-the-tehran-palace-on-new-years-eve-everett.html>.

³³ "The Significance of Khomeini's Opposition to the Iranian Government." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State. Accessed June 28, 2020. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v22/d64>.

However, Iran lacks the power to challenge the United States directly, so for Iran to successfully protect itself, this cabinet must develop new ways to deter American aggression. The presence of Israel, a key American ally, may pose an opportunity for Iran. Since the revolution, positive relations between Iran and Israel have quickly evaporated, as Ayatollah Khomeini views Israel as “the Little Satan” due to their relations with the United States and their treatment of Muslim peoples, particularly the Palestinians. Without the strength to counter the U.S. directly, Iran may need to target Israel. Iran may be able to threaten Israel by allying with the Shia in southern Lebanon. However, Iran has only just finished its revolution and does not yet have the resources to influence other nations. It will be up to this cabinet to begin setting the groundwork to potentially challenge Israel, and by extension, the United States.³⁴ Further, to successfully oppose the “Great Satan”, Iran may also need to build its military or ally with other Middle Eastern states. This will be difficult given that Iran is a Shia-majority country in a predominantly Sunni region. Ultimately, Iran’s strategy must be multi-dimensional for it to be successful.³⁵

Overall, relations with the United States will be the main focus of the committee. Now in power, it is the goal of Ayatollah Khomeini to push back against the powerful nations that have carved out a sizable influence in the Middle East, namely the United States and Great Britain. Delegates will be tasked with having to respond to decisions made by U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his cabinet that have direct consequences in the Middle East. Delegates can either counter any U.S. action head-on or reach out to allies in the region to present a unified front against United States encroachment. Additionally, delegates will have to be mindful of the

³⁴ Jeb Sharp, “History of Iraq Part II: The Rise of Saddam Hussein,” *The World*, February 12, 2003, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2003-02-12/history-iraq-part-ii-rise-saddam-hussein>.

³⁵ Maloney, Suzanne. “1979: Iran and America.” *Brookings*. Brookings, January 24, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/1979-iran-and-america/>.

growing hostility towards the United States bubbling up within Iran, as in particular, the college-aged Iranians have been especially vocal in their disapproval of the United States. A confrontation with the United States may come soon for the new Iranian government. The Shah has asked the United States for refuge and medical treatment. Many Iranians, including Khomeini's administration, have demanded that the Shah be returned to face trial for his crimes. You must decide how to respond if the US elects to accept the Shah into their country.

Topic 4: Relations with Iraq

Iran and Iraq have had disputes for over a millennia, since the days of the early Mesopotamian empires.³⁶ The lasting conflicts are over a border dispute, most notably of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. The first border agreement between the two nations was in 1535 between the then Persian and Ottoman Empires, with subsequent treaties also coming in 1639, 1847, 1913, 1937, and 1975.³⁷ The United Kingdom played a large role in brokering the treaties of the 20th century, as they wanted to ensure stability in the region to pursue their oil interests. The Shatt al-Arab was much more important to the Iraqis because as a landlocked nation, the waterway was the only connection Iraq had to the outside world.³⁸ Overall through the treaties, the Iraqis got the worse end of the deal as they lost sizable territory through the shifting boundaries of the various treaties. While the territory dispute plays a large role in the conflict with Iraq, it does not tell the whole story.

