

**Background Guide** 

**Iranian Hostage Crisis** 

#### **Committee Overview**

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Dais: Catherine Carulas and Alex Sadler

*Topic 1*: Iranian Revolution

*Topic 2*: Iranian Hostage Crisis

*United Nations Children's Fund (novice committee)* 

The Iranian Hostage Crisis (IHC) provides a unique opportunity for delegates at JHUMUNC 2014. Instead of each delegate representing a country and working with and against the representatives of other nations, delegate in the IHC will be assigned the roles of American political, intelligence, and military leaders during the Hostage Crisis starting in 1979.

In contrast to the competing aims of varying countries in other committees, the delegates will all be working for the same goal: bringing back the hostages and dealing with the new realities brought about by the revolution. However, each delegate will represent a unique individual with his own unique background, ideals, and motivations. Thus, delegates will need to be able to resolve their differences for the sake of those held hostage.



#### **Overview of the Council**

Today is November 4, 1979. In light of the progressive nature of the revolution in Iran and the hostage situation developing at the American embassy in Tehran, a task force has been assembled with the purpose of addressing the growing security issues at hand. The Iranian Revolution was sparked against the authoritative rule of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and his many human rights abuses. This revolution, and the subsequent hostage crisis, have evoked numerous concerns from the United States. Concerns that affect both the relationship between the United States and Iran and the sensitive geopolitical climate within the Middle East.

The council is composed of twenty-four delegates who fall into four blocs: the president and his staff, the cabinet, the military, and the intelligence community. Although each bloc has clear differences in beliefs and courses of action, collaboration to create a multilateral decision is still very important. The council's primary goal is to recommend actions to be taken in response to the current crises. Because of the seriousness of the situation, all potential action is on the table. This includes diplomacy, intelligence missions, and military force. However, it is requisite that all implications of any activity taken be fully examined by the committee. The decisions of the council will lead directly to policy enacted by the various parts of the United States government.

Normal JHUMUNC Parliamentary Procedure will be used during this session. The committee will open with a Speaker's List and delegates will set the agenda. Once the agenda is set, the discussion will begin according to the agenda. The Speaker's List will be the default, unless there are any motions for moderated or unmoderated caucuses. Once the Speaker's List closes or there are no speakers left, the committee will move directly into voting procedure. Otherwise, the typical committee flow will continue through the discussion. There may be a temporary suspension of rules for "Round Robins", or question and answer sessions for working papers. Typical committee flow will resume, concluding with voting procedure on resolutions/directives that have been drafted and amended.

For the purpose of this committee, directives, communiqués, and press releases may be passed. All items passed must receive a simple majority of the council's votes, with the president making the final decision in the event of a tie. Possible votes are "Yes", "No" and "Abstain." If a roll call vote is motioned for, "Yes with Rights" and "No with Rights" will also be allowed. Any delegate that reports as "Present and Voting" may not abstain.



The council can pass directives, which are shorter and less complex than resolutions. They are generally more specific than a resolution, and also lack the special language of a resolution. Because of the ever-changing situation at hand, decisions must be made quicker and resolutions will prove to be timely. Any action, passed by a directive, will be carried out by the United States government.

Communiqués will function as a communication tool for the committee to interact with individuals and groups that are not members of the task force. These non-members can include foreign governments, American politicians, government employees and even the Iranian revolutionaries. Despite the fact that communiqués do not directly result in action, they must be considered carefully as well.

A press release will allow for the committee to make information public. As a part of a democratic government, the committee has an obligation to keep the American people informed. However, the committee should remember that with a crisis at hand, it must delicately balance between public opinion and operational security.

In addition to directives, communiqués, and press releases passed by the committee, individual members have the capacity to submit secret, individual directives and communiqués. While personal communiqués can be an important tool, secret directives outside of the wishes of the task force carry much risk and may not always be possible. Rogue individuals may face severe consequences that may affect the course of history.

# **Delegate Biographies**

President and Staff

# 1. Jimmy Carter – President of the United States of America

Jimmy Carter is the 39<sup>th</sup> and current President of the United States of America. President Carter is a Democrat and a former United States Naval officer. In foreign affairs, one of President Carter's primary policy goals is promoting universal human rights. Although he has placed emphasis on human rights, as seen with the formation of the Human Rights Coordinating Group in the State Department <sup>[i]</sup>, his standing with human rights can be seen as mixed.

