Iran Hostage Crisis

Model United Nations at UC Davis
Hello Delegates,

My name is Rainier Austin, and I am honored to be the Head Chair for the Iranian Hostage Crisis Committee. I am currently a second-year Linguistics and International Relations double major with a focus on Global Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, specifically in the Middle East and Africa. I have had the pleasure of being involved with Model UN since high school. In my time in MUN, I have previously head chaired for DMUNC and CCCMUN, and most recently served as Secretary-General for AggieMUN, UC Davis’ collegiate conference. In addition to my involvement in MUN, I have an internship in Sacramento, work as a campus tour guide, and am a member of a sorority. In my free time, I enjoy classic literature, calligraphy, and, of course, staying up to date on current events.

In this committee, I will be taking the role of President of the United States, who is leading the hostage negotiations. I will be responsible for facilitating debate, while you, the delegates, are tasked with actually directing debate in your negotiations. Delegates are expected to be prepared and actively involved in debate. While DMUNC is first and foremost an educational experience, this should not negate the actual substantive work done in committee, which tends to be the most interesting part. In my opinion, the most enriching experience for all comes from delegates who are knowledgeable about the state of international affairs at the time of the committee, as well as background information. As a crisis committee, more advanced preparation is expected, so it is imperative that delegates do work prior to arriving in committee. Otherwise, the direction of the committee is dependent on your ideas and creativity.
At the end of the day, MUN is about having fun, creating friendships, and learning. I cannot begin to describe how much MUN has influenced my life, from giving me a major to giving me another family away from home. In addition to competition, it will serve you well to keep these ideals in mind during committee. Good luck with your research, and I can’t wait to meet you in May!

Loyally,

Rainier Austin

Head Chair, Iran Hostage Crisis, DMUNC XIV

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Greetings Delegates:

My name is Fabiola Diaz, and it is my pleasure to be your Crisis Director for the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979. I am a fourth-year Political Science and Spanish double Major. In my spare time, I like to cook big meals with my roommates and surf back home in Southern California.

I enjoy altering history and coming up with crazy alternatives to events, which has contributed to my passion for crisis committees in Model United Nations at UC Davis. My experience with MUN began in the Fall of 2015, and I have involved ever since attending various conferences and staffing our crisis committees.

In addition to my role as Crisis Director, I am also the Secretary General of Fundraising for Model United Nations at UC Davis. This committee is very special to me because it is my last conference at Davis, so I hope that all delegates have a great time working with each other in searching for creative solutions for this Crisis.

All the best,

Fabiola Diaz

Crisis Director, Iran Hostage Crisis, DMUNC XIV
About the Committee

This committee is a simulation of the Iranian Hostage Crisis negotiations, and the events leading up to it, which historically culminated in the Algiers Accords, signed by the United States of America and Iran. Crisis will take some liberties with events and timeline, in order to suit the committee as needed.
Current Situation

The late 1970s was a volatile time in Iranian history. In 1979 the Shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the head of a United States backed monarchy, was overthrown in the Iranian Revolution, which stemmed from protests that the Shah was too supportive of western ideals, and a call for a return to Islamic theocracy.\(^1\) At this point in time, the Iranian people were frustrated with what they viewed as excessive waste and opulent spending by the Shah. These frustrations were further compounded by economic missteps and accusations of social injustice.\(^2\) The Shah was deposed, and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini installed as the Supreme Leader of a new Theocratic Islamic Republic. When the Shah was admitted for medical treatment in the United States, the Iranian people revolted against this further display of American intervention in Iranian affairs, which they interpreted as American cooperation in the alleged crimes committed by the shah against his people. They demanded that the Shah be extradited back to Iran to stand trial for the crimes he was alleged to have committed while in power. In response to the asylum granted to the Shah by the United States, several attempts were made to take control of the US embassy in Tehran, with eventual success on November 4th 1979.\(^3\) It is this hostage situation this committee will be examining.

