



*The School for Ethics and Global Leadership*

# A New Regime and New Opportunity in Iran: Recommendations for U.S. Policy

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# Table of Contents

Section	Page
Executive Summary	3
History and Current Status	6
Relationship Between the Iranian Government and Its People	11
The Economy of Iran	16
Iranian Nuclear Program	23
Israeli-Iranian Relations	29
Implications for the Surrounding Region	33
Bibliography	39

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## Introduction

This policy document, written during the fall of 2013, is the work of 24 high school juniors at the School For Ethics and Global Leadership, in Washington, DC. The School For Ethics and Global Leadership (SEGL) is a semester-long program that aims to provide intellectually motivated high school juniors from across the country with the best possible opportunity to shape themselves into ethical thinkers and global leaders. Each class chooses a current international challenge and constructs a policy document that provides reasonable and effective solutions to the problem. This document is a purely student-run effort and does not reflect the positions of the School for Ethics and Global Leadership or its faculty. We present this document with great hope for the future of United States-Iranian relations.

**For more information, comments, questions, or concerns, please contact [iran@schoolforethics.org](mailto:iran@schoolforethics.org). Thank you.**

## Executive Summary

For 444 nights during the 1979 hostage crisis, Americans held their breath as one of the darkest periods of Iranian-American relations unfolded. But bated breath gave way to 34 years of choked conversation and nearly complete silence as dialogue drew to a close. Since the hostage crisis, a result of the 1979 revolution, Iran has been at the center of not only the United States' relationship, but the world's relationship, with the Middle East. Rich in oil and other resources, Iran's importance to the world increased over the past century. As a result, foreign powers have had a historic interest in the country. Such outside influence is apparent throughout Iran's history of revolutions and changing opinions towards the West. 50 years ago, under the rule of the Shah, Iran was more secularized and had a closer, stronger relationship with the West. In 1979, the Shah was deposed and the Supreme Leader brought religion to the forefront of the ideology of the Iranian government. Ties between the United States and Iran officially collapsed after 52 Americans were taken hostage in the American Embassy in Tehran in November 1979. As the Ayatollah took power, Iran entered into a diplomatic slumber. Interactions with the West became a matter of military posturing, nuclear stigma, sanctions, and a dearth of dialogue. However, President Hassan Rouhani's 2013 election may mark Iran's awakening.

Although President Ahmadinejad, Rouhani's predecessor, takes a hardline stance against Western interaction, Rouhani campaigned on softening that stance. Additionally, he is looking to make a deal with the West in order to lift sanctions that are crippling his country. For the first time since 1979, communications between presidents in Iran and the United States took place. Since communication has opened, Iran has made it clear that it has a right to a nuclear program and to enrich uranium but it is open to negotiation about the program's specifics.

Rouhani's reformist approach is a welcome change for humanitarian organizations worldwide. Conservative, Persian, and Shi'a men have historically dominated Iranian sociopolitical life, and those who are excluded from this group, political dissidents, women, and ethnic and religious minorities are at the mercy of this enfranchised elite. Each of these populations confronts repression in one way or another: the government arrests political activists in mass; women do not enjoy the same legal protections as men; the school system discriminates against ethnic minorities; the government incarcerates both ethnic and religious minorities at a higher rate than other populations. These populations, and many other Iranian citizens, must also contend with abusive conditions within the Iranian prison system when they are arrested. Although the theocracy has institutionalized some of these abuses, the global community should attempt to alleviate many of them by increasing Iran's involvement with the rest of the world and holding human rights abusers accountable for their actions.

The United States may spend almost \$700 billion a year on its military, but its most powerful weapon in curbing Iran has been economic sanctions. Sanctions on Iran have been effective because Iran's economy lends itself to foreign manipulation. As a rentier state, Iran generates most of its revenue from leasing out its oil fields to foreign countries and firms. The sanctions imposed by the EU and U.S. have significantly cut Iranian GDP, especially in the oil industry. The United States has been imposing economic sanctions on Iran since 1979

and in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the EU and the UN followed suit. Both the UN and EU sanctions have the primary goal of stopping Iran from attaining nuclear weapons. To do this, all uranium ore trade to Tehran must be stopped. The sanctions have had some success in stopping the flow of nuclear materials and weapons to Iran. However, the sanctions are still being violated and as long as Iran keeps acquiring uranium ore, the sanctions do not truly accomplish their goal. Currently, many different countries, ranging from economic superpowers like China and India to smaller African nations like Zimbabwe and Senegal, breach the sanctions in different ways. This violation of the sanctions poses a threat to the sanctions' future efficacy.

Since its establishment in 1957 with help from the west, Iran's nuclear program has had an inconsistent, controversial history. In 1974, Iran became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and signed its Safeguards Agreement, but it has yet to ratify the Additional Protocols portion of the regulations. After theocratic ideals became more centralized in the government after the Revolution of 1979 and its respective constitution, Iran took a starker stance defending its right to a nuclear power program and enrichment. Since then, Iran's history of dishonesty with the IAEA regarding its nuclear program has caused uncertainty in the international community. Events in 2005 that revealed Iran's deceptive violations with the IAEA launched an international response in the form of economic sanctions on the country. The United Nations, United States, and European Union implemented sanctions directed at crippling the nuclear program. In Iran, both the President and Supreme Leader have remained firm in belief that it is against the religion of Islam to pursue nuclear weaponization and that Iran is not currently doing so, contrary to international suspicion. Since 1979, this contentious issue has remained unresolved but with the recent election of President Rouhani, the United States should take advantage of the improving atmosphere surrounding negotiations.

Currently, Iranian-Israeli relations stand poorly. Hostile political statements and threats have impeded reconciliation between the two nations. Given that both Iran and Israel are minorities in an often unfriendly and predominantly Muslim Sunni region, both nations have presented the world a façade, portraying themselves as strong independent nations intent on protecting the safety of their citizens. This image has led to tensions and conflict between Israel and Iran. Caught in a power struggle for influence in the Middle East, both Iran and Israel believe that the key to dominance lies in military and economic influence. Israel, with nuclear weapons, has a military lead over Iran. Israel's military advantage over Iran is being threatened by the current Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, international sanctions on oil threaten Iran's previous economic edge. As the United States' principle ally in the region, Israeli interests will have to be addressed in negotiations with Iran. Although the US has expressed solidarity with Israeli security concerns, it is evident that if negotiations are to proceed, the US and international community must remember to consider both Iranian and Israeli interests

The international community has amplified sanctions on Iran over the last decade, however, now there is talk of scaling them back as part of a nuclear agreement. Iran has funded regional groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Assad regime in Syria. The economic freedoms that Iran would gain in the event of sanctions relief must not work against United States interests. The U.S. categorizes both Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organizations because of their attacks on Israeli soil. Diminishing Iranian support of these terrorist

organizations would heighten the security of U.S.'s ally Israel. On the other hand, the Iranian relationship with the Assad regime may become an opportunity. Iranian support for a political solution to the Syrian civil war would be a major step towards resolution of the conflict. Iran's regional influence extends via its wealth of oil, which gives it economic sway over the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia worries that if Iran possesses a nuclear weapon, Iran could use it to control oil and natural gas trade in the region, and in response Saudi Arabia threatens to obtain a nuclear deterrent. The U.S. must do what it can to keep Saudi Arabia from obtaining nuclear arms.

United States relations with Iran are anything but simple - the international community needs to balance the issues of human rights, sanctions and the economy, the Israeli-Iranian Relations program, and Iranian influence in the Middle East, not to mention its relationship with Israel. However, an opportunity is arriving with the change in regime. With this rare opportunity in mind, we have prepared the following document and recommendations in an effort to address the issues discussed above.

## Historical Background and Current Status

The United States and Iran have a complex past brimming with animosity and conflict. The 1953 Iranian coup d'état, the Revolution of 1979, the hostage crisis, the Iran-Iraq war, the Iran-Contra affair, and modern disputes over nuclear proliferation have culminated in tensions at a dangerous high.<sup>1</sup> However the new reformist Iranian President Hassan Rouhani offers to usher in a new era of communication between the two nations. As the United States proceeds toward diplomacy with Iran, the U.S. must thoroughly examine the regional and international threats posed by Iran's developing nuclear program as well as the tactics the U.S. can use to effectively contain it. A comprehensive agreement must be reached through cooperation, not hostility, where current sanctions will be repealed slowly in a step-by-step process as Iran limits its nuclear weapon producing capability.

A deal with Iran will, undoubtedly, also affect the surrounding region. Iran has ties in the Persian Gulf that are both economic, related to trade and oil, and political, as Iran's nuclear proliferation has an effect on neighboring countries' desire for security. As the U.S. continues to move toward an agreement with Iran over nuclear weapons it also must evaluate the implications of a resolution on Iran's neighboring countries.<sup>2</sup> Iran has threatened the United States' close ally, Israel, in the past few years. Israel fears any agreement that would allow Iran to continue its nuclear program.<sup>3</sup> While trying to establish an agreement with Iran, protecting Israel and other allies is essential.<sup>4</sup>

To come to a deal with Iran, the U.S. must understand and account for Iran's government and key leaders. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a theocracy, with Shi'a Islam as the official religion and two major leaders who head the regime. The Supreme Leader, currently Ali Khamenei, is appointed for life, holds religious and political power and has the final say on Iran's policies. The President, currently Hassan Rouhani, is elected by popular vote for a four-year term and heads the executive branch of the government, which deals with commonplace government affairs under the advisement of the Supreme Leader.<sup>5</sup> Reaching an agreement with Iran necessitates working with the demands of both of these figures.

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Sasan Shoamanesh, "History Brief: Timeline of US-Iran Relations Until the Obama Administration," *MIT International Review*, (2009), <http://web.mit.edu/mitir/2009/online/us-iran-2.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Yeganeh Torbati, "U.S. Strike on Syria could derail Iran President's Master Plan," *Reuters*, September 4, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/>.

<sup>3</sup> David E. Sanger, "Split on Accord on Iran Strains U.S.-Israel Ties," *The New York Times*, November 18, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> "History, Government, Current Conditions, and Foreign Relations," *International Debates* 5, no. 9 (Dec 2007): 5-12, <http://proxygw.wrlc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=27798008&site=ehost-live>.

## Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei

Former Supreme Leader Khomeini and the Revolution of 1979 heavily influenced current Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.<sup>6</sup> Khamenei served as president under Khomeini from 1981 until he became Supreme Leader in 1989. Khamenei has vowed to uphold the principles of the revolution, such as theocratic government, Iranian nationalism, and cutting ties with Western countries.<sup>7</sup> He made his stance toward the United States clear in 2003, when he said:

What the United States, which has been spearheading the aggression against our Islamic revolution, expects from our nation and government is submission and surrender to its hegemony, and this is the real motive for U.S. claims regarding weapons of mass destruction, human rights or democracy.<sup>8</sup>

However, Khamenei has also made clear that negotiations with the United States can occur when they are in Iran's interest. In 2008, he said, "Cutting ties with America is among our basic policies. However, we have never said that the relations will remain severed forever. ... Undoubtedly, the day the relations with America prove beneficial for the Iranian nation I will be the first one to approve of that."<sup>9</sup>

Iranian presidents, although operating under the authority of the Supreme Leader, have differed in ideology, particularly between liberal reformist Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) and conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013). The differences between presidents reflect the idea that the Supreme Leader is to remain removed from day-to-day government, allowing for presidents to influence the regime's actions. Supreme Leader Khamenei has stated that the Supreme Leader's role is to "safeguard the Islamic system and revolution."<sup>10</sup> Although the Supreme Leader has sovereign authority over the government, he allows the president to determine policy as long as it is in line with the Islamic faith and as long as the personal relationship between the Supreme Leader and the president is sound. For example, Khamenei has conservative tendencies, but he publicly undermined conservative president Ahmadinejad's power and legitimacy because of personal tension between the two.<sup>11, 12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Akbar Ganji, "Who Is Ali Khamenei?" *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 5 (September 2013): 24-48, <http://proxygw.wrlc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=89749127&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Karim Sadjadpour, "Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (2009): 14, [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour\\_iran\\_final2.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Robert F. Worth, "In Iran Rivalry, Khamenei Takes Presidency Itself," *The New York Times*, October 6, 2011.

## President Hassan Rouhani

Hassan Rouhani, Iran's previous chief nuclear negotiator (2003-2005), was elected President of Iran on June 15, 2013.<sup>13</sup> Rouhani has expressed interest in repairing Iran's relations with the West, specifically the United States, and stated in his inaugural speech that "transparency is the key to opening a new chapter in mutual trust."<sup>14</sup> Rouhani campaigned with the slogan "Moderation and Wisdom," and appealed to people's hopes of stabilizing the economy, improving negotiations with the West, and addressing the sanctions.<sup>15</sup>

Both Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Rouhani have recently shown a willingness to cooperate with United States leaders in negotiating sanctions and Iran's nuclear program.<sup>16</sup> U.S. President Obama spoke directly with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on September 27 2013 about the possible negotiations on Iran's nuclear policy, and Obama later commented, "I believe we can reach a comprehensive solution."<sup>17</sup> Khamenei's inclination to allow Iran to cooperate with the United States indicates a shift in Iranian foreign policy under Rouhani's new regime. Perhaps for the first time since ties were cut off in 1979, the Supreme Leader of Iran believes that negotiation with the West is in Iran's best interest, and President Rouhani has expressed the same sentiment. At this important juncture of time, it is imperative that the United States is effective in reaching a reasonable nuclear agreement and building positive diplomatic relations with Iran.

Under past Iranian presidents, Iran was found to have multiple secret nuclear facilities (Natanz and Arak in 2002 and Qom in 2009).<sup>18</sup> Iran defied the Paris Agreement of 2003 when the Iranian government declared in 2005 that it had continued its nuclear program despite its promise to stop for three years.<sup>19</sup> Further UN sanctions were imposed on Iran after the information that Iran had been continuing its nuclear program without the UN's knowledge came to light. Under President Rouhani, with his history in nuclear negotiation and reformist tendencies, the United States has an opportunity to negotiate, which it should utilize. However, because of Iran's history of defying nuclear treaties, the U.S. should be

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<sup>13</sup> James Reynolds, "Hassan Rouhani takes over as Iran President," *BBC News Middle East*, August 3, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23557673>.

<sup>14</sup> "Profile: Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran," *BBC News Middle East*, November 11, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22886729>.

<sup>15</sup> Lintao Yu, "The Rouhani Era," *Beijing Review* 56, no. 33 (August 15 2013): 14-15, <http://proxygw.wrlc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=89922880&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Gearan and Jason Rezaian, "Iran's Hassan Rouhani prepares for his debut trip to the United Nations," *Washington Post*, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>.

<sup>17</sup> Chelsea J. Carter, "It's a three-decade first: Presidents of U.S, Iran talk directly, if only by phone," *CNN*, September 28, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/27/politics/us-iran/>.

<sup>18</sup> "Iran Nuclear," *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, (October 2013), <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/iran/nuclear/>.

<sup>19</sup> "Iran and America: An Intersecting History," *Newsweek* 153, no. 22 (2009): 29-52, <http://proxygw.wrlc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=40540495&site=ehost-live>.



cautious in approaching negotiations. No drastic measure of repealing sanctions should be taken until concrete proof of halted nuclear enrichment is presented.

## **U.S. Congress**

U.S. President Barack Obama signed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA) in 2010. CISADA placed sanctions on the supply of refined petroleum products being sent to Iran by non-U.S. businesses. Oil is central to Iran's economy, and the natural resource of petroleum contributes to Iran's regional influence in the Persian Gulf. However, Iran's petroleum-refining capabilities are underdeveloped, so the sanctions target the refined gasoline that Iran imports from other countries.<sup>20</sup> The Iranian government questions the intention of the sanctions, as Supreme Leader Khamenei stated in August of 2011:

Although the excuse for sanctions is the issue of nuclear energy, they are lying...Perhaps you recall that the first sanctions against this country were enacted at a time when the nuclear issue absolutely did not exist...Thus, the enemy's goal is to hurl the Islamic Republic to the ground.<sup>21</sup>

In July 2013, the United States House of Representatives passed H.R. 850, the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act, which would heighten sanctions on Iran despite disapproval from U.S. President Obama.<sup>22</sup> As of November 2013, the U.S. Senate has yet to take up the bill as they wait for the outcome of the second round of talks in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>23</sup> To allow diplomatic relations to proceed during this sensitive time of contact with Iran, the U.S. Senate must consider that passing the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act would inflame tensions and hinder the communication process.

## **International Action**

In addition to the U.S., the United Nations has sanctioned Iran. UN Security Council passed Resolution 1737 in 2006, which froze assets related to Iran's nuclear proliferation, and in 2007 the sanctions were expanded with Resolution 1747.<sup>24</sup> Championed by the U.S., these resolutions are evidence of the United States' influence in the UNSC and its ability to rally global leaders against Iran. Moving forward, the U.S. needs to make good use of its influence within the UN.

Recent talks with Iran in Geneva came about after Obama and Rouhani opened up communication. From November 6 through November 8, 2013, leaders from the P5+1 (United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France and Germany) gathered in Geneva

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<sup>20</sup> Treasury of the United States, *CISADA*, (Washington, DC, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Ganji, "Who Is Ali Khamenei?"

<sup>22</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, *H.R. 850* (Washington, DC, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Mark Landler, "On Iran Talks, Congress Could Play 'Bad Cop,'" *The New York Times*, October 11, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations, *S/RES/1747*, (New York, 2007).

with leaders from Iran to discuss Iran's nuclear program.<sup>25</sup> U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, requested that Iran cooperate in limiting uranium enrichment past 20 percent.<sup>26</sup> In exchange, the United States would lift sanctions on petrochemicals and release Iranian assets currently frozen in South Korea, China, and India.<sup>27</sup> Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif expressed support for this plan. However, the talks fell through after internal disagreements, notably involving France, and a failure to reach a complete consensus with Iran. On November 20, 2013, the second round of talks in Geneva began. Iranian leaders refused to stop the enrichment of uranium, declaring that their nuclear program is their "red line" not to be crossed.<sup>28</sup> The United States should not seek to fully end Iran's nuclear energy program, but its main interest is in preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon, and it must not compromise on demanding limitation of uranium enrichment as talks proceed.

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<sup>25</sup> Julian Borger, "Geneva Talks End Without Deal on Iran's Nuclear Programme," *The Guardian*, November 9, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com>.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Erdbrink, "Iran and Western Powers Clash Over Why Nuclear Talks Failed," *The New York Times*, November 13, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Nick Cumming-Bruce, "World Powers Renew Push on Iranian Nuclear Program," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

# The Relationship Between the Iranian Government and Its People

Human rights abuses in Iran, although often overshadowed by the dialogue surrounding the nuclear program, are a contentious issue. The post-revolution regime, especially during Ahmadinejad's presidency, has disenfranchised ethnic and religious minorities, political dissidents, and women. These targeted groups are funneled into the Iranian prison system, which features a slew of human rights problems in and of itself. However, reformist President Hassan Rouhani presents an opportunity for change. By increasing Iran's involvement with and accountability to the international community, the UN can incentivize Iran to confront the blatant abuses that occur within its borders.

## Religious and Ethnic Minorities

Because 98 percent of Iranians are Muslim, there is a great divide between religious minorities such as Jews, Christians, Baha'is, Zoroastrians, and Muslims. Meanwhile, the Azeris, Kurds, Turkmen, and Arabs find themselves struggling for equal treatment in a society dominated by Persians.<sup>29</sup> Due to these gaps, religious and ethnic minorities are constantly subject to inequality and injustice. Religious leaders, mainly the Supreme Leader, interpret Sharia law, the religious law that dictates all aspects of Islamic life. This strict Islamic foundation makes minorities' integration into society an arduous process. Religious minorities have only two percent of the seats in the Majles and are therefore left with little opportunity to voice their opposition and ameliorate their situation, including arbitrary detention and social abuse.<sup>30</sup> For example, the government shut down many Baha'i schools and fired many educators because they advocated for the Baha'i faith. The Baha'is remain the most prominent religious minority and are therefore subject to the most abuse. Additionally, Persians often marginalize these ethnic minorities and are discouraged from participating in Iranian society. For example, Arab communities in Iran have little access to clean, potable, water because of poor infrastructure. Their right to linguistic and cultural freedom is severely limited, as teachers are required to teach only in Farsi.<sup>31</sup> According to Iran's constitution, "oppression of any form is not acceptable." However, because Iran is a theocracy, interpretations of Sharia law often outweigh the rights protected in the Constitution.<sup>32</sup> All government institutions, including the judiciary and military, act under the Supreme Leader's interpretation of Sharia law. This standard allows the military to detain any individual who defies Sharia law or the Islamic Republic, and court cases are rarely carried out in a civil and impartial manner. The international community recognizes that these

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<sup>29</sup> "Central Intelligence Agency." The World Factbook.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> (accessed November 12, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> "The Ministry." Department of the Interior.<http://moi.ir/Portal/Home/> (accessed November 19, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Oct 4, 2013, Web edition.