Jimmy Carter has made an effort to create policy that negatively affected the human rights abusers of Africa (South Africa and Rhodesia) and South America (Chile and Argentina).



However, he strategically ignored Shah Pahlavi's many human rights violations within Iran. Jimmy Carter has appeared weak in foreign policy because of the revolution in Iran and also because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Although these incidents have negatively affected his prestige as the Head of State, he still has the time to create and initiate a plan of action that will hopefully rescue the American Embassy hostages and help secure him a second term in 1980.

## 2. Hamilton Jordan – Chief of Staff to the President of the United States of America

Hamilton Jordan is the Chief of Staff to the President, fitting the role of manager and chief advisor to the President. Although he was ineligible for the military, Mr. Jordan was a civilian volunteer in Vietnam. Since then, he has proven himself to be an asset to President Carter, who has often praised him for his detailed analysis on American foreign and domestic policy. Although a controversial figure as a result of several personal problems, Jordan is a valued member of the government. He is expected to be working on gathering detailed accounts from the Iranian hostage crisis and reporting these accounts to the President, advising him on possible solutions and their respective consequences.

## 3. Zbigniew Brzezinski – National Security Advisor to the President

Zbigniew Brzezinski is advisor to Jimmy Carter on issues of national security. He is characterized as a hardliner, with respect to the Iranian Revolution <sup>[ii]</sup>. Brzezinski has called for the Shah to institute a military crackdown on all opposition groups in order to institute a stronger regime led by the Shah. This is in opposition to the plan endorsed by the Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, who believes in using soft power methods.

## 4. David L. Aaron – Deputy National Security Advisor to the President

Having entered the American Foreign Service in 1962, Aaron has since been an important diplomat who has served to benefit the political and economic interests of the United States. He started his career as a political and economic officer in Ecuador, after which he was placed in the NATO division of the Department of State, in which he worked as an officer on the Nuclear Planning Group and on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [iii]. He then became an important member of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency where he was a representative



of the US delegation at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). Between 1972 and 1974, Aaron served in the National Security Council and played an important role in drafting the Schlesinger Doctrine. Since 1977, Aaron has served as the Deputy National Security Advisor. He is a man with a strong personality and therefore is seen as a tough and controversial figure.

## 5. Lloyd Cutler – White House Counsel

Lloyd Cutler's affiliations with the American administration date back to the Second World War during which he briefly worked with the Lend-Lease administration, later enlisting in the US army and establishing himself as an intelligence analyst. Cutler is a specialist in international law and public policy, and was therefore the co-chair of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law, formed at the request of President Kennedy in 1962. He also served as a special counsel and consultant to President Carter on the ratification of SALT II and other international matters earlier in 1979.

# 6. Gary Sick – Special Assistant to the President/Senior Director of the Gulf States, Iran and Iraq

With his special expertise on Iran, he has suggested that it would be unwise for the Americans to become directly involved in the Iranian Revolution as this would lead to a large anti-American sentiment in Iran. He has insisted that it is important for America to engage in positive diplomatic relations with Iran and should therefore address the matter of the Iranian hostage crisis with a greater level of dialogue between the Americans and the Iranian aggressors. As an expert on Iran, it is likely that Sick will play the crucial role of serving as an intermediary between the two countries.

#### Cabinet Members

# 7. Walter Mondale – Vice President of the United States of America

Walter Mondale is the current Vice President under President Carter. Vice President Mondale is a Democrat and a former member of the United States Army. In foreign affairs, Vice President Mondale initially supported the Vietnam War, but later opposed it, realizing the negative effects it had on American foreign policy. He is a strong supporter of a nuclear arms freeze. Mondale, compared to other Vice Presidents, has already had a huge influence on not



only decisions within the Executive Branch but also in policy-making <sup>[iv]</sup>. His access to Jimmy Carter gives him a voice in substantive policy-making. Walter Mondale continues to shape the office of the Vice President and has already made a huge impact on the shifting role of the Vice President in American politics. His power in policy-making should not be ignored within task-force deliberations.

## 8. Benjamin Civiletti – Attorney General

Benjamin Civiletti is the newly appointed Attorney General, previously serving as the Deputy Attorney General. Civiletti has asserted the importance of punishing the Iranians involved with the hostage crisis and believes that they should be internationally tried for their aggression against American citizens, referring to this as a crime of war. He has also suggested that the Iranian Revolution should be seen as a threat and that the United States must act to protect the Pahlavi regime in Tehran.

