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Letter from the Crisis Director

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to the 2019 Davis Model United Conference (DMUNC)! I have the pleasure to introduce you to the Iran-Saudi Arabia Cold War Crisis Committee. My name is Mohammad Qayum and I will be serving as your Crisis Director for this committee on the Iran-Saudi Arabia Cold War. I am a fourth-year political science major here at UC Davis and have the honor to serve as the current president for Model United Nations. Since I am graduating, this will be the last committee I ever run. On my free time, I like to watch the West Wing, watch sports, write, read, and play soccer.

I am excited to serve you all this coming DMUNC, we will have a fun and challenging committee ahead of us. I expect all of you to read up and come in prepared to make the debate exhilarating for everyone.

The topic at hand is not only a complicated one, but one that is entirely relevant to international relations as a whole. I am excited that this topic will serve as my last one with all of you.

Please feel free to reach out to me at with whatever questions you may have!

Sincerely,

Mohammad Qayum
Crisis Director
Iran-Saudi Arabia Cold War Crisis Committee
Davis Model United Nations XVII
Dmunc.iran@davismun.org
Committee Background

This council represents the interests of the Iranian government. From bureaucrats to religious figures and even foreign representatives, the work of this committee is critical to the survival of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As detailed below, this committee has many challenges to face as well as many opportunities to expand Iranian influence throughout the Middle East and around the world. This committee will begin in modern times (present day).

Position Papers

The Position papers are part of MUN that I absolutely expect from every delegate. The format will be as follows: Times New Roman 12 font 1.5 times spacing. The paper should be no more than 2 full pages long with default margins. I expect you to be able to describe your character, their role in committee, the plans you intend to try within committee and who you will work with both in committee and out of committee to achieve those goals. I know that the interests facing Iran are diverse, and the pages you have to write the position paper are limited so I only want you to focus on an aspect of Iranian foreign policy that you find particularly interesting or that your character would be able to influence.
Topic: The Iran-Saudi Arabia Cold War
Background Information

The Iranian Saudi Cold war started after Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the American backed Shah of Iran. This is commonly referred to as the Islamic Revolution of 1979, however, this can be misleading. A large chunk of the population including secular young people and communists helped to play a role in this revolution. Only after the fall of the Shah did Ayatollah Khomeini manage to consolidate his power by purging these other interests. Thus, he was able to set up an Islamic government that relied on religious legitimacy despite the fact that the revolution was only possible because of the work of a diverse part of the population.

Another aspect of this war came from the clash of ideas over who is the legitimate Islamic Government. Before the revolution, Saudi Arabia saw itself as the true Islamic nation because it had two Islamic Holy Sites, Medina and Mecca. Another part of this religious divide came from the fact that Saudi Arabia is mostly Sunni while Iran’s population is mostly Shia. Truthfully, Sunni and Shia actually got along quite well for most of their history, but this divide played into the narrative of both nations opposing each other.

With the Cold War officially underway, Iran began to export revolution to other nations. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, the nation began to “see their revolution as an example for other ‘oppressed’ peoples.” Specifically, they believed that other monarchs in the region ought to be overthrown and replaced with more Islamic governments. While Saudi Arabia was incredibly Islamic, it was also a monarchy so it feared
that its own population could be inspired to overthrow them. Thus, it responded by supporting other autocracies in the region and crackdown on revolution.

Iraq also saw the revolution as a threat but also as an opportunity. They were a secular monarchy right on the border of Iran so were the perfect target for Iranian revolutionary exports. Thus, in 1980, Saddam Hussein invaded Iran with the expectation of a quick victory. However, Iran eventually began to push them back gaining back the lost territory. The war lasted from 22 September 1980 to 20 August 1988. Iranian loses are estimated at 200,000–600,000 killed but Iran claims the actual deaths are much lower.¹

Iraq suffered losses around 250,000–500,000 but Iraq also claims the actual deaths are much lower as well. The geopolitical result of the war was a draw with both nations having the same borders as before the war through the United Nations Security Council Resolution 598. Iraq had access to American, Saudi, and other western nations support. Some of this support included dual use technology that helped Iraq deploy chemical weapons against Iranian troops and Kurdish forces. However, most of the help included war supplies and credit. This is commonly seen as the reason that Iraq was not completely overrun by Iranian forces.²

¹ [www.peacemaker.un.org/iraqiran-resolution598](http://www.peacemaker.un.org/iraqiran-resolution598)
² [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f9DRmC5p-M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f9DRmC5p-M)
Saudi Arabia and Iran have been in a cold war over regional dominance of the Middle East. While there are multiple factors playing into this war for example Sunni Shia differences, oil exports, and Islamic legitimacy, the main source of tension is fundamentally political with both nations believing that they are the rightful nation to control the Middle East. This manifests itself as multiple proxy wars across the region. The critical ones are Yemen and Syria.  