<sup>32</sup> Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, October 24, 1979, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b56710.html>.

inequalities exist; however, the Iranian government may perceive many of these recommendations as offensive to its system of government. Thus, a recommendation by the United States seems impractical and ineffective at this time.

## Political Activists

Under the Constitution of 1979, all citizens are guaranteed the rights to speech, expression, and association so long as exercising them does not “undermine... national integrity” or “[harm] the Islamic precepts or public rights.”<sup>33</sup> However, in attempt to quell communication between reformists and the international community, the government continually suppresses printed and online publications that express opposition to the regime.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, reformist leaders such as Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi were put under house arrest due to the peaceful protests they led following the 2009 elections and during the Arab Spring rebellions. Since 2012, over 800 students, journalists, and reformists have been imprisoned or executed without justification or trial in protests.<sup>35,36</sup> The religious authorities deem many peaceful protests “as insulting the sacred, propagation of ideas [of] the Islamic Republic” or a “creation of mistrust in the public mind.”<sup>37</sup> In response, the government interprets the Constitution in such a way that allows it to incarcerate its people unnecessarily. It is unclear how strictly the government interprets insurrection to be insulting and therefore unclear how widely people can exercise their guaranteed rights.

Some of the most violent and tumultuous protests have occurred in response to arguably fraudulent elections. Those in charge of the elections limited communications between reformists by incarcerating opposition leaders.<sup>38</sup> While there is a risk of insulting the Iranian government, the U.S. should nevertheless help Iran improve the electoral procedure to ensure that the Iranian people have the right to directly elect the members of the Assembly of Religious Experts, and the president.

The *Guidelines for Understanding, Adjudicating, and Resolving Disputes in Elections* (GUARDE) is a “guide of best practices that provides effective mechanisms for resolving election disputes and complaints.”<sup>39</sup> According to studies conducted by

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<sup>33</sup> Mehrangiz Kar, “Constitutional Obstacles: Human Rights and Democracy in Iran.” *Iran Human Rights Documentation Center*, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Amnesty International, “Iran: Worsening Repression of Dissent as Election Approaches,” AI Index MDE 13/012/2009 February 2009. <http://www.amnesty.org/>.

<sup>35</sup> “Iran: Threats to Free, Fair Elections: Imprisonment of Opposition, Media Crackdown, Impunity Mar Prospects,” *Human Rights Watch*: May 2013.

<sup>36</sup> United States Department of State, “Iran 2012 Human rights report.” (Washington, DC: GPO, 2012): April 19, 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Kar, “Constitutional Obstacles.”

<sup>38</sup> “Iran: Threats to Free, Fair Elections,” *Human Rights Watch*.

<sup>39</sup> International Foundation of Electoral Systems, “Introducing a New Tool: Standards, Techniques and Resources for Investigating Disputed Elections,” September 18, 2013. <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Articles/2013/Introducing-a-New-Tool-Standards-Techniques-and-Resources-for-Investigating-Disputes-in-Elections.aspx>

the International Foundation of Electoral Systems, “faith in the entire political system can be eroded if the electorate does not accept the results of an election and if election-related disputes are not dealt with effectively and efficiently.”<sup>40</sup> Additionally, adjudicating election disputes quells protests as well as international criticism, and convinces the people that its government is not exploiting them. Iran could avoid future protests and prevent another uprising comparable to that of 2009 by adopting the principles outlined in GUARDE.

## Women

Under the 1979 Constitution, women’s rights are not explicitly listed; an ambiguity that leads to infractions of many of their human rights.<sup>41</sup> Women are not treated equally under the law, especially in matters of marriage and divorce, custody, freedom of movement, transmission of citizenship, education, and employment.<sup>42</sup> Women may request divorce but only under certain conditions. Although a woman is given preference in custody, if she remarries, the father gains custody of the child. Single women are also not allowed to purchase contraceptives. Though more prevalent in rural areas, restriction of movement is also common. The Iranian government does not recognize marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim spouses; therefore, women may not transmit citizenship to children or to foreign spouses. However, the most significant issue in the realm of women’s rights is equality in educational opportunity. Although they make up 65 percent of university students, women cannot take a myriad of university classes and also face gender segregation, especially in more political, scientific, and social areas of study. Because their professional opportunities are limited 33.9 percent of women are unemployed, compared 20.2 percent of men.<sup>43</sup> Although the constitution calls for equal treatment of women, the cultural, religious, social, academic, and political barriers that Iranian women encounter infringe upon the civil rights they are guaranteed.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international document that lists the rights of women around the world. It defines what discrimination against women is and creates an agenda for international action to prevent such disenfranchisement.<sup>44</sup> CEDAW explains that discrimination against women is “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect... [of] impairing or nullifying the recognition... of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”<sup>45</sup> By accepting CEDAW, countries commit themselves to working to end discrimination and are held legally responsible to put orders into practice and to submit national reports every four years about

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, October 24, 1979, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b56710.html/>.

<sup>42</sup> UN General Assembly, “Report.”

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Iran 2012 Human Rights Report.”

<sup>44</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook – Iran.”

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, “The Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (overview),” 1979, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>.

the measures they have taken to comply with the treaty. Iran and the United States are two of the seven countries that have not yet signed the treaty. Although the treaty has not breached the U.S. agenda, the U.S., the UN, and other international confederations have had no problem signing sanctions on Iran into existence. As an incentive to sign the treaty, the United States should propose that all countries withhold further sanctions on Iran unless diplomatic action on the part of P5+1 does not succeed.

## Incarceration

Political activists, minority groups, women and other prosecuted populations all face the injustice of the Iranian prison system. Through the Basij and Revolutionary Guard, the government arrests members of these groups and holds detainees for months without fair trials.<sup>46,47</sup> In jail, prisoners often contend with “overcrowding, limited access to medical treatment...and inadequate nutritional provisions” as well as torture and rape.<sup>48,49</sup> Moreover, some interpretations of Sharia law justify flogging, stoning, amputations, and mass executions.<sup>50</sup>

Ironically, Iran is part of the Commission of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), which has spent the last two years establishing rules to protect prisoners’ rights. In addition to controlling the budget of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (an organization that has good rapport with Iran), the CCPCJ sponsors international responses to national and transnational crime. In the past two years, it has hosted two Intergovernmental Expert Group Meetings on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, and it plans to host a third in 2014. Even though clarifying the protections Iran’s prisoners are guaranteed could help reduce abuse, Iran has not participated in these meetings. Iran may welcome a formal invitation to the meetings, since the Iranian government has expressed an interest in reforming its prison system.<sup>51</sup>

Many abuses prisoners endure stem from an inability to hold officials and prison guards linked to human rights abuses responsible. There are no accessible records of prison statistics, and no ombudsmen exist to advocate on prisoners’ behalfs.<sup>52</sup> The EU has taken a stand against such abuses and prohibits officials linked to human rights abuses from entering the confederation. The UN has done little to penalize officials involved in human rights abuses, although it froze the bank accounts and restricted the travel of officials linked to the Iranian nuclear program via Resolution 1737. If the UN were to expand this resolution to punish human rights abusers, as the EU does, it could hold the offenders accountable for their actions. If the international community hopes to support basic freedoms, ethnic

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<sup>46</sup> United States Department of State, “Iran 2012 Human Rights Report.”

<sup>47</sup> UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur.”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> “The crackdown; Iran and human rights.” *The Economist*, Aug 15, 2009.

<http://www.economist.com/node/14222321>.

<sup>50</sup> C.V. Maftai, “The sanctions of the Islamic Criminal Law.” Romanian Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs. Sept, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur.

<sup>52</sup> United States Department of State, “Iran 2012 Human rights report.”

minority rights, religious rights women's rights—human rights—in Iran, it should start by helping the Iranian government institute prison reform.

### **Recommendations:**

- Recommend Iran institutionalize the principles highlighted in the GUARDE to help prevent future protests and legitimize elections, building trust between the government, the international community, and the Iranian people.
- Address the core women's rights issues in the Islamic Republic of Iran by jointly agreeing and signing on to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and propose that the countries and alliances withhold further sanctions on Iran until diplomatic action on the part of P5+1 does not succeed as an incentive to sign onto this treaty.
- Request Iran attend the third open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Group Meeting on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners in January 2014, or face potential expulsion from the Commission of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
- Extend UN Security Council Resolution 1737 to include officials with links to human rights abuses. This will allow the UN to freeze the assets of and impose a travel ban on members of the bureaucracy and those directly aiding them who are linked to or committing human rights abuses.

## The Economy of Iran

As a result of the sanctions imposed on Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran's economy has experienced a steady decline. This decline is due to its dependency on foreign nations. As a reinter state, a state that leases out its land and resources to other nations and firms for profit, Iran's government inherently relies on foreign nations for its income. This reliance on foreign sources of income makes Iran very vulnerable to foreign sanctions. Iran does not have many national industries beyond oil production and with the continual declining international purchase of Iranian oil; Iran's economy has been severely crippled. Along with their implications on Iran's economy, sanctions have also helped to stem the flow of nuclear materials to Iran, slowing Iran's nuclear development. Due to the crippling nature of the current sanctions and their effectiveness of slowing Iran's nuclear program, the international community, for fear of eroding relations with Iran, should introduce no further sanctions. The sanctions already in place should instead be more strictly enforced to increase their efficacy.

The decline of Iran's economy has led to economic vulnerability, attributed to a lack of economic diversity and little industrialization.<sup>53</sup> Iran's failure to budget effectively makes it difficult for economic growth. The country is currently \$7.215 billion in debt.<sup>54</sup> Contributing to the debt of Iran are bonyads. Bonyads began as religious charities and now conduct a wide-variety of activities that infiltrate into many sectors of society, such as controlling anything from hotels to shipping lines to auto-manufacturing.<sup>55</sup> Bonyads do not pay taxes, yet they receive large government subsidies for their work.<sup>56</sup> A large majority, 80 percent, of bonyads reportedly lose money.<sup>57</sup> Bonyads are also exempt from official oversight and are therefore not required to publicize their progress, or lack of thereof, and have the ability to control major estates handed to them by the state. Bonyads have been successful in creating monopolies in the imports of several items and therefore account for 33-40 percent of Iran's GDP.<sup>58</sup> The immunities of Bonyads are the reason why corruption has easily infiltrated the system. Bonyad's are a huge player in the lack of economic diversity in Iran. It is extremely difficult for the private sector to compete with these para-statal institutions.<sup>59</sup> It is even more difficult to start a small business from the ground up because the Iranian government has

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<sup>53</sup> Fariborz Ghadar and Rob Sobhani, "It's the Economy, Stupid. Trials and Tribulations of the Iranian Economy," Cambridge, *Harvard International Review* 33.1 (Spring 2011): 22-26.