# 9. George William Miller – Secretary of the Treasury

George William Miller is the newly appointed Secretary of the Treasury, previously serving as the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve. As he is charged with the preservation of financial stability in the USA, Miller has continuously suggested diplomacy as a means of thawing the tensions between the USA and Iran. This is because he believes that any escalation, like military action, would incur unsustainable costs to the American economy, inducing long-term negative consequences.

## 10. Harold Brown – Secretary of Defense

Harold Brown is an extremely important member of the American government and a trusted companion of President Carter. Brown has played a crucial role in the development of American foreign policy on various issues such as the Panama Canal crisis, the Camp David Accords and in arms control. Unlike his deputy, Brown is a man of diplomacy and is extremely opposed to any kind of aggressive response to the Iranian hostage crisis. He has repeatedly suggested that the American government must act in the interests of its citizens and should therefore avoid any kind of explicit confrontation in Iran.



## 11. William Graham Claytor, Jr. – Deputy Secretary of Defense

William Graham Claytor, Jr. is the newly appointed Deputy Secretary of Defense, formerly serving as the Secretary of the Navy. Claytor has made a strong case for military action in response to the Iranian hostage crisis and has referred to waiting for diplomatic talks with the Iranians as a 'waste of time'. He believes that the Iranians are unlikely to agree to a peaceful solution to the crisis and, therefore, the American government must take the necessary steps to protect American citizens.

## 12. Cyrus Vance – Secretary of State

Cyrus Vance's foreign policy is marked by his strong emphasis on negotiation and mutual compromises over conflict<sup>[v]</sup>. During the Iranian Revolution, Vance has advocated for President Carter to call upon negotiations with the Iranian opposition group. He has argued with National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski with what should be done with Iran. Vance has called upon the Shah to appease the opposition and to promise political reforms that will secure new Iranian leadership to be established, contrary to the recommendation by Brzezinski that the Shah should crackdown militarily on the opposition groups.

#### 13. Warren Christopher – Deputy Secretary of State

Warren Christopher started his career by becoming a law clerk to the United States Supreme Court of Justice, after which he went on to serve as the United States Deputy Attorney General until 1969. He has served as President Carter's Deputy Secretary of State since 1977 and is likely to play an important role in negotiating any kind of peace made with the Iranians over the release of the American hostages. He has continuously asserted that the only way to ensure the safe return of the American hostages is to engage in dialogue with the aggressors.

#### *Intelligence Community*

## 14. Stansfield Turner – Director of Central Intelligence

As Director of Central Intelligence, Stansfield Turner is the head of the Central Intelligence Agency and is tasked with coordinating the intelligence activities of the entire U.S. Intelligence Community. Turner serves as the primary intelligence advisor to President Carter as



well as the National Security Council. Turner may have a role in developing and carrying out certain covert and espionage activities that might prove useful for the rescue of the hostages.

15. Bobby Ray Inman – Director of the National Security Agency/Chief of the Central Security Service

The Director of the NSA is always a commissioned officer of one of the military services. Inman is the principal intelligence advisor to President Carter in matters of signals intelligence. He is charged with the monitoring, collection, decoding, translation and analysis of information collected through signals intelligence, e.g. wiretaps and overheard military and diplomatic communiqués.

## 16. Eugene F. Tighe – Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency

As Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Tighe is a three-star Air Force General and serves as the highest ranking intelligence officer of the military services, acting as the primary adviser to President Carter on matters of military intelligence [vi]. Tighe is also the principal military intelligence adviser to the Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, as well as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones.

#### 17. John N. McMahon – Deputy Director for Operations

John McMahon is tasked with coordinating all operations of the CIA, primarily focused on planning covert operations either to gather intelligence or to conduct direct action raids. McMahon works closely with other directors of the CIA, notably Stansfield Turner, and John Irving, the Director of CIA Special Activities Division.

#### 18. John Irving – Director of the Special Activities Division

The Special Activities Division (SAD) is subordinate to the CIA Director of Operations. SAD conducts paramilitary operations as well as direct action raids in countries around the world <sup>[vii]</sup>. As Director of SAD, Irving has a large role to play in terms of any infiltration and covert missions to rescue the hostages.