This committee begins immediately after President Carter receives news of the situation in Tehran. He convenes this meeting in a secret location (known to the general population as Camp David). Any action that is taken, be it negotiation or invasion or otherwise is up to the

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discretion of the committee. The ultimate goal is to secure the release of the hostages and bring them home to American soil.

At the inception of the hostage crisis, the Iranian government is in a state of complete disarray. Ayatollah Khomeini, who has a lot of power and much public support, has executed the majority of the Shah’s inner circle. Khomeini retains great popularity, but is not yet the head of a consolidated government. The government at this time has been referred to as being in a “revolutionary crisis mode”. Economically, Iran is still recovering from a short but brutal recession that took place from 1977-1978, in addition to other sweeping economic changes that were made under the reign of the Shah. Due to protests against westernization by the Iranian people, led by the Ayatollah, there is a dramatic shift to religious ideology that permeates almost every aspect of daily life, from clothing to diet to education.

At the same time, the United States is just beginning to emerge from a period of “stagflation”, characterized by growing interest rates combined with depressed employment rates and a decreased economy. The US is in the midst of the Cold War with the USSR, although it is at the tail end of a period of detente. In contrast to the renewed social conservatism present in Iran at the time, the United States was undergoing a period of radical social change, with the

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coming of second wave feminism, a continued civil rights movement, and the beginnings of a dedicated environmentalism movement present.
Historical Background

The latter half of the 20th century was a tumultuous time for Iran. In 1941, Reza Shah Pahlavi was deposed in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Shah whose health concerns provided the ignition point for the hostage crisis. When speaking colloquially of the Shah of Iran, it will refer to the second Pahlavi monarch, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. The coup that worked to overthrow the first Shah was backed by the USSR and the UK. These Allied powers did so to ensure that oil-rich Iran (and officially neutral) would not supply oil to Nazi Germany and the Axis powers. By installing the new Shah, the Allies were able to secure Iranian oil for the remainder of the war. In between the two Pahlavi monarchs, there was an intermediate period of democracy, after which there was a US-UK backed coup d’etat, which ultimately brought the second Shah to power in 1953. The United States was motivated to participate in this coup in order to restore its oil interests in Iran.

As part of the Shah’s reform programs, he implemented the “White Revolution”, which broke apart large land holdings, thereby effectively ending feudalism in Iran, and allowed religious minorities to hold office. These reforms made the religious conservatives, led by Ruhollah Khomeini to be unhappy with the government. The religious conservatism of Khomeini’s faction was based on the revival of Shi’a ideology that was spreading throughout Iran at the time. The group called for a return to traditional Islamic ideals, and viewed Westernization as a way in which Muslim nations become pawns in Western-centric geopolitics. In the aftermath of the White Revolution, Khomeini was arrested and exiled, after

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9 Abrahamian 82.
11 Abrahamian 51.
which three days of riots spread throughout Iran as the people showed their support for the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini.

The Shah’s rule was very Western when compared with what many think of Iran today. The capitalism of the West had permeated Iranian culture, much to the disdain of Khomeini and his ideology and this combined with rampant spending by the Shah to the disgruntlement of a large portion of the Iranian people. Economic troubles caused by massive growth from oil revenues, overarching reforms that included the privatization of land once owned by religious groups, and inflation also added to this contentious environment.

All of these factors culminated in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and eventual overthrow of the Shah in favor of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The Iranian Revolution had many casualties, mainly sustained during conflicts between protesters and military, with estimates ranging from 3,000 to 60,000. That being said, militarization was not the Shah’s primary strategy used to combat the revolution. Instead, he preferred negotiation over direct combat. With Khomeini leading the revolution, the Shah’s government began to fall apart, as cabinet members defected to the Ayatollah, and the people responded to orders to flood the streets and demonstrate. As a whole, the deposition of the Shah was a surprise to most internal and external witnesses as the Shah was suddenly overthrown after Khomeini’s triumphant return from exile.