<sup>54</sup> "Iran: Economic – Overview," *Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook*, 2012. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Ali A. Saeidi, "Iranian Para-governmental Organizations (bonyads)," *Middle East Institute*, January 29, 2009, 2013. <http://www.mei.edu/content/iranian-para-governmental-organizations-bonyads>.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Kenneth Katzman, Iran's Bonyads: Economic strength and Weaknesses, *The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research*, August 6, 2006. <http://www.ecssr.com/>

<sup>58</sup> Ali A. Saeidi, "Iranian Para-governmental Organizations (bonyads)," *Middle East Institute*, January 29, 2009, 2013. <http://www.mei.edu/content/iranian-para-governmental-organizations-bonyads>

<sup>59</sup> Dr. Abbas Bakhtiar, "Ahmadinejad's Achille's Heel: The Iranian Economy," *Payvand*, 2007.



made the process of doing so extraordinarily arduous. Iran's economy has been and remains primarily dependent on the oil and natural gas industry.<sup>60</sup> This overreliance has limited the diversity of Iran's economy and the growth of other industry sectors. Because of the government focus on oil, there have been few government policies aimed at developing other potentially profitable areas of industry.<sup>61</sup> Oil profits accounted for 65 percent of government revenues.<sup>62</sup> Iran's dependence on oil has had a two-fold effect on the economy: its excessive domestic demand for oil and oversight of refining has led to high inflation rates, and the reliance has built up a rentier economy in Iran.<sup>63</sup>

Because revenue comes virtually only from oil and bonyads, Iran's economy is vulnerable. The small amount of industrialization that has occurred over the years is because of overreliance on oil and the failure to see the importance of a more diverse economy. In addition, the statist policies that stem from a centrally planned economy leave Iran behind when it comes to economy growth. Contributing to this lack of economic growth is the fact that many political and religious leaders head a large portion of the economic sector, inviting corruption and mismanagement of the economy to suite their own goals.<sup>64</sup> As of 2013 the Iranian economy is trying to transition to a more free-market model. All three issues set the stage for immense economic vulnerability at the time the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran. Iran's economic vulnerability made it, and continues to make it a perfect target for sanctions.<sup>65</sup> The sanctions imposed on the various sectors of the economy are effective in distressing Iran. The sanctions imposed have, therefore, vastly affected the already deteriorating economy.

## History of Sanctions

Since 1979, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations have placed extensive sanctions on Iran. The most basic, but widely followed, sanctions on Iran come from the United Nations. The UN sanctions, most recently updated in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929, ban the export of weapons and materials that could be used to further Iran's nuclear program.<sup>66</sup> These sanctions have curbed the flow of weapons and nuclear materials into Iran but have not reached their full potential due to various countries disregarding the sanctions let's work on not making your piece and my piece redundant.<sup>67</sup> The European Union has imposed more extensive sanctions, mainly targeting

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<sup>60</sup> Fared Mohamedi, "Iran: The Oil and Gas Industry," *The United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer*, 2013.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ali Gheissari, *Contemporary Iran: Economy, Society, Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Fared Mohamedi, "Iran: The Oil and Gas Industry," *The United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer*, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> "An overview of O.F.A.C. Regulations involving Sanctions against Iran." U.S. Department of the Treasury. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2013. <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/iran.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> Berman, Ilan. "Tightening the Economic Noose." *Middle East Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 41-47. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

Iran's financial sector. These sanctions include freezing bank accounts of individuals associated with human rights abuses or the Iranian nuclear program.<sup>68</sup> They bar Iranian merchants from getting insurance for their businesses, and also include sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), Iran's nationalized shipping company.<sup>69</sup> The harshest sanctions have been imposed by the United States, barring virtually any trade with Iran, except exchanges that involve humanitarian aid.<sup>70</sup> These sanctions have devastated the entirety of the Iranian population, with the sanction of goods hurting lower classes and the sanctions on banking hurting upper classes. The broad sanctions imposed by the U.S. have decreased the quality of life for the majority of Iranian citizens and in recent years have begun to create discontent with the regime.<sup>71</sup>

The sanctions the UN, the EU, and the U.S., have enacted put a considerable economic pressure on Iran, giving the Iranian government adequate incentive to begin discussions with the West to bring about sanction removal. This ability was demonstrated in 2010 with the discussions between the U.S. and Iran over a possible fuel rod swap in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.<sup>72</sup> The deal demonstrated the ability of the current sanctions to bring about negotiations and agreement on a contentious issue. Though the current sanctions have been effective at bringing about a discourse, the imposition of further sanctions has the possibility to stifle the increasing cooperation between Iran and the West. Sanction increases, such as those proposed by the United States Congress and the European Union's tightening of restrictions on IRISL, could hinder discussion with Iran, especially during the P5+1 talks.<sup>73,74</sup> Sanctions have had success in their goals of stifling Iran's nuclear program and bringing about discussion with Iran, but could be strengthened through stricter enforcement, which would not have the side-effect of hampering negotiations.

The United Nations sanctions on Iran bar countries and firms from sending nuclear materials to Iran. The primary goal of the sanctions is to ensure that Iran can never attain

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<sup>68</sup> "European Commission – Restrictive measures in force (Article 215 TFEU)." European Union External Action Service. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2013. <http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/sanctions/docs/m>

<sup>69</sup> Rosett, Claudia. "Iran's Worrisome Shipping News." *The Wall Street Journal*. <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304200804579165743729609738> (accessed November 4, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> "An overview of O.F.A.C. Regulations involving Sanctions against Iran." U.S. Department of the Treasury. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2013. <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/iran.pdf>

<sup>71</sup> Berman, Ilan. "Tightening the Economic Noose." *Middle East Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 41-47. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>72</sup> "Iran signs nuclear fuel-swap deal with Turkey." BBC News. BBC, 17 May 2010. Web. 19 Nov. 2013. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8685846.stm>

<sup>73</sup> Rosett, Claudia. "Iran's Worrisome Shipping News." *The Wall Street Journal*. <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304200804579165743729609738> (accessed November 4, 2013).

<sup>74</sup> "Iran negotiations: John Kerry warns US Congress against passing new sanctions." *The Guardian*, 14 Nov. 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/14/iran-negotiations-john-kerry-sanctions>.

nuclear weapons.<sup>75</sup> This enforcement can only be accomplished if the flow of all nuclear materials is stopped. Even though the sanctions have been successful in stemming the flow of the materials, they are not reaching their full potential because there is still uranium ore being exported to Tehran.<sup>76</sup> The sanctions only succeed in their goal of stopping the program if there is absolutely no more uranium ore sent to Tehran. The best way to achieve this goal is to enforce the current UN sanctions with stricter punishments for violators.<sup>77</sup> Currently, there is no punishment for violators and thus, countries have still been trading nuclear materials with Iran. The Iranian Government and Iranian firms have been trading for uranium ore with Venezuela.<sup>78</sup> Iran is also working to develop relations with various African nations, such as Senegal, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Democratic Republic of the Congo, for this same purpose.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, Kazakhstan and Iran were alleged to have made a secret agreement in 2009 to let Iran import 1,350 tons of uranium for 450 million dollars.<sup>80</sup> This illicit trade of uranium ore to Tehran was in direct violation of multiple UN resolutions. The circumvention of UN sanctions undermines their effectiveness and allows Iran to continue its nuclear program despite the restrictions placed on it by the United Nations.

Unlike the UN sanctions, the U.S. sanctions have concrete punishments for transgressors. Executive Order 13574 mandates the punishment of countries and firms that violate the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) and the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (CISADA).<sup>81</sup> The Executive Order states that the United States Treasury is obligated to punish violators of the sanctions with at least five sanctions out of a list of twelve specified in Executive Order 13590.<sup>82</sup> An example of five of the listed punishments are:

Denial of licenses for the U.S. export of militarily or militarily useful technology to the entity; prohibition of the sanctioned entity from acquiring, holding, using, or trading any U.S.-based property which the sanctioned entity has a (financial) interest in; a ban on a U.S. person from investing in or purchasing significant amounts of equity or debt instruments of a sanctioned person; denial of Export-Import Bank loans, credits, or credit guarantees for U.S. exports to the sanctioned entity; and restriction on imports from the sanctioned entity, in accordance with the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Aghazadeh, Mahdiah. "A Historical Overview of Sanction on Iran and Iran's Nuclear Program." *Journal of Academic Studies* 14, no. 56 (February/March 2013): 136-59.

<sup>76</sup> Esfandiary, Dina, and Mark Fitzpatrick. "Sanctions on Iran: Defining and Enabling 'Success'." *Survival* 53, no. 5 (October/November 2011):

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Berman, Ilan. "Tightening the Economic Noose." *Middle East Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 41-47. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. "Iran Sanctions." Congressional Research Service. Last modified October 11, 2013. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS20871.pdf>.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

These punishments have rarely been enforced on transgressing countries. In the cases of nations such as India, China, and Turkey, however, there are exemptions from further sanctions because every year they work to lessen their dependency on imports from Iran.<sup>84</sup> Pakistan is different because it is currently undertaking a project to increase its trade with Iran. On March 11, 2013, Pakistan began its construction of a natural gas pipeline with Iran. U.S. sanctions prohibit foreign countries or firms from importing Iranian gas or investing in projects and technologies that benefit Iran's gas industry. The construction of the Iran-Pakistan pipeline falls under those provisions.<sup>85</sup> This construction is a direct breach of the sanctions and thus it is the state department's prerogative to reprimand Pakistan.

China, an often overlooked player in the Iran debate, has the potential to be the United States' greatest obstacle, or its greatest ally, in pursuing stability in the Middle East. Currently, China violates UN Resolution 1929 by trading weapons and oil with Iran. China remains Iran's number one purchaser of crude oil, and Iran's largest source of ballistic missile technology and materials.<sup>86</sup> Although China voted to pass the UN sanctions, Chinese businesses have filled the void left by other foreign businesses who comply with the sanctions and no longer trade with Iran, thus becoming the biggest investors in Iran's energy sector and taking up infrastructure projects abandoned by other foreign development companies.<sup>87,88</sup> China profits off its monopoly on the Iranian economy and benefits from the lack of Western business in Iran.<sup>89</sup> However, despite taking advantage of Iran's poor economic disposition, China shares many interests with the U.S. in the Middle East that would be better protected with bilateral cooperation. China's defiance of UN sanctions and strong economic ties to Iran weaken the effectiveness of the sanctions and only drag out the process of trying to achieve nuclear transparency in Iran.<sup>90</sup> The less effective the current sanctions are, the more sanctions will be advised by entities invested in the issue, like the U.S. and the UN, in order to achieve the desired pressure on Tehran. The more isolated Iran becomes from the international community, the more volatile and unpredictable it becomes as well, potentially causing huge increases in world oil prices.<sup>91</sup> With the shared interest of avoiding these complications in mind, the U.S. and China have the ability to cooperate on their differing opinions and evade conflicts of interest. Investing in this dialogue would bring

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Currier, Carrie, and Manochehr Dorraj. "In Arms We Trust: the Economic and Strategic Factors Motivating China-Iran Relations." *Journal Of Chinese Political Science* 15, no. 1 (March 2010): 49-69. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

<sup>87</sup> Scott Warren Harold and Alireza Nader. "China and Iran: Economic, Political, Military Relations" *Occasional Paper*, 2012: 1-46. RAND Corporation.