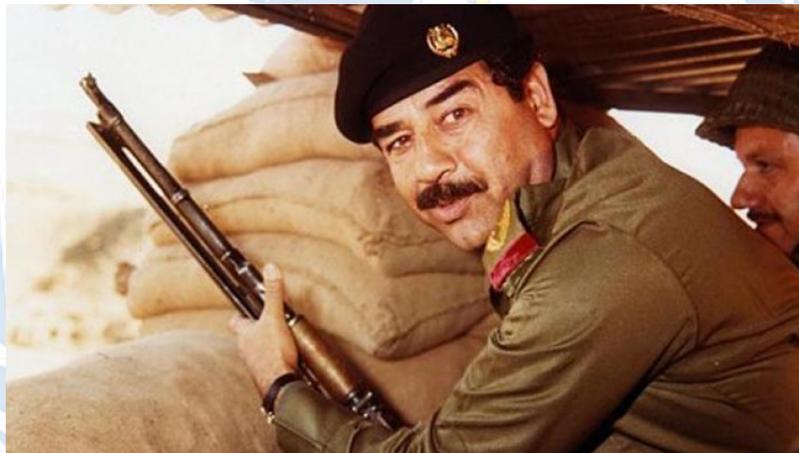
Saddam Hussein rose to power in Iraq shortly after the Iranian Revolution. He and other Middle Eastern powers are aware of the weaknesses of the new Iranian regime and are only waiting for the right moment to exploit Iranian turmoil. Hussein and Ayatollah Khomeini have

³⁶ Swearigen, Will D. "Geopolitical Origins of the Iran-Iraq War." JSTOR. Accessed June 28, 2020. https://www.jstor.org/stable/215091?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

³⁷ Swearigen, "Geopolitical Origins of the Iran-Iraq War"

³⁸ Swearigen, "Geopolitical Origins of the Iran-Iraq War"

had strong animosity towards each other even before either rose to power. Khomeini spent part of his time in exile in the Iraqi city of Najaf, but Hussein expelled him from the country at the request of Shah Pahlavi. Ever since Khomeini has been heavily anti-Hussein and has voiced for the removal of Hussein from power since assuming leadership.³⁹ Additionally, Khomeini's goal as Supreme Leader was to export the Iranian Revolution across the Middle Eastern region, and this plan led to hostility between Iran and Iraq. Under Saddam Hussein, Iraq was heavily secular and even actively suppressed the Shia majority in the country, a complete opposite of the theocratic regime burgeoning in Iran. Khomeini has tried to rally the Shia majority in Iraq to lead an uprising, much to the ire of Hussein.



Iraqi President Saddam Hussein⁴⁰

The delegates in Khomeini's cabinet will have to juggle yet another threat to their brand-new government. While some in the cabinet, particularly Khomeini and the religious elite, will push to export their Islamic revolution to Iraq, Saddam Hussein will view such actions as a threat to his regime and aspirations in the region. There is an escalation of tensions due to the personal animosity between Khomeini and Hussein, so delegates will have to balance decision making as

³⁹ Swerigen, "Geopolitical Origins of the Iran-Iraq War"

⁴⁰ <https://www.pri.org/stories/2003-02-12/history-iraq-part-ii-rise-saddam-hussein>

they have to be loyal to Khomeini but does not put the Iranian people in danger by upsetting Hussein. Delegates will have to work to avoid war and respond to new threats as they arise.

Topic 5: Iran's Place in the Cold War

Iran was thrust into the Cold War as a consequence of a joint invasion at the hands of the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R) and the United Kingdom during World War II. The Soviet Union, a geographic neighbor to Iran, continued to have an ongoing presence in the country after the invasion and was the first nation to recognize the newly created Islamic Republic of Iran, formally doing so in February of 1979. This Soviet influence was the main catalyst that drew the United States into Iran. At the time the committee begins, the Soviet Union is planning advances into the Middle East, with intelligence revealing a planned invasion of Afghanistan in the coming months. Under the rule of Leonid Brezhnev and his Brezhnev doctrine, which authorized the use of Soviet forces against threats to socialism anywhere in the world, the Soviet Union has already affirmed its commitment to mobilize and protect any socialist nation in the Middle East.

The Soviet Union watched closely as Iran fell into revolution, as a weakened Iran affected the U.S.S.R. on multiple levels. On the economic front, an

unstable Iran would disrupt the oil industry, and could potentially pave the way for prominent



Soviet influence.⁴¹ Secondly, the U.S.S.R. warned foreign nations to avoid an invasion of Iran, as Leonid Brezhnev in November of 1978 stated that any “interference, let alone military interference in the affairs of Iran, a state which has a common frontier as the U.S.S.R. would be regarded as a matter of effecting its security interests.”⁴²

Delegates will have to determine how to balance the opposing forces from the United States and the Soviet Union as both are in the middle of the Cold War. With the U.S. opposing the new regime and the Soviet Union vowing to side with Iran in the event of external influence, delegates may be placed right at the heart of Cold War tensions, especially considering the power Iran wields due to its oil industry. With the world economy booming and so heavily dependent on oil, both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. will try to create stability in Iran, while their actions may create instability in the country and the Gulf region.

