



IAEA: Iranian Nuclear Program

I. Background of Topic

One of the major international security problems is Iran's nuclear weapons program. In the 1950's The United States and Iran signed a cooperation agreement that gave Iran access to peaceful nuclear technology. The issue faded then for several years but has resurfaced in the last several years. UN monitoring groups discovered a uranium enrichment plant in Natanz and a heavy water plant in Arak. The Iranian government insisted that these were used to create safe nuclear energy. Iran has been very uncooperative with The United Nations in dealing with this problem. Under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran is required to notify the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about their nuclear facilities, which they did not do. The international community is very skeptical of Iran's position that the reactors are for energy only, due to the increasing amount of evidence pointing otherwise. The world is very wary of a nuclear armed Iran, because of its government's hostile nature. There have been many threats coming from Iran making this issue a major global security problem.

II. UN Involvement

The UN agency that has been the most involved in this issue is the IAEA, whose job it is to keep a watchful eye on all nuclear activity around the world. Since the Iranian nuclear problem became a global issue, the IAEA has been focusing their attention on Iran. When the IAEA went to inspect the nuclear reactors in Iran, they found some traces of a type of uranium they believe is being used in the production of nuclear weapons. Iran has not been fully cooperating with the IAEA. For instance, when the IAEA scheduled an inspection for early March 2004, Iran postponed the visit until late April. They also have broken several of the seals placed by the IAEA which has caused global concern. After Iran ignored the demands of the UN to suspend all uranium processing, The Security Council imposed sanctions on Iran's trade of nuclear materials and technology. (Note SC resolutions 1737, 1747, and 1803) The Council allowed them a sixty day period to halt all uranium production in exchange for suspending the sanctions. Security Council Resolution 1929 imposed additional sanctions on Iran as a result of their lack of compliance with previous resolutions. The IAEA still continues its role as stringent watchdog over Iran as the problem has not been eradicated.

III. Possible Solutions

There are several possible solutions to consider. More aggressive solutions entail preemptive air raids against Natanz and Arak. This is an extremely dangerous solution, however, because of its inflammatory possible consequences. Since this conflict is potentially explosive, the more reasonable solutions are diplomatic. These include concessions to Iran for cooperation with IAEA demands. The United States could reaffirm its abidance to the Algiers Accord which stated that the US would not intervene in Iran's internal politics. The international community could accept the fact that Iran will continue to enrich uranium and lift some sanctions with the



assurance that if Iran were to break such agreements, international response would be swift and severe. Effective multilateral negotiations are possibly the most important solution as long as important demands are met and respected.

IV. Bloc Positions

In general, the regional bloc positions can be summarized as following:

Western Block: Iran's nuclear program is a threat and needs to be dealt with urgently.

Middle Eastern Block: With the exception of Israel, many Middle Eastern nations have been spurred by Iran to begin their own nuclear programs. There is limited extreme regional opposition to Iran.

Asian Block: encourages diplomatic means to end the crisis rather than increased sanctions.

African Block: Generally more pro Iran's nuclear program.

Latin American Block: Many countries are supportive of Iran's nuclear program, especially Venezuela.

V. Guiding Questions

1. How important are Iranian natural resources in dealing with this issue?
2. Should sanctions increase or should a new approach be implemented?
3. How should the IAEA lead the effort to alleviate this crisis?
4. How far does respecting a nation's sovereignty go in this debate?