<sup>88</sup> Downs, Erica, and Suzanne Moloney. "Getting China to Sanction Iran." *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 2 (March 2011): 15-21. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

<sup>89</sup> Currier, Carrie, and Manochehr Dorraj. "In Arms We Trust: the Economic and Strategic Factors Motivating China-Iran Relations." *Journal Of Chinese Political Science* 15, no. 1 (March 2010): 49-69. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

<sup>90</sup> Willem van Kemenade, "China vs. the Western Campaign for Iran Sanctions." *Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 99-114. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

two of the strongest-willed stakeholders in this issue together against nuclear proliferation. As the U.S. disincentives Chinese investment in Iranian industries, it is important to keep two things in mind. First, as the U.S. and China develop a shared stance outside of the formal P5+1 negotiation setting, the U.S. will no longer have a reason to subordinate China's ideas when each member of the forum comes to the table to protect their interests. Also, the more effective sanctions are in persuading the Iranian regime to cooperate with the UN, the sooner China can return their investments to a healthier economy with potential for growth. If the US successfully cultivates bilateral relations and communications with China, it could have huge implications for the future of sanctions in Iran and stability in the region.

## **Future of Sanctions**

Iran's funding of terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah, presents a threat to Israel and its allies. At the current time, attempting to stop this collaboration through imposing more economic sanctions would lead to detriment in other areas of negotiations, such as nuclear negotiations. This is due to the fact that economic sanctions would be effective tools to hinder this cooperation but would be immensely unpopular with Iran. If Iran were to cut off talks, however, then increasing sanctions would be a reasonable solution to Iran-Hezbollah cooperation. The United States already, in a Department of the Treasury list, catalogues Iranian banks and financial institutions linked to terrorism or weapons trafficking and prevents Iran from conducting economic activity within the U.S.<sup>92</sup> The European Union does not have comparable sanctions on these institutions and thus Iran is still able to use the EU economic system to continue funding terrorists and shipping weapons.<sup>93</sup> Though it is not feasible at this time for the U.S. or its allies to stop Iran-Hezbollah cooperation, if Iran were to break off talks, further sanctions on Iran would become a reasonable option to protect the interests of the U.S. and its allies.

## **Recommendations:**

- The U.S. should invest in cooperative and direct dialogue with China on the issue of protecting major shared interests on nuclear nonproliferation and transparency from Iran. By engaging in direct and constructive bilateral discussions away from the formal setting of P5+1 consultations, the U.S. and China can develop a shared stance to protect their individual and mutual interests regarding Iran and the Middle East.
- Propose a UN resolution to enact penalties on countries found to be trading nuclear materials with Iran. The penalties should include a weapons embargo and a reduction in any foreign aid the country receives.
- The State Department should immediately impose the five sanctions previously listed on Pakistan because Pakistan is violating the sanctions imposed on Iran with its

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<sup>92</sup> "An overview of O.F.A.C. Regulations involving Sanctions against Iran." U.S. Department of the Treasury.

<sup>93</sup> "European Commission – Restrictive measures in force (Article 215 TFEU)." European Union External Action Service.

construction of the IP pipeline.

- Propose that all countries withhold further sanctions against Iran, such as the European Union's sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, until such time as diplomatic action on the part of the P5+1 does not succeed.
- In the case of a failed attempt at solving the nuclear question in Iran, the United States should encourage the European Union to prohibit Iranian-linked banks, as designated by the Treasury Department, specifically the Bank Saderat Iran, Bank Sepah, Bank Melli Iran, Bank Kargoshaee, and Arian Bank from engaging in economic activity within the EU to attempt to stem funding to terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah.

## Iranian Nuclear Program

On September 17, 2013 the United States and Iran held direct talks for the first time since 1979. These talks rekindled hope of a better relationship with Iran. Iran's nuclear policy has been the most contentious issue during these negotiations. For the U.S., the question is: can we trust Iran? Iran has a history of hiding various nuclear facilities and of not complying with the International Atomic Energy Association regulations. However, with this new and open communication, the best option for the United States is diplomacy, considering that Iran is willing to negotiate and the United States could benefit greatly. President Hassan Rouhani's more moderate stance concerning its nuclear program provides an opportunity for negotiators to come to an agreement about Iranian nuclear policy. These negotiations represent a turning point for U.S.-Iranian relations, and the United States should be open to gradually lessening sanctions if Iran proves itself trustworthy.

### Background of Iran's Nuclear Program

Iran's nuclear program has always been a controversial issue. Iran first established its nuclear program in 1957 under the regime of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, with the help of the United States through the Atoms for Peace Program.<sup>94</sup> The Atoms for Peace Program was an organization created under the Eisenhower administration to promote peaceful nuclear energy. There are two main events that caused suspicion to arise in the United States and in the international community. In 2002, the National Council of Resistance of Iran revealed that Iran had secret nuclear facilities including Natanz, Iran's current primary enrichment facility, and Arak, Iran's major heavy water plant.<sup>95</sup> As a result, in 2003, in the Paris Agreement, the EU-3 persuaded Iran to suspend its nuclear program for three years and in return the EU-3 did not report Iran's suspicious behavior to the UN Security Council. However, in 2005, it was discovered that Iran had violated the agreement and restarted its program in secret.<sup>96</sup> Iran's inability to suspend its nuclear program for the requested amount of time prompted the recurring question: can the U.S. trust Iran? In 2009, the United States and the EU-3 revealed another of Iran's secret programs, located in Qom, which once again raised concern that Iran had the capability to develop nuclear weapons.<sup>97</sup> Iran has a history of not being transparent or cooperating with the IAEA.<sup>98</sup> The United States should be cautious in these agreements. However, the United States must also take advantage of the opportunity presented by the change in regime. Furthermore, the United States should be willing to compromise in these negotiations.

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<sup>94</sup> David Allbright and Andrea Stricker, "Iran's Nuclear Program," United States Institute of Peace, accessed November 10, 2013, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/irans-nuclear-program>.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, Board of Governors, *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1835 (2008) in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, (February 18, 2010).

Ayatollah Khamenei believes that weapons of mass destruction contradict Islamic beliefs and has repeatedly denied and even criticized the idea of pursuing nuclear arms.<sup>99</sup> Despite these statements against nuclear weapons, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has defended the right of Iran to pursue nuclear technology and refuses to compromise on this point.<sup>100</sup> Iran wishes for the United States to acknowledge its right to enrich uranium for nuclear energy. However, the United States is aware that Iran has enriched more uranium than is needed for nuclear energy in the past and is thus afraid to recognize Iran's right to enrichment for fear that it will lessen the effectiveness of future sanctions. For the United States, the key issue is establishing trust, most likely through more transparency in the nuclear program or a temporary suspension of the program. This one-year suspension would give the IAEA enough time to fully inspect all facilities and provide the U.S. sufficient amount of time to lift sanctions.

## Iran's Nuclear Facilities

Currently, Iran has two nuclear power reactors, Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant and Darkhovin Nuclear Power Plant. Its facilities include, among other capabilities, twelve nuclear enrichment, one nuclear heavy water production, and five suspected nuclear weaponization facilities.<sup>101</sup> Iran's major facilities are the uranium enrichment sites, Natanz and Fordow, the uranium conversion site in Esfahan, and the nuclear research complex in Tehran. Preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon is the United States' primary security concern. Iran has enough low enriched uranium to produce two nuclear weapons if they enriched the uranium to 90 percent, which is the amount needed to create a nuclear weapon.<sup>102</sup> In comparison, only 3.5 percent enriched uranium is needed for nuclear energy.<sup>103</sup> In May 2012, IAEA inspectors found uranium purities up to 27 percent even though 20 percent is the worldwide-recognized maximum that can act as a "fully adequate barrier to weapons usability."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Michael Eisenstadt Mehdi Khalaji, "Nuclear Fatwa: Religion and Politics in Iran's Proliferation Strategy," *The Washington Institute*, Accessed November 11, 2013.

<sup>100</sup> Somini Sengupta, "Rouhani, Blunt and Charming, Pitches a Moderate Iran," *The New York Times*, September 26, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/27/world/middleeast/irans-president-calls-on-israel-to-join-nuclear-treaty.html>.

<sup>101</sup> "Iran: Nuclear Facilities," The Nuclear Threat Initiative, last updated October 2013, <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/iran/facilities/>.

<sup>102</sup> David Allbright and Andrea Stricker. "Iran's Nuclear Program," <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/irans-nuclear-program>.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> R.G. Muranaka, "Conversion of research reactors to low-enrichment uranium fuels," *IAEA Bulletin*, no. 25 (2005): 18.



## Nuclear Regulation

Iran signed and entered a Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA on May 15, 1974.<sup>105</sup> This agreement requires the Iranian government to declare all nuclear material and changes to the reported material inventory, as well as nuclear trade agreements with other countries.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the IAEA has inspections to verify reports of nuclear material, some of which the inspections are entitled to a defined schedule but can be requested under short notice to limited locations within a nuclear facility, and some that arise when the IAEA feels as if the information declared by the member state or information collected during a routine inspection leave them unable to “fulfill [their] responsibility as a nuclear inspectorate.”<sup>107</sup> It first came to the public’s attention that Iran had violated its Safeguards Agreement in 2002 when the two undeclared nuclear facilities were revealed.<sup>108</sup> On December 18, 2003, Iran signed onto the Additional Protocol of the IAEA regulations that expanded the amount of nuclear activities that states will be required to provide to the IAEA as well as the types of facilities, but they have not ratified it to date.<sup>109</sup> Thus, the IAEA has reason to be wary of Iran’s nuclear program due to Iran’s inability to be honest and forthright in the past. Iran has not followed United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929, which outlined the steps and required implementation of the Safeguards Agreement in Iran.<sup>110</sup> In order for the United States to trust Iran, Iran needs to ratify its Additional Protocol and be more transparent in its nuclear program.