## Military Community

# 19. General David C. Jones – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

General Jones is a four-star Air Force General. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he is the highest ranking military officer of the US Armed Forces and is the primary military advisor to President Carter, the National Security Council, and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown [viii]. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs does not have operational command over any of the military services. However, the Chairman has the responsibility to present a range of advice and opinions from all of the Chiefs of Staff to the President, where they then can transmit communication to the commanders of the military branches. This strategic planning function allows for the Executive Branch to carry out broad military action utilizing all branches of the military. Because of this, General Jones works closely with the rest of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, specifically the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as the representatives of the other military services.

## 20. General Edward C. Meyer – Chief of Staff of the United States Army

General Meyer is a four-star US Army general and is the highest ranking officer in the Department of the Army. He is the principal army advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as the National Security Council, Secretary of Defense Brown and President Carter. The Joint Chiefs of Staff help the Chairman accomplish his mission to unify a strategic direction for combatant forces and to integrate military forces into an effective team of land, naval and air forces. Like the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of Staff of the Army does not have operational command over any armed forces [ix]. His role is administrative and strategic, as he has a significant role in planning and advising civilian leadership of the armed forces.

## 21. General Robert H. Barrow – Chief of Staff of the United States Marine Corps

General Barrow is a four-star US Marine Corps general, reporting through the Department of the Navy and is a principal member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He served as the primary adviser to President Carter, Secretary of Defense Brown and the National Security Council on all matters pertaining to the Marine Corps. Similar to the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commandant does not exercise operational authority over any troops; rather, his role is administrative and focused on planning and strategy in military decisions.



## 22. Admiral Thomas B. Hayward – Chief of Staff of the United States Navy

Admiral Hayward is a four-star U.S. Navy admiral, serving as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and as the principal adviser to the President, Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council on all matters pertaining to the Navy. He is the highest ranking member of all U.S. Naval forces. His role is strictly administrative and does not involve operational authority over any naval forces. However, his strategic role may be used to coordinate with naval leaders in future deployments.

## 23. General Lew Allen, Jr. – Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force

General Allen is a four-star U.S. Air Force general, serving as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and as the principal adviser to the President, Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council on all matters pertaining to the Air Force. He is the highest ranking member of the U.S. Air Force. His role is strictly administrative and does not involve operational authority over any Air Force personnel. However, he still has a huge sway in military decisions within the White House in terms of strategic planning.

# 24. General James B. Vaught – Director of Operations and Mobilization for the US Army

General Vaught is a US Army General who has seen combat in three wars: World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Vaught had a role in directing the mission in Egypt and works closely with both Secretary of Defense Brown and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. General Vaught may be considered a chief strategist behind any future military deployments to tackle the hostage crisis.



#### Introduction

Earlier today, on November 4, 1979, close to five hundred Iranian students stormed the American embassy in Tehran. They gathered before seven in the morning, and appeared to be protesting outside the embassy gates. At some point in the morning, the crowds grew to an unspecified size and became violent. The growing mob broke through the embassy compound's gates. At this time, the protesters are holding an unknown number of American citizens inside hostage and have complete control of the embassy.

This recent incident has shocked not only the United States but the entire international community. The fact that Iranian citizens took over an American embassy goes against the laws of national sovereignty and diplomatic immunity.

The United States has quite a crisis on its hands, and all the world is watching us at this important hour. Whether it be a rescue mission or retaliation in the form of political intervention, it is up to the delegates of this taskforce to save the lives of the ninety Americans held captive, and to help foster a stable relationship with the government of Iran. By accomplishing this, the task-force must also look towards a resolution that will include the future relationship between United States and Iran. [xvii]

## History

As the hostage situation in Tehran is still developing, not much is clearly known. The protesters appear to have been mainly Iranian youth from Tehran's major universities that were supporting the ongoing revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini. However, direct ties between Ayatollah Khomeini and the hostage takers are still unclear.

The Iranian Hostage Crisis can be seen as further escalation against the United State's alliance and support for the Shah Mohammad Pahlavi. [xviii] This support has not wavered during the several decades after the 1953 coup, where the United States and British spy agencies helped Iranian royalists to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Mosaddegh in Operation Ajax. Many university students are aware of these incidents and have even known about the CIA's involvement in the training of the very brutal government secret police, the SAVAK. This



knowledge has fueled their motives towards establishing a new government; a government free of Western interference.

A few months prior to the onset of the revolution, President Carter angered many Iranians by toasting to the Shah and stating how loved he was by the people of Iran. Because of this, among other things, protesters managed to occupy the embassy in Tehran and hold the hostages captive for a few hours in February 1979. The trend towards violence against the embassy and the increasing number of violent protesters has forced the United States to reduce the staff at the American embassy to around sixty people.