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The War in Data

- 60,223–83,700 killed overall in Yemen (6,592 civilians)
- 500+ killed overall in Saudi Arabia
- 49,960 wounded overall in Yemen
- 3,154,572 people displaced
- 84,701 children died from starvation (per Save the Children) and 2,556 people died due to a cholera outbreak (April 2017–October 2018)\(^4\)

Iran is funding the Houthi rebels in Yemen. While officially denying this, multiple sources from both American and UN organizations claim this is true.

\(^{4}\) [www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-iran-houthis/exclusive-iran-steps-up-support-for-houthis-in-yemens-war-sources-idUSKBN16S22R](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-iran-houthis/exclusive-iran-steps-up-support-for-houthis-in-yemens-war-sources-idUSKBN16S22R)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DbdBluFrlE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DbdBluFrlE)
**Quick Stats Block**

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History

Modern Iran

Iran or the Islamic Republic of Iran is a country in the Middle East with a total population of 81 million with an area of 1.6 million km². Its capital is Tehran which itself has a population of around 8.4 million. The official language is Persian. The current President Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran is often seen as a moderate who wants to improve Iran on the world stage. He ran against the establishment and was in fact not the original first choice of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, so his victory in 2013 was quite a turning point. In fact, he is the first president to speak on the phone with the American president since the revolution.

A common theme throughout Iranian history is the influence of foreign powers in the nation. From British, to Russia, to American powers. Iran has only recently been able to determine its future free from foreign meddling. It is up to this committee to ensure that Iran maintains territorial integrity and its national sovereignty. Can Iran continue to build on its momentum and become the primary hegemon in the Middle East or will it fall back to a failed state subject to the whims of imperial powers? Will you work through diplomatic channels to create deals to thaw out the Saudi Iranian cold war or will you leverage Iran’s military asymmetric advantage to bring her enemies to their knees? Will Iranian civilization stand the test of time?
Yemen

The Yemen civil war is a conflict between the Yemen government which is Hadi led and the Houthi council. The civil war began in 2015 and now serves as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Saudi Arabia backs the Yemeni government while Iran backs the Houthi Council. The war has caused incredible suffering which continues to this day. Despite consistently targeting and killing civilians, Saudi Arabia continues to be armed by Americans and President Trump has doubled down on his intentions to keep selling arms. It is important to note that America and Saudi Arabia have a long history connecting the arms sales dating back to the end WWII. It is not even a uniquely conservative phenomena, as the largest number of weapons sold to Saudi Arabia happened under President Obama in 2012. This adds another layer to the conflict with Iran needing to resist American influence in the region, but Saudi Arabia using superior American technology to achieve its own policy goals.

Syria

The war in Syria is the deadliest conflict currently on going. In the wake of the Arab Spring, protests began against the brutal dictator. This turned into a civil war when Asaad began to crack down on the people. The war has lasted from 15 March 2011 to the present with 367,965–560,000 (December 2018 SOHR estimate) killed, over 7,600,000 internally displaced (July 2015 UNHCR estimate) and over 5,116,097 refugees (July 2017 registered by UNHCR).
While the battle lines are difficult to pin down directly, there are essentially 4 main groups within the war with different international backers. Group 1 is the Syrian government backed by Hezbollah (and Iranian backed group), Iran, and Russia. Group 2 is the Kurdish groups unofficially called the Democratic Federation of Rojava – Northern Syria. This group is backed by Americans although President Trump has recently called for the withdrawal of American forces in Syria. Group 3 is the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria which was initially backed by multiple Gulf States but has not been for a while now. Finally group 4 consists of the remaining rebel groups backed by America, the Gulf States, and Turkey.5

 www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFpanWNgfQY
Resources: Fossil Fuels, Military, Nuclear

Fossil Fuels

Iran has plenty of Natural Resources. In fact, it has the world’s second largest natural gas and fourth largest proven oil reserves. Iran has leveraged with this resource in regard to its foreign policy. It has heavily relied on fossil fuels to power itself. As of 2016, 84% of the energy it creates is generated from fossil fuels. 15% of its energy comes from hydroelectric plants with less than 1% coming from nuclear and all other renewables combined. In terms of crude oil, the country produces around 4.469 million bbl./day in 2017 and exports around 750,220 bbl./day in 2015. Interestingly, given the large proven oil reserves, the country imports no oil. In terms of natural gas, the country exports 11.64 billion cu/m compared to 3.993 billion cu/m imports.