## Sanctions

In 1968, Iran signed the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, which was ratified in 1970. It urged that all countries seek to use nuclear capability for peaceful means and encouraged countries to cease development.<sup>111</sup> Iran’s lack of cooperation has led to a myriad of sanctions imposed upon Iran. These sanctions hinder both its economic progress and diplomatic advancement throughout the international community. As a result of the hostage crisis in 1979, the United States imposed an embargo on Iranian oil and froze all Iranian assets, believed to amount to \$12 billion in U.S. Banks.<sup>112</sup> The unfreezing of the banks would

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<sup>105</sup> The International Atomic Energy Agency, *Agreement Between Iran and the IAEA for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, (December 13, 1974).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>108</sup> David Allbright and Andrea Stricker. “Iran’s Nuclear Program,” <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/irans-nuclear-program>.

<sup>109</sup> “Iran: Nuclear Facilities,” The Nuclear Threat Initiative, <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/iran/facilities/>.

<sup>110</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, Board of Governors, *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions* (February 18, 2003).

<sup>111</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,” accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infocircs/Others/infocirc140.pdf>.

<sup>112</sup> Gary Sick, “The Carter Administration,” Iran Primer, accessed November 11, 2013, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/carter-administration-0>.

provide a significant incentive to Iran in these current negotiations considering that the loss of these assets took a heavy toll on Iran's economy. There are several banks that are known to fund terrorist groups in the Middle East or aid Iran's nuclear program: Bank Saderat Iran, Bank Sepah, Bank Melli Iran, Bank Kargoshaee, and Arian Bank. These banks are not included in the United States sanction on Iran.<sup>113</sup> Thus, these banks can be used as a point of negotiation if Iran does not comply with agreements. Furthermore, the government banned all U.S. citizens and firms from trading Iranian oil, or petroleum products that may have been refined in Iran.<sup>114</sup> In 2010, the UN imposed Resolution 1929, which placed more sanctions on ballistic missile activity, and any financial activity concerning individuals involved with Iran's nuclear program, and it intensified the arms embargo to deter Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.<sup>115</sup> On June 3, 2013, President Obama gave Executive Order 13645, which imposed a sanction on any person's or foreign financial institution's "sale, supply, or transfer to Iran of significant goods or services used in connection with the automotive sector of Iran."<sup>116</sup> If the U.S. decides to lessen sanctions, the U.S. should first lift the automotive sector sanction because it poses the least threat to the U.S. in terms of Iran creating a nuclear weapon.

## Current Negotiations

On September 17, 2013, the first direct talks between Iran and the United States began. This event was an important first step because it showed that both countries are looking to improve their relationship and move towards diplomacy. This first step was followed closely by the phone call between President Obama and President Rouhani on September 27.<sup>117</sup> Despite this hopeful communication, the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress considered passing the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013, which would increase sanctions against Iran. As not to disrupt the negotiations, Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe Biden asked Congress

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<sup>113</sup> "Designated IRGC Affiliates and Designated Iran-Linked Financial Institutions," United States Department of the Treasury, accessed November 11, 2013, [http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/irgc\\_ifsr.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/irgc_ifsr.pdf).

<sup>114</sup> "What You Need To Know About U.S Economic Sanctions," The United States Treasury, accessed November 12, 2013, <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/iran.pdf>.

<sup>115</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution Number 1929, Security Council S/RES/1929*, 2010.

<sup>116</sup> The White House, *Executive Order -- Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012 and Additional Sanctions with Respect To Iran*, Office of the Press Secretary, June 3, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/03/executive-order-authorizing-implementation-certain-sanctions-set-forth-i>.

<sup>117</sup> Dan Roberts, "Obama holds historic phone call with Rouhani and hints at end to sanctions," *The Guardian*, September 27, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/27/obama-phone-call-iranian-president-rouhani>.

to postpone The Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013.<sup>118</sup> On October 24, Hossein Naqavi Hoeseini, one of Iran's leading lawmakers, said that Iran stopped enriching uranium up to 20 percent. However, seven days later, Iran's top nuclear official, Ali Akbar Salchi, said that this was a false claim and Iran never actually stopped 20 percent uranium enrichment.<sup>119</sup> This is an unsettling inconsistency for the U.S. because it is trying to establish trust with Iran. If Iran is not completely transparent about its nuclear program there is no way to establish that trust. On November 8, Secretary of State John Kerry joined the negotiations occurring in Geneva. However, they reached no compromise. Negotiators decided to postpone further negotiations until November 20, though the cause of the postponement is unclear. The United States claims that negotiations fell through because the Iranians refused to sign the proposal; however, Iranians blame the French for defending Israel's harsher stance.<sup>120</sup> On November 12, as a show of good faith, Iran announced that it will allow IAEA inspectors access to the Arak facility, which will produce plutonium as a byproduct and is thus considered a threat, and the Ganchin Mines, which produce yellowcake uranium to convert to nuclear fuel. However, Iran has only granted access to the heavy water facilities at Arak, not its nuclear reactor. Nor have they granted access to the Parchin military base, where officials suspect that Iran had tested triggering devices for nuclear weapons.<sup>121</sup> These areas are major points of contention and the U.S. must be resolved to receive access to these sites. Iran's willingness to grant IAEA access to its Arak reactor and the Ganchin Mines show Iran's determination to come to an agreement. On November 20, talks resumed in Geneva. The P5+1 proposed that Iran halt its enrichment to 20 percent which is medium grade level enrichment and convert uranium stockpiles to oxide form. The United States should note Iran's "red-line", however, preventing Iran from building a nuclear weapon is the primary concern. Thus the United States should hold firm in the following recommendations.

### **Recommendations:**

- Congress should not pass the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013 while negotiations occur in between Iran and the P5+1.

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<sup>118</sup> Jonathan Weisman and Michael R. Gordon, "Kerry and Biden Ask for Room to Reach a Nuclear Deal," *The New York Times*, November 13, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/14/world/middleeast/kerry-and-biden-ask-for-room-to-reach-a-nuclear-deal-with-iran.html?ref=nuclearprogram>.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas Erdbrink, "Iran Denies Halts to 20 percent Uranium Enrichment," *The New York Times*, October 30, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/31/world/middleeast/iran.html?ref=iran>.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas Erdbrink, "Iran and Western Powers Clash Over Why Nuclear Talks Failed," *The New York Times*, November 13, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/14/world/middleeast/iran-and-western-powers-clash-over-why-nuclear-talks-failed.html?ref=nuclearprogram>.

<sup>121</sup> Alissa J. Rubin and David E. Sanger, "Iran Says It Has Agreed to 'Road Map' With U.N. Agency on Nuclear Inspections," *The New York Times*, November 11, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/12/world/middleeast/iran-says-it-agrees-to-road-map-with-un-on-nuclear-inspections.html?ref=iran>.

- Secretary of State John Kerry should require that Iran ratify its IAEA Additional Protocol and grant complete access for IAEA officials to oversee Iranian nuclear facilities, including the Parchin military complex and Arak's nuclear reactor, which is currently under construction.
- The United States should propose to Iran that it fully suspend nuclear activity for one year during which it may only enrich uranium at 5% in order to build trust. Secretary of State John Kerry should request that, after that one year period ends, Iran only enrich uranium up to 20% as to prevent possible acquisition of a nuclear weapon.
- Secretary of State John Kerry should advocate for Congress to unfreeze Iran's bank accounts, with the exception of UN Resolution 1737, and urge the EU to do the same if Iran successfully suspends nuclear facilities, restrains nuclear enrichment to 20%, and ratifies IAEA Additional Protocol allowing complete access to its facilities. If Iran continues to satisfy IAEA requirements, then we recommend that the United States lift sanctions accordingly starting with the removal of the sanction on Iran's automotive sector. The last sanction to be lifted should be the sanction on oil.
- If Iran either refuses to comply with the agreement or later violates it, the United States and the EU should also freeze the Iranian assets in the following banks: Bank Saderat Iran, Bank Sepah, Bank Melli Iran, Bank Kargoshaee, and Arian Bank. Congress should also pass the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013 in the case Iran does not comply.

## Israeli-Iranian Relations

There is a long history of tension between the Islamic republic of Iran and Israel. Hostile statements towards Israel by Iran have only exacerbated an already strained relationship.<sup>122</sup> This hostility is evident through ballistic missile tests, political threats, intimidation tactics, and Iran's support to enemies of the State of Israel such as Hamas. Consequently, the United States and Israel have responded to these threats with various tactics such as sanctions implemented by the U.S. and the UN. Also, although Israel has not claimed responsibility for the cyber-attacks targeting Iranian nuclear programs; these attacks have been proven effective in stalling Iranian nuclear programs.<sup>123</sup> These actions have led to increased tensions in the region, creating an atmosphere of contempt that has hindered the success of recent negotiations. Although Israel is strongly against having negotiations with Iran, President Rouhani presented the United States a rare opportunity to negotiate with Iran; therefore, the U.S. should welcome negotiations because of the potential agreement between the U.S. and Iran. Because of Israel's interest to ensure that Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons, these negotiations could prove beneficial in securing regional safety.

### Hamas

As a Jewish state in a Muslim region, Israel finds itself surrounded by hostile factions, some of whom are allegedly supported by the Iranian government. Prominent among these groups, Hamas poses a threat to Israeli security. Furthermore, Hamas claims to receive funding from the Iranian government, a claim that has not been confirmed by Iran. Under such circumstances Israel believes that Iran is partially responsible for increasing anti-Israeli sentiment in the region.

Israel feels threatened by its neighbors and Iran because "many Islamic groups including Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad have repeatedly and openly professed their desire to destroy Israel."<sup>124</sup> Concerns that Iran may be supporting enemies of the state of Israel have been validated after events such as in 2010 when Supreme Leader Khamenei held official meetings with Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal in Tehran.<sup>125</sup> Although specifics of such gatherings are not disclosed, "diplomats estimated that Iran used to give Hamas some \$250 million a year, but one Palestinian official reckoned that only 20 percent of that was now being handed over," however, with new President Hassan Rouhani, there is no guarantee as to how much support Hamas will receive from Iran.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Gawdat, Bahgat, "The Islamic Republic [of Iran] and the Jewish state," *Israel Affairs* 11, no.3 2005: 519.

<sup>123</sup> David Sanger, "Obama Order Sped Up Wave of Cyberattacks Against Iran," *The New York Times*, June 1, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/01/world/middleeast/obama-ordered-wave-of-cyberattacks-against-iran.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/01/world/middleeast/obama-ordered-wave-of-cyberattacks-against-iran.html?_r=0)

<sup>124</sup> Alon Ben-Meir, "Israel's Response to a Nuclear Iran," *International Journal On World Peace* 27, no.1: 63.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Al-Mughrabi, Nidal, "Cornered Hamas looks back at Iran, Hezbollah", *Reuters*.