With such a powerful nation able to dominate the region at any moment, delegates in Khomeini's cabinet will determine how to proceed with establishing relations with the Soviet Union. As the U.S. and Iraq challenge the new regime, an alliance with the Soviet Union could be beneficial. Delegates could vouch for no relations, loose relations, or push to make Iran more socialist to align with the U.S.S.R.'s principles. Such an alignment would gain Iran a powerful ally but may undermine Iran's independence and risk U.S. intervention. Delegates will have to consider all of this while making their decisions.

Questions to Consider

Topic 1: Unrest Post-Revolution

- Many believe Khomeini is concentrating too much power and is stripping the rights of Iranian citizens, especially women, in the process. Are Khomeini's maneuvers laying the

⁴¹ Akbar, Mansoor. “USSR-Iran Relations (1976-1986).” JSTOR. Accessed June 28, 2020. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41394477?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

⁴² Akbar, “USSR-Iran Relations (1976-1986)”

groundwork for another revolution? Or is this the beginning of a strong Islamic theocracy in Iran?

- Communist and socialist groups in Iran are gaining members and power, so how will their policy views be incorporated into the new Iranian government, if at all?
- Is Khomeini's newly founded Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) just a rebranded version of Pahlavi's secret police, the SAVAK? If so, how will the government explain it to citizens after they revolted against Pahlavi largely because of SAVAK?
- How should Khomeini's newly formed government deal with future violent insurrections similar to the ones in Khuzistan, Kurdistan, and Gonbad-e Qabus?

Topic 2: Economic Reforms

- How should the government best unite the Shiite tradition with economic reform to produce the strongest economy?
- Khomeini has made it clear that he does not want Iran to be dependent on foreign nations. In what ways will the government alter the Iranian oil industry to avoid foreign countries monopolizing the industry?
- How should Khomeini's cabinet address the strikes and instability that caused the oil shock that sent oil prices skyrocketing?
- Should Iran coordinate with other oil-producing nations in the Middle East to deal with the oil shock, or should it be handled only by the Iranian government?

Topic 3: Relations with the United States

- Khomeini refers to the United States as the "Great Satan" and possesses a heavy anti-U.S. rhetoric. With relations already soured, how will this affect the U.S. demand for Iranian oil?
- Will Khomeini's strict anti-U.S. rhetoric alienate Iran from other Middle Eastern countries that have positive relations with the United States?
- There are plenty of Iranians who still support Shah Pahlavi and still feel positively towards the United States. Could this divide in the population lead to issues domestically?

- What measures will Khomeini's cabinet take to push back against the United States' influence in Iran and the Middle East as a whole?

Topic 4: Relations with Iraq

- How will Khomeini's cabinet respond if Saddam Hussein were to escalate tensions with an invasion of Iran?
- Should the government create a task force to diplomatically discuss a resolution to tensions between Iran and Iraq?
- In what ways will the government balance the Sunni-Shiite conflict between the countries?
- Would Iran have the military personnel to successfully wage war against Iraq? If not, what will the government do to increase military prowess?

Topic 5: Iran's Place in the Cold War

- What relations, if any, will the new Iranian government have with the Soviet Union?
- The U.S.S.R. has vowed to see any encroachment on Iran as a threat to itself personally. Can you trust the Soviet Union to keep its word? Or is this an empty statement?
- Allying with the Soviet Union could risk an invasion from the United States. Would Iran be prepared for this invasion even with the Soviet Union supporting them?
- Khomeini has tried and succeeded in suppressing socialist groups. Would it then be hypocritical to ally with a socialist nation? Could this embolden socialist groups and threaten Khomeini's power?

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