Recognizing the increasing anti-Western threats from Iran, the Carter administration made efforts to establish a relationship with the established revolutionary government at the time. These efforts were futile, because on October 22, 1979, the United States allowed the Shah to arrive in New York to receive medical treatment for his lymphoma. These events have all culminated in a movement that is fueled by anti-Americanism and fear that there will be American involvement in the new political structure of Iran. These events have made it clear that drastic Iranian action against the United States was only a matter of time.

#### **Recent Action**

It was first thought, earlier today, that the Iranians were going to partake in friendly protesting and would only partake in a sit-in. It is apparent, however, that when the embassy guards brandished their firearms, the students saw an opportunity to take hostages. It is also now apparent that Ayatollah Khomeini has given the full support to the student invaders and told them to "go and kick them out." [xix]

There are reports that some American marines were blindfolded and are being paraded around the embassy grounds in front of photographers. It has become clear that one of the main motivations of the students is for the United States to return the Shah to Iran to give him an Iranian trial, as they are not content with the United States keeping the Shah in their country. Relatively little action has been taken by President Carter, as he and his administration are not entirely sure who exactly they are dealing with and who they should be speaking with. Early reports are stating that "surges of patriotism" have been seen all throughout the United States as all of its citizens only wish for the safe return home of their diplomats.



#### **Questions a Resolution Must Answer**

- 1) What action should be taken in order to ensure the safety of the American hostages in Iran?
- 2) What demands is the US government willing to entertain in order to protect the hostages?
- 3) Is military force an appropriate response to the hostage crisis? If so, what resources will be used?
- 4) What precautions need to be taken in order to ensure the safety of other Americans working in embassies around the world? Is reform necessary to prevent a future incident?
- 5) Should the United States consider an option to use the United Nations and the pro-democracy alliance of NATO as a tool to rescue the hostages?
- 6) Can the United States use its diplomatic resources to save the hostages? What kind of resources are at the disposal of the United States, in terms of this crisis?
- 7) What possible courses of action will have repercussions for the perception of the United States in the international community?

#### **Bloc Positions**

President, Staff, and Cabinet

It is very important once again to recognize President Carter's prioritization of human rights. The lives of the hostages are vital to President Carter's concerns, and the human rights issues that plague Iran during this crisis should not be ignored. A diplomatic solution to the hostage situation should be considered as a strong option by the administration. President Carter will most likely pursue military or forceful action only when other options have been exhausted. Not all members of President Carter's staff and cabinet may have the same priorities as the president himself and this will be emphasized in task force deliberations.

# Intelligence

The intelligence community was unable to foresee the events of today's hostage situation. The track record of the United States intelligence community has been unsatisfactory, to say the least. Their own involvement in the overthrow of the previous anti-Western Iranian government and the installation of the Shah has caused many Iranian citizens to develop anti-Western ideologies, especially when they associate the human rights abuses committed by the Shah with the United States. However, the intelligence community will have to rely on the success of its capabilities when dealing with the situation as it develops. Their role in gathering intelligence is



also crucial, as the publicly available information leaving Iran will be expected to lean heavily in favor of Ayatollah Khomeini and the revolutionaries. Successful intelligence means smart decision making.

## Military

The Iranian military's transition to supporting the revolution has removed a key tool to be potentially used to address the hostage situation. Any possible military solution will need to address this reality. The American military is still confident in its capabilities to address the situation in Tehran. The military bloc within the task force must decide what kind of intervention or retaliation is necessary to save the American embassy hostages and what resources should be used for such a course of action. Clashes between the military and executive blocs will be noted in session; however, collaboration and compromise must be met to develop an efficient and allencompassing resolution.

#### Conclusion

The ongoing hostage situation is of clear importance. Ninety people have been captured by a movement that looks to destroy the relationship between the United States and Iran. While the hostage takers have yet to show any desire to harm the hostages, the possibility of harm to the Americans in the embassy requires immediate action to be taken. The situation in Tehran is evolving, so information and operational priorities may change at any time and new events might occur that can trigger even more chaos.

Despite the uncertainty in the chain of events that will follow, it is this committee's obligation, to both the American lives at risk and to the entire country, to develop a course of action that will save those involved and end this crisis, promote American interests in a volatile region and one that will show the international community that such events will not be tolerated. At this crucial moment, all eyes are on us.



#### **Endnotes**

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