Military

In terms of military capabilities and expenditures, as of 2015 Iran spent 2.69% of its GDP on military expenditures. The following are the main branches of the Iranian military: Islamic Republic of Iran Regular Forces (Artesh): Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force (IRIAF), Khatemolanbia Air Defense Headquarters; Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Islami, IRGC): Ground Resistance Forces, Navy, Aerospace Force, Quds Force (special operations); Law Enforcement Forces (2015).
Nuclear

Iran also has a nuclear program that has come under international scrutiny. While officially a member of the Nonproliferation Treaty, Iran has been found in violation of said treaty with its development of nuclear material. Under the Obama administration, Iran as well as major powers throughout the world came to an agreement called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Iran under the deal has made many of its centrifuges unusable as well as filling up multiple of its reactors with concrete. Furthermore, according to the BBC “Iran's uranium stockpile was reduced by 98% to 300kg (660lbs), a figure that must not be exceeded until 2031. It must also keep the stockpile level of enrichment at 3.67%.” (BBC). President Trump has promised to pull out of the Iran deal on the campaign trail and on May 8th, 2018 the United States officially withdrew.
Changes agreed under Iran deal to limit nuclear programme

Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

Character List

- Eshaq Jahangiri, First Vice President
- Ali Akbar Salehi, Vice President and Head of Atomic Energy Organization
- Sorena Sattari, Vice President and Head of National Elites Foundation
- Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President and Head of Environmental Protection Organization
- Sadeq Khalilian, Minister of Agriculture
- Mehdi Ghazanfari, Minister of Commerce
- Mohammad Abbasi, Minister of Cooperatives
- Mohammad Hosseini, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance
- Ahmad Vahidi, Minister of Defense and Logistics
- Hamid-Reza Haji Babaee, Minister of Education
- Majid Namjoo, Minister of Energy
- Ali Akbar Salehi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, Minister of Health and Medical Education
- Aliakbar Mehrabian, Minister of Industries and Mines Supervisor
- Heyder Moslehi, Minister of Intelligence
- Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, Minister of Interior
- Morteza Bakhtiari, Minister of Justice
- Ali Nikzad, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs
- Masoud Mir Kazemi, Minister of Petroleum Supervision
- Hamid Bebahani, Minister of Roads and Transportation
- Kamran Daneshjoo, Minister of Science, Research, and Technology
- Sadeq Mahsouli, Minister of Welfare and Social Security
- Brigadier General Amir Hatami, Minister of Defence
- Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Commander of the General Staff of the Armed Forces
- Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Commander-in-Chief of the Army
- Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC
- Major General Qasem Soleimani, Commander of Quds Force
- Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari, Commander-in-Chief of the Law Enforcement Force
Questions to Consider

1. Who are our true trustworthy allies?

2. How can we use our marketable resources to our advantage?

3. How far can our military span?

4. How can we best prepare for a potential direct military conflict?

5. How do we maintain the support of the Iranian people?
Conference Information

DMUNC is an annual conference hosted by the student-run organization, Model United Nations at UC Davis, on the University of California, Davis campus. Every May, more than 500 students from across California and the U.S. come to UC Davis to participate in a weekend of stimulating debate. Through simulation of UN bodies and other historical committees, we hope to spread international awareness, appreciation for diplomacy, and a dedication to improving the world. Our goal is to create an enriching educational experience for students to realize their personal potential to be strong leaders, confident public speakers, and concerned global citizens.

With a reputation as one of California's outstanding Model United Nations conferences, DMUNC strives to continue its history of seventeen years of distinction as a novice learning conference for delegates. We thank you for your interest in this conference. As we have from the beginning, DMUNC promises an exceptional educational opportunity for delegates.

For more logistical information, questions or concerns, please visit the DMUNC website at dmunc.org or email the Secretary General, Ms. Romae-Anne Aquino, at dmunc.sg@davismun.org
Secretariat

Romae-Anne Aquino
Secretary General

Elsa Denis
Director General

Katie Ciulla
Under Secretary General of Staff &
Under Secretary General of Finance

Justin Yap
Under Secretary General of Committees &
Under Secretary General of Technology

Sapna Bhakta
Under Secretary General of Public Relations &
Under Secretary General of Delegate Services