After his overthrow, the Shah found refuge in Egypt, and later Morocco, the Bahamas, and Mexico. When he needed emergency gallbladder surgery, complicated by cancer, the Shah insisted on being treated in the US despite offers from other nations. When President Carter

12 http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/revolutionary-economy
13 Ibid.
14 Abrahamian 181.
grudgingly allowed the Shah to receive medical treatment in the US, he unintentionally put into action the final straw that pushed the already fervent anti-Western sentiment of the Iranian people over the edge. This action caused them to retaliate in an extreme way: the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran. There were two attempts before a successful takeover, occurring in February and September of 1979, with the successful seizure taking place on November 4, 1979. The final takeover was conducted by a student organization, known as the Muslim Student Followers. This group stormed the embassy, ultimately taking 52 American nationals hostage.

The students demanded that the United States extradite the Shah to Iran to be stand trial, apologize for its intervention in Iranian affairs, and unfreeze Iranian assets taken after the overthrow of the Shah. This is where you come into play. You are tasked with securing the release of the hostages.
Key Issues

Oil

The initial US coup d’état that brought the Shah to power was conducted to protect foreign oil investments in the Middle East. This is a common theme that continues in US-Iranian foreign relations, even today. The White Revolution brought some economic distress to the Iranian economy, as much of its economic policy was based on oil prices. The Shah had previously supported OPEC’s raising of oil prices, which lead to the oil crisis of 1973, and had negative impacts on relations between Iran and other Middle Eastern states.

Westernization

This revolution was interesting in that it lead to a more autocratic regime as opposed to increased liberalization as is common with modern day revolutions. The Iranian people united under the conservative ideals of Ayatollah’s ideology of Gharbzadegi, which opposed westernization, and the manner in which it lead to the utilization of nations as pawns by western nations.15

Pressure from American People

In the aftermath of the taking of the hostages, the American media focused intensely on the plight of the hostages, with beginning a nightly tally of the hostages’ incarceration. There was a new television show, Nightline, that was created to update the public about the situation, with these reports showing Iranians shouting “death to America” and similar mantras. Americans responded by stringing yellow ribbons across streets, becoming a constant

15https://books.google.com/books?id=NvFtAAAAAMAAJ&q=Gharbzadegi&dq=Gharbzadegi&hl=en&ei=ER0JTZbUI42-sAP3o9GhDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result
reminder of the hostages. The fact that the crisis was so heavily covered in the media, compounded with 1980 being an election year proved fatal for and possibility of President Carter being elected to a second term. At its lowest, Carter’s approval rating fell to 20%, lower than that of President Nixon during Watergate.¹⁶ The Democratic Party instead chose to nominate his Vice President, Walter Mondale, who ultimately lost to Ronald Reagan.

Flow of Committee and Debate

Debate

The default form of debate will be a moderated caucus with 30-second speaking time. The Chair will allow procedural motions to modify the form of debate. A member of the committee can motion for a more structured moderated caucus, with a specific topic, speaking time, and total time. All points will be entertained after each speech or the conclusion of a topic-specific moderated caucus. A procedural motion will carry with a vote of 50% + 1.

Committee Documents

Directives

Directives leverage the resources of the committee as a whole. In this case the resources refer to those of the Committee to Secure the Release of Hostages in Iran. This includes but is not limited to: military operations, diplomatic cooperation, covert intelligence gathering, and domestic affairs. Directives should be divided into specific clauses that clearly articulate the policy being undertaken. A Directive will pass with a simple majority of 50%+1.

Communiques

A communiqué is a formal message addressed to a body outside the committee. This method is the fastest and most secure way of communicating with the government of the State of Vietnam. A communiqué will pass with a simple majority of 50%+1

Committee Communication

Committee communication refers to private bilateral communication between a delegate and in-room committee participants, the chair, or out-of-room resources. Delegates should carefully denote their note’s intended recipients and sign-off.
Inter-delegate Communication

Delegates should feel free to write personal notes to their fellow committee members. We ask that these notes pertain to the business of the committee.

Communication to the Chair

Delegates may also write to the chair with questions regarding procedural issues of the committee as well as a wide range of personal inquiries. Delegates should feel free to write to the chair on any issue that would improve the committee experience. This could range from a clarification of portfolio powers to substantive questions.