If favorable advancements are to be sustained, the U.S. should advise that Iran be more transparent with its relations with Hamas. This would be accomplished through the deployment of a UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs team to assess the official relations between Iran and Hamas and report the findings to the international community. These reports would then influence what path Israel and the U.S. take towards addressing Israel's concerns, which would serve as an indicator as to how much of Sanction 103 is lifted.

## Cyber Attacks

In the past, anonymous confirmed cyber-attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities have been successful in deterring Iran from advancing its nuclear program.<sup>127</sup> Sophisticated viruses, as seen in 2010, are capable of penetrating Iranian cyber defenses and have the capacity of damaging electronic systems and acquiring sensitive information.<sup>128</sup> Theoretically, a cyber-attack on a large scale could freeze Iranian enrichment systems for several days and cause irreparable damage to vital systems.

This new avenue for warfare presents many potential benefits, which with appropriate funding and research, could be a very effective approach in dealing with the imminent problem. To Israel's benefit, a program like the one previously mentioned would give Israel backup protocol and a sense of security in the case of failed negotiations with Iran. Because cyber-attacks are currently the most effective, indirect approach to combating the Iranian nuclear program, the U.S. should strongly consider this alternative and further develop technology of that nature alongside Israel. In the unlikely event of Iranian aggression or noncompliance, such technology would be deployed as an alternative to a conventional military assault.<sup>129</sup> Although it might not be the most effective option at the moment, it is the most viable response if negotiations were to fall through. However, this solution would not be permanent, as stalling the system a better-formulated approach could be conceived.

## Benjamin Netanyahu's "Red Line"

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has strongly expressed support of all sanctions on Iran. Netanyahu's support is derived from the harsh economic effects the sanctions have had on Iran. However, Benjamin Netanyahu also recognizes that the sanctions have not rid Iran of its nuclear program. The International Atomic Energy Agency has stated that the number of centrifuges in the Qom nuclear facility had doubled in 2011.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> James P. Farwell and Rafal Rohozinski "The New Reality of Cyber War," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*: 115.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>130</sup> Arshad, Mohammed. "Key portions of Israeli PM Netanyahu's U.N. speech on Iran." *Reuters*. (2012) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/27/us-un-assembly-israel-text/idUSBRE88Q1RR20120927>.

Netanyahu said Iran's nuclear program has to pass through three stages before it could be capable of producing a bomb, and Israel's "red line" is the second stage, which is at 90 percent enrichment of uranium. The red line is the point at which Israel will not tolerate Iran's nuclear program any further. If this red line is transgressed, Netanyahu has committed to taking all measures necessary to halt nuclear proliferation in Iran. It is both the United States' and Israel's top priority to guarantee that Iran does not attain nuclear weapons. In order to satisfy both U.S. and Israeli needs without harming the negotiation with Iran, it is important that Israel's bottom line be considered. If Iran enriches past 90 percent, then the United State's priority is to secure the protection and safety of its allies. Thus, the U.S. should not impede on actions Israel takes against Iran if Iran passes Israel's red line. Hence, the U.S. should evaluate the situation and decide what steps to take as the conflict unfolds.

### **Iranian Ballistic Missiles**

The Iranian ballistic missile program dates back to the rule of the shah. After the overthrow of the shah, Iran primarily developed its program using foreign technology such as that of North Korea. Presently, Iran has the capability to strike any target within a 2,000 mile radius.<sup>131</sup> Although the accuracy of such weapons is contentious, Iran exploits the psychological damage possession of these weapons creates. Israel, being within this radius, fears the threat of an Iranian missile attack, whether it be of a chemical, biological, or nuclear nature. Thus Israel has developed one of the most sophisticated defense systems in the world. Furthermore, Israel has, with US military aid, developed the largest air force in the region, capable of conducting air strikes over enemy territory.

To counteract such a threat, Iran has developed a sophisticated anti-air defense system that has proven capable of taking down air targets in the past, and Iran has also developed many of its nuclear and missile facilities underground as a defense to such a strike.<sup>132</sup> Consequently, an Israeli attack on Iran would be costly, and too many would be impossible. Such sustained air supremacy can at the present only be carried out by the United States. As Israel's biggest ally, the U.S. would support the small nation in the case of a military confrontation as previous American presidents have stated.

With a large military presence in the area, including bases in Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia as well as a large naval presence in the Persian Gulf, the United States is well situated to carry out prolonged attacks over Iran.<sup>133</sup> However, many military analysts predict that even an American assault would be costly to the American forces. Unlike the Iraq invasion,

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<sup>131</sup> Dima Adamsky, Karim Sadjadpour, Diane de Gramont, Shahram Chubin, Eric S. Edelman, Andrew F. Krepinevich, and Evan Braden Montgomery "The War Over Containing Iran: Can a Nuclear Iran be Stopped?" *Foreign Affairs*, 90. no.2 (2011):155-160.

<sup>132</sup> Jim Zanotti. "Israel: Possible Military Strike Against Iran's Nuclear Facilities." *Congressional Research Service*: (2012): 1-57. International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, EBSCOhost: 38.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

the United States would face a country with a developed level of defense technology.<sup>134</sup> Iran holds one of the largest armies and air forces in the world, although obsolete and ill equipped, which would be a challenge to any opposing faction. In addition, the strong patriotism found in many of the Iranian peoples, something comparable to that of the Iraqi people under Hussein. An American assault on Iran is logistically possible; however, it would be costly in terms of money and lives. Considering U.S. involvement in the region over the past decade, the American people would not show popular support for such action. However, the public opinion is subject to change if Iran, a country that has stated its desire to irradiate Israel in the past, attains nuclear weapons.

### **Recommendations:**

- The US should support Israel in the development of a cyber-defense, which should be used as a failsafe in the case of failed negotiations and the continued development of nuclear weapons on Iran's part. This support could come in the form of research and monetary assistance. Israel and the U.S. should not disclose this program to Iran during the negotiations.
- The U.S., along with the assistance of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, should investigate Iranian-Hamas relations and seek a statement from President Rouhani that details the formalities of Iran's relationship with Hamas. If the findings suggest that Iran supports Hamas through monetary, military, or political measures, then the U.S. should partially lift section 103 of American Iranian Sanctions in a monetary amount equivalent to the value that is no longer given to Hamas. The negotiations to reduce Iranian support of Hamas occur after negotiations over Iranian nuclear programs are met. Please refer to the third recommendation of the following section for the exact procedure.
- If there is definitive evidence that Israel's red line has been crossed, Israel has a legitimate claim to take any measures it deems appropriate to protect itself. At such a point, any actions taken by the Israeli government in self-defense should be unhindered by the U.S. If this situation arises the United States should evaluate its options and proceed as necessary.

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<sup>134</sup> Squadron Leader (Retd) ASAD, "Military Strike against Iran by USA -- Israel Coalition: Options and Consequences," Defense Journal 16.



## Implications for the Surrounding Region

For decades, Iran has had heavy economic, military, and political influence in the Middle East. Iran is the country with the sixth largest oil-production in the world and exports billions of dollars in oil and natural gas to regional and international clients. Additionally, Iran's developing nuclear program has raised questions about Iran's military intentions in the Middle East. U.S. allies in the region, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, perceive Iran's increasing military presence and potential development of nuclear weapons as a threat.<sup>135</sup> Iran has also consistently provided support to the Assad regime in Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Iran's support of groups that have directly harmed United States allies affects U.S. interests in the region because of its obligation to defend and maintain friendly relations with United States' allies.<sup>136</sup>

Because of the stable economic and diplomatic relations between Iran and its northern neighbors, such as Turkey and Armenia, these states are not at the forefront of Iranian foreign policy. Instead, Iran's influence in Syria, its possible development of a nuclear weapon, its support for terrorist organizations, and its role in the oil and natural gas markets are the focus of Iranian relations in the region. U.S. action regarding Iran's regional influence should center around these four issues.

### Syria

Iran is a major supporter of the Syrian Assad regime, which is currently engaged in its third consecutive year of a civil war with rebel groups. Although both the Assad regime and the rebels aim for stability, neither has made successful efforts to stop the violence. One glimmer of hope is the Geneva II peace talks scheduled for December 12 2013, which will focus on finding a political solution to terminate the violence that has persisted in the Syrian region since March 2011.<sup>137</sup> The UN, United States, and Russia proposed the talks and Syrian information minister Omran al-Zoubi announced early in November that Syrian government officials would be "open to all ideas," although al-Zoubi did not specify which officials would be present.<sup>138, 139</sup> The Syrian National Coalition, the Assad regime's main opposition in the Syrian Civil War, will also be represented in the talks.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Yoel Guzansky, "Questioning Riyadh's Nuclear Rationale," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2013, <http://proxygw.wrhc.org>.

<sup>136</sup> Afshin Molavi, "Iran and the Gulf States," *The United States Institute of Peace*, 2013, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-gulf-states>.

<sup>137</sup> Lina Sinjab, "Syrians place their faith in Geneva II talks," *BBC News*, November 15, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24960337>.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Muhammed Tawfeeq, "Official: Syrian government to attend Syria II without preconditions," *CNN*, November 6, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/world/meast/syria-civil-war/>.

<sup>140</sup> Ahmad Jarba, "A Moment of Truth Looms for Syria," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 18, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303531204579204200168065482>.

The success of the Geneva II talks depends largely on Iran's desire, or lack thereof, to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict. The other main supporter of the Assad regime, Russia, initiated the Geneva II peace talks and has requested Iran's presence.<sup>141</sup> Iran may or may not comply with Russia's request and attend the talks; regardless, a nuclear agreement with Iran would optimize conditions for initiating Iranian involvement in peace efforts in Syria. Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that he is hopeful that "resolving the nuclear issue would pave the way for the resolution of other issues," namely the violence in Syria.<sup>142</sup> Although not the focus of Iran's November 9 negotiations in Geneva, the Syrian crisis "was discussed thoroughly during side talks."<sup>143</sup> After the first round of negotiations between the P5+1 nations and Iran, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that the talks yielded "significant progress," but did not specify what subjects were discussed. Kerry's refusal to comment on the details of the negotiations indicates that there are distinct issues on the table, which must remain undisclosed in order to reach an agreement.

The pending National Defense Authorization Act would give President Barack Obama further authority to alter the current sanctions imposed on Iran. However, members of Congress who are opposed to mending relations with Iran are aiming to limit Obama's negotiation power through amendments of the bill.<sup>144</sup> Because U.S.-Iranian relations are more hopeful now than they have been in decades, limiting the President's power would only hinder U.S. ability to reach a mutually agreeable result. Not only would an agreement stabilize the Iranian nuclear situation, but it would also promote Iranian support for peace efforts in Syria.<sup>145</sup> While remaining cautious, the U.S. must not waste this opportunity by limiting the tools it has on the negotiating table.