Personal Directives

A personal directive allows delegates to access their portfolio powers. Portfolio powers are any resources that are at the personal command of the delegate. These powers could take the form of access to information, personal press statements, or more direct orders. While personal directives are an opportunity for delegate creativity those who overreach should expect repercussions. If for some reason, personal directives contain conflicting orders for the same unit, officers on the ground will use their own discretion. For clarity, please carefully label all personal directives as such to help with note sorting. Notes that are not signed may fail to receive a response.

Communication with Foreign Governments

Delegates may request to communicate with governments other than their own and that of the United States via a note to Crisis Staff which will be assessed on a case by case basis. Delegates who are not American nationals may communicate with their home governments freely.
Character Descriptions

Chief of Naval Operations ADM Thomas B. Hayward

As a Naval Admiral, Hayward has strengthened the US Navy against the growing Soviet power. His military career began in 1947 after graduating from the US Naval Academy, he served as a sailor in WWII as well as a US aviator during the Korean War. He also attended George Washington University and the National War College between his service in both wars. Hayward strongly believed in the development of a strong US Navy to combat the growing threat of the Soviets during the Cold War. He deployed naval fleets into the Indian Ocean and also assisted in the development and design of advanced aircrafts and warships.

Chief of Staff of the Air Force: Lew Allen Jr.

During the Iran Hostage Crisis, Allen was the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence for the Intelligence Community in Washington D.C. His military career also includes being the tenth Chief of Staff of the US Air force. As a physicist, he focused on the Jet Propulsion System and served as a military advisor to the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the President. He was also responsible for the operations of the military space fleet since 1961, but despite his influence he lacked the power to direct men into battle.

Chief of the National Guard Bureau: Lt Gen La Vern E. Weber

Lieutenant General La Vern E. Weber is the acting Chief of the National Guard Bureau and is the principal advisor in non-federalized National Guard forces and any other matters determined by the Secretary of Defense. He also serves as the principal advisor to the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Air Force, and the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force. La Vern E.
Weber began his military career in the US Army in the Korean War as the Korean War Director of the Army National Guard, and as of 1979, he has held the title of Lieutenant General.

**Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) (MI6): Sir Arthur (Dick) Franks**

In 1979, Sir Arthur Dickie Franks is appointed Chief of the Secret Intelligence Services (SIS) of the United Kingdom, otherwise known as MI6. Before serving as the head of the SIS, Sir Arthur Dickie Franks previously served as an Intelligent Officer. He was also involved in Operation Boot, otherwise known as TPAJAX Project, an operation that attempted to oust the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953. As the Chief of the MI6, Franks is in command of the entire organization as well as the British foreign intelligence, giving him the authority of overseeing covert operations.

**Speaker of the House: Tip O’Neill**

Prior to being the Speaker of the House in 1977 Tip O’Neill served as Congressman for 34 year. His reputation in Congress is known as being an outspoken Liberal, especially during the Carter administration. O’Neill struggled to accept Carter’s fiscal austerity, and this led to a discord between President Carter and O’Neill. As Speaker of the House, his powers include introducing legislation as well as advancing legislation. He has significant power over the Democrat Party in the House of Representatives.

**Secretary of State: Cyrus Vance**

Since being appointed Secretary of State in 1977, his foreign policy has had an emphasis on diplomatic resolution rather than military action. His attitude on the reduction of arms and conflict resolutions has led him to clash often with Brzenzinski. Previously, he has acted as general counsel of the Department of Defense followed then as Secretary of the Army. Being
Secretary of State allows him to carry much influence, as well as having the ability to conduct diplomatic relations with foreign countries. He is also a foreign relations advisor to the President.

**Director of Central Intelligence: Stansfield Turner**

Turner began his career serving in the US Navy and as commander of the NATO Southern Flank in Italy. As Director of the CIA, Turner’s powers include directing operatives and conduct missions, interpreting intelligence gathered, and advising the administration on foreign policy.

**National Security Advisor: Zbigniew Brzezinski**

Brzezinski served as National Security Advisor to President Carter from 1977-1980. He emphasized on normalizing relations between the US and the People’s Republic of China as well as reversing the Nixon-Kissinger policy of 1972. Vance and Kissinger clashed in regards to Carter’s foreign policy. Brzeninski had authority to influence the US foreign policy goals and actions as the chief foreign policy advisor to the president. In the Iran Hostage Crisis, Brzezinski will serve as communicator with important, updated information to President Carter.

**Energy Secretary: James R. Schlesinger**

Schlesinger was appointed Energy Secretary in 1977 after serving as Secretary of Defense from 1973-1975. Despite being dismissed as Secretary of Defense under Ford’s administration and then fired by Carter in 1979 for insubordination, he has been brought back for purposes of this committee. As Energy Secretary, he has control of the Department of Energy and has the influence to suggest and implement laws involving energy policy.

**US Trade Representative: Robert S. Strauss**
Strauss is the leading representative of the US Government in dealing with international trade issues. Additionally, he also served as the primary trade policy advisor to the President. President Carter has already requested that Strauss assisted in improving relations with trading partners in the Middle East and to help mediate a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Throughout this committee, Strauss will have an active role in deciding how actions in Iran and in the Middle East will impact US trade policy.

**US Ambassador to the UN: Donald McHenry**

Donald McHenry represents the US interests in the United Nations. His title is Permanent Representative of the United States of America in the UN as well as the Representative of the US in the Security Council of the UN. McHenry is responsible for advocating and executing US Policy in the General Assembly, Security Council, and all other UN constituent organizations. Ambassador McHenry can utilize the US veto power, because the US is a permanent member (P5), and has considerable influence over the administration and operation of the UN itself.

**Chairman JCS: David Jones**

Under the supervision of the Chairman, the Joint Chiefs in Staff is a body of the highest-ranking officers in each US military branch. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) since 1974, Jones is both the primary military advisor to the President and the Secretary of Defense. As Chairman, Jones has considerable influence in military decisions at the highest levels and advises the President and Secretary of Defense on all potential operations.

**Army COS: Edward Meyer:** As Chief of Staff, Meyer is the highest-ranking officer in the US Army and is a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Meyer is responsible for ensuring the Army’s
combat-readiness and is tasked with translating executive directives into instructions and plans to be executed within the Army. The COS serves as a senior advisor to the President and the Secretary of the Army.

**Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: Frank Church**

Frank Church serves as a senator from Idaho since 1957 and was appointed as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations since 1979. Despite having lost to Jimmy Carter in the Democratic presidential primary election in 1976, Church stands by President Carter’s decisions to take action and attempt to get rescue the hostages. Church can use his influence as Chairman to encourage members of Congress, especially his own party, to vote on laws. Along with Speaker of the House, Church hold a considerable amount of influence to make Congress to pass legislation regarding the crisis.

**Secretary of Labor: Ray Marshall**

As Secretary of Labor, Mr. Marshall exercises control over the Department of Labor and has the power to suggest and enforce laws involving unions, the workplace, and all other issues pertaining to business-person controversies. It is important to remember that the hostage situation inside the American Embassy in Tehran is not the only crisis to face the United States. Iran is a major supplier of energy to the world; revolution and diplomatic crisis threaten this supply of oil. The United States is in a severe recession. Without the development and protection of the economy, domestic unrest seems inevitable.

**Director of Defense Intelligence Agency- Eugene F. Tighe**

Eugene F. Tighe is the nation’s highest ranking military intelligence officer. He is the primary intelligence adviser to the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
Staff and he also chairs the Military Intelligence Board, which coordinates activities of the entire defense intelligence community. Unlike the CIA, the DIA is focused on providing military based security intelligence and preventing strategic surprise. The Director oversees the DIA in collecting, processing, exploiting, and analyzing foreign military and defense-related information, and then producing timely and relevant all-source analysis. He is one of the main officers in charge of gathering information during the crisis. During the crisis, he is currently in the process of restructuring the entire DIA, making him an avid supporter of increased intelligence activity in Iran.