## Hezbollah

Iran provides yearly economic support to Hezbollah, a Shiite militant group from Lebanon that was formed, in part, through Iranian support during the Lebanese Civil War in 1982.<sup>146</sup> Hezbollah intends to create a theocratic government in Lebanon similar to that of Iran, even

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<sup>141</sup> Zulaikha Abdullah, "Russia insists on Saudi and Iranian participation in Geneva II," *Middle East Monitor*, November 19, 2013, <http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/europe/8383-russia-insists-on-saudi-and-iranian-participation-in-geneva-ii>.

<sup>142</sup> Week in Review, "Iran nuclear deal key to political solution in Syria," *Al-Monitor*, November 10, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/weekinreview.html>.

<sup>143</sup> Ali Hashem, "Iran and the two Genevas," *Al-Monitor*, November 12, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/iran-nuclear-deal-syria-progress.html>.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Week in Review, "Iran nuclear deal key to political solution in Syria," *Al-Monitor*, November 10, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/weekinreview.html>.

<sup>146</sup> Bilal Saab, "Rethinking Hezbollah's Disarmament," *Brookings Institution*, 2008, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/09/fall-hezbollah-saab>.

though the current government of Lebanon does not approve of Hezbollah's actions.<sup>147</sup> Additionally, Hezbollah militarily targets Israel, the United States' biggest stronghold in the Middle East, and Hezbollah has been recognized by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist organization.<sup>148</sup> Though there is no confirmed sum of money that Iran annually gives Hezbollah, the Middle East Forum, a prominent think tank focusing on the Middle East, provides estimates that range from \$50 to \$200 million. The Forum also speculates that Hezbollah uses the money in part towards purchasing weapons.<sup>149</sup>

In response to the war in 2006 between Israel and Lebanon, the United Nations Security Council created Security Resolution 1701, stating that members of the UN must "require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon ... other than that of the Lebanese state."<sup>150</sup> By providing equipment and monetary support to Hezbollah, Iran is violating this resolution. Even though this issue is not at the forefront of Iran-United States relations, addressing the issue of Iranian funding to Hezbollah is crucial for the future negotiations. While the United States cannot require Iran to prevent funding Hezbollah, the U.S. should offer an incentive, by limiting an amount of particular sanctions, to Iran to encourage a decrease in funding to Hezbollah. This amount would directly correlate to the sum of money decreased in funding to Hezbollah. Section 103 of the U.S.-Iranian Sanctions states that "the authorization to import into the United States, and deal in, certain foodstuffs and carpets of Iranian origin was revoked."<sup>151</sup> This sanction specifically will be decreased because it would support Iran's economy while not providing income to Hezbollah funders.

To make this proposal feasible, the U.S. should propose to the United Nations that the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs carry out an investigation to determine the monetary value of Iranian support to Hezbollah. The UNDESA should conduct this investigation after nuclear negotiations conclude. Thus, by decreasing Iranian funding to Hezbollah, the U.S. reinforces Israeli security and Iranian support of terrorist groups will not impede upon further diplomatic agreements, specifically regarding nuclear power.

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<sup>147</sup> Jonathan Master, "Hezbollah (a.k.a. Hizbollah, Hizbu'llah)." *Council on Foreign Relations*, July 22, 2013.

<sup>148</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Designation of Kata'ib Hizballah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," *U.S. Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs*, July 2, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/july/125582.htm>.

<sup>149</sup> Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah Finances: Funding the Party of God," *The Washington Institute*, February 2005, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/hezbollah-finances-funding-the-party-of-god>.

<sup>150</sup> "Security Council Calls for End to Hostilities between Hizbollah, Israel," *United Nations Security Council Department of Public Information*, August 11, 2006, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8808.doc.htm>.

<sup>151</sup> "Security Council Imposes Sanctions on Iran for Failure to Halt," *United Nations Security Council Department of Public Information*, December 23, 2006, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8928.doc.htm>.

## Gulf Countries

The countries along the Persian Gulf have maintained strong economic and diplomatic relations with Iran since their inceptions. Iran has aided these Middle Eastern nations in creating economic foundations for their fuel industries.<sup>152</sup> Countries such as Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia rely heavily on Iran for the exportation and importation of basic goods, as well as access to transportation through the Strait of Hormuz. However, with Iranian plans for nuclear development, these countries are now questioning the security of their relationships with Iran.

Saudi Arabia specifically is prepared to take drastic security measures in response to Iran's nuclear development. "If they get nuclear weapons, we will get nuclear weapons," asserted Saudi King Abdullah.<sup>153</sup> Riyadh fears that nuclear capabilities in the hands of Iran will allow Iranians to dictate the oil trade agenda throughout the Persian Gulf. Because oil deposits in the Gulf region are a major component of the Saudi economy, the potential threat of Iranian dominance is enough of an incentive for Saudi Arabia to take military action in response. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the United States will extend a "defense umbrella" to Gulf countries should Iran acquire nuclear weapons; however, this "defense umbrella" was never formally extended to Saudi diplomats. Additionally, anti-western sentiment and the strong push for independence among this region encourages these countries to pull away from U.S. military defense. Because smaller nations along the Gulf often follow Saudi Arabian footsteps regarding foreign policy, the United States hopes to set the standard of nonproliferation with Saudi Arabia in response to proliferation in Iran.<sup>154</sup>

In November of 2013, many international sources rumor that Saudi Arabia has purchased nuclear weapons from Pakistan in response to nuclear development in Iran. Amos Yadlin, a former head of Israeli military intelligence, stated "the Saudis will not wait one month. They already paid for the bomb, they will go to Pakistan and bring what they need to bring."<sup>155</sup> While there is no confirmation that Saudi Arabia has acquired a nuclear weapon, many experts speculate that deals between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are in the works, given that Saudi Arabia has provided funding for Pakistan's nuclear programs in the past.<sup>156</sup> In the event that Saudi Arabia is threatened by Iran's nuclear weapon, the U.S. should offer military protection; however once Saudi Arabia confirms that it possesses nuclear power, the U.S. should no longer defend Saudi land.

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<sup>152</sup> Robin Wright, "The Challenge of Iran," *The United States Institute of Peace*, 2013, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/challenge-iran>.

<sup>153</sup> Yoel Guzansky, "Questioning Riyadh's Nuclear Rationale," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2013, <http://proxygw.wrlc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=85845489&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Mark Urban, "Saudi nuclear weapons 'on order' from Pakistan," *BBC*, November 6, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24823846>.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

## Pipelines

Iran is a fuel supplier for Pakistan, which is trying to fulfill growing energy demands, 50 percent of which are natural gas consumption. Currently, Pakistan consumes all of its domestic gas production and will become a net importer of gas without increased domestic production,<sup>157</sup> while Iran has an estimated 974 trillion cubic feet in proven gas reserves and 136 billion barrels in proven oil reserves.<sup>158</sup> The Iran-Pakistan Pipeline would connect Iran and Pakistan and supply 60 million metric standard cubic meters per day to Pakistan.<sup>159</sup> Both China and Russia have expressed interest in becoming financially involved in the IP project.<sup>160</sup> These two countries see the pipeline as an instrument to expand their commercial and strategic reach in the region,<sup>161</sup> which would be disadvantageous for U.S. interests.

Exempting Pakistan from any of the sanctions that would result from the pipeline being constructed would undermine the bargaining value of sanctions in US-Iranian negotiations. In addition, an exception to the sanctions would set a dangerous precedent for the flexibility of the sanctions. If the status of U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran changes, however, the contingent sanctions upon Pakistan would change as well. The U.S. has encouraged another route, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Pipeline. The TAPI pipeline would be able to deliver roughly half of the IP pipeline's capacity. Turkmenistan has the world's fifth-largest gas reserves.<sup>162</sup> Its involvement is significant to the United States because Russia relies heavily on it as a supplier and the TAPI pipeline would undermine the Russian monopoly on the Caspian states' pipeline routes.<sup>163</sup> This would allow further U.S. influence in this rapidly developing region. Therefore, the U.S. should encourage progress on the TAPI project.

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<sup>157</sup> U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, "Pakistan," *Country Analysis Brief*, December 2006, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Pakistan/Full.html>.

<sup>158</sup> U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, "Iran," *Country Analysis Brief*, October 2007, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Iran/Full.html>.

<sup>159</sup> Ali Mostashari, "The Political Economy of the Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline," *Iran Analysis Quarterly* 4, March 2007, <http://isgmit.org/publications/>.

<sup>160</sup> Ben Lando, "Iran Presses India for IPI Pipeline Answer," *United Press International*, February 18, 2008, [http://www.upi.com/International\\_Security/Energy/Analysis/2008/02/18/analysis\\_oil\\_and\\_gas\\_pipeline\\_watch/4414](http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Energy/Analysis/2008/02/18/analysis_oil_and_gas_pipeline_watch/4414).

<sup>161</sup> John Keefer Douglas, "Fueling the Dragon's Flame," *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, September 14, 2006, <http://www.gees.org/documentos/Document-01840.pdf>.

<sup>162</sup> British Petroleum, "BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2013," *BP*, 2013, [http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/statistical-review/statistical\\_review\\_of\\_world\\_energy\\_2013.pdf](http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/statistical-review/statistical_review_of_world_energy_2013.pdf).

<sup>163</sup> Associated Press, "Gazprom to Buy Central Asian Gas at 'European Prices,'" *International Herald Tribune*, March 11, 2008, <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/03/11/europe/EU-GEN-Russia-Gas-Prices.php>.

## **Recommendations:**

- Congress should refrain from amending the National Defense Authorization Act in ways that would restrict President Barack Obama's authority to control U.S. sanctions on Iran.
- The United States should propose a plan to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for an examination of Iran's monetary contributions to Hezbollah. This amount will be added to the amount given to Hamas to determine the sum of money Iran contributes to major terrorist organizations.
- The United States should propose that Iran lessen economic ties to Hezbollah and Hamas with the incentive of partially lifting section 103 of American Iranian Sanctions. The amount decreased from this sanction should be directly proportional to the amount Iran decreases from its contributions to major terrorist organizations (i.e. Hezbollah and Hamas). The negotiations to reduce Iranian support of Hezbollah and Hamas would occur after negotiations regarding Iranian nuclear programs.
- The U.S. Department of State should create a formal agreement with Saudi Arabia offering full protection and military support should Iran threaten Saudi Arabia with a nuclear weapon. If confirmed that Saudi Arabia acquires its own nuclear weapon, Saudi Arabia will receive complete loss of United States protection against Iran's nuclear weapon and further loss of aid regarding nuclear proliferation in the region.

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