**U.S. Ambassador to Iran- William H. Sullivan**

William H. Sullivan is the chief American diplomat and primary messenger between President Carter and the Shah. He plays an important role in communicating America’s directives with the Shah. From the start of the crisis, the Ambassador has felt that America should abandon support of the Shah and move on to support Khomeini in order to quell the growing unrest in Iran and ensure the safety of the hostages-a view that has faced and will continue to face opposition by the majority of the participants of the committee. Originally fired by Carter, special circumstances have called him into committee to make use of his knowledge and experience.

**Commandant of the Marine Corps- Robert H. Barrow**

Robert H. Barrow, as Commandant of the Marine Corps, is the highest-ranking member of the U.S. Marine Corps and a member of the Joint Chief of Staffs. He reports directly to the Secretary of the Navy and is responsible for ensuring the organization, policy, plans and programs for the Marines Corps. He also advises the President, the Secretary of Defense and the
Secretary of the Navy on matters regarding the Marine Corps as well as acts as the agent of the Secretary in carrying out military plans. The Commandant is ambitious when it comes to expanding the Marines’ size and power, creating new task forces and improving naval gun forces. He is looking to get the Marines more involved and is eager to test new rapid response strategies.

**Deputy head of SAVAK: Hossein Fardoust**

Hossein Fardoust was a childhood friend of the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and served for ten years as deputy head of SAVAK, the feared Iranian intelligence agency. As deputy head of SAVAK, Fardoust was responsible for running day-to-day affairs of the security and intelligence bureau, and for a time headed the Special Intelligence Bureau of Iran. Fardoust was one of the few generals in the Iranian military who did not flee the country or was arrested after the regime collapsed during the 1979 revolution. It is rumored that he defected much information to the new Iranian intelligence service, though nothing can be confirmed.

**French Ambassador: Arthur Hartman**

As the sole communicator between Iran and the United States, France has been essential in resolving the crisis. Hartman was appointed as the United States ambassador to France in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter. Hartman’s role in the diplomatic relation between France and the United States is critical towards many economic, diplomatic and military assets that may be necessary in the Iran Hostage Crisis in Tehran.

**Soviet Ambassador: Thomas Watson, Jr.**

Thomas Watson is the single American diplomat for the Soviet Union. Watson’s history has granted him the position of ambassador to the USSR in 1979. Due to the USSR having great
influence, it had veto power in the United Nations Council and shares a border with Iran. Despite recent events affecting the relationship between the US and USSR (the grain embargo against the USSR), Ambassador Watson has the influence to potentially better relations between the two superpowers during the Iran Crisis.

**Secretary of Commerce: Philip M. Klutznick**

Philip M. Klutznick is Secretary of Commerce heading the US Department of Commerce. He is responsible for the promotion and the development of foreign and domestic commerce. Due to Iran being a major supplier of energy of the world, this could affect the supply of oil in the world. With the United States in a deep economic recession, the development and economic unrest is significant in diplomatic discussion.

**US Contact with Iraq: Gary Sick**

Officially, the United States ceased to maintain diplomatic ties with Iraq following the Six Day War. Unofficially however, there has been contact between members of the American and Iraqi governments. One of these contacts is rumored to be Gary Sick. Iraq is an essential nation to keep relations with during the crisis with Iran, as the two regional rivals share a border that has historically been disputed. As the chief point of contact between the US and Iraq, it will be within Mr. Sick’s power to facilitate these relations and provide insight into the region during committee.
Questions to Consider

1. Should the U.S. engage with the revolutionary government in Iran, if so, how?
2. What would be the implications of further US intervention in Iran?
3. What would be the greater implications of US actions in Iran? How will it change US relations with Iran and other members of the international community?
4. Does your character have personal goals in the Iranian Crisis? Do these goals contribute or inhibit committee-wide goals?
5. Consider the United State’s role in the Iran-Iraq War. How did the Hostage Crisis increase tensions between the nations?
Bibliography


