

## United States National Security Council

### Welcome

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the BUSUN 2010 United States National Security Council. As you may know, this committee is a part of BUSUN's Interconnected Crisis, which means that you have several days of exciting, fast-paced and intellectually rigorous debate awaiting you at the conference.

My name is Andrew White, and I will be acting as the chair of the USNSC, playing the role of President Barack Obama. I am a sophomore at Brown majoring in International Relations and Economics, and this is my second year participating in BUSUN. Last year, I served as the director of this same committee, so I'm very excited to return to the USNSC as chair, and I look forward to working with you to make this year's committee especially successful.

As those of you who have participated in a crisis committee will know, the format of our committee will be quite different from that of a 'traditional' Model United Nations committee. However, it remains true that good research is essential to getting the most out of your time at BUSUN, so I hope you will all come to the conference with a strong understanding of the many issues we will discuss. Please read the information in this background guide thoroughly, and carefully consider the questions posed at the end of each research topic. On the other hand, remember that the background guide is intended only as a starting point for your research and position papers, so I strongly encourage you to take the time to seek out additional information, and to come prepared to address the unexpected turns of events that are the norm at BUSUN's

Interconnected Crisis.

If you have any questions about either your research or the committee in general, please feel free to email me at [crisis.usa@busun.net](mailto:crisis.usa@busun.net) and I will help you in any way I can. I look forward to meeting all of you in November!

Sincerely,

Andrew White  
US National Security Council Chair  
[crisis.usa@busun.net](mailto:crisis.usa@busun.net)

### Committee History

The United States National Security Council (USNSC) was created in 1947 and is today officially part of the Executive Office of the President of the United States. The USNSC was originally conceived, in light of the emerging threat then posed by the USSR, as a supplement to the State Department in informing presidential decision-making. Today, it has emerged as the chief forum for the President's Cabinet and other important officials to advise him on matters of national security and foreign policy.

The relatively small size of the USNSC has made it key in the President's efforts to coordinate foreign policy stances with various intelligence agencies, government offices and military personnel. As one of the key players in international relations and international organizations, the United States (and by extension, the USNSC) have considerable power to influence the action of the international community on many foreign policy issues. However, it is also true that one of the great strengths of the United States lies in our ability to work with our allies to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, and this is a fact that should be kept in mind when exerting our

influence on the international stage.

Our USNSC at BUSUN will be composed of a slightly smaller version of the real National Security Council, and will consist of the following individuals:

Barack Obama (President of the United States)  
 Joe Biden (Vice President of the United States)  
 Hillary Clinton (Secretary of State)  
 Robert M. Gates (Secretary of Defense)  
 ADM Michael Mullen (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff)  
 James R. Clapper (Director of National Intelligence)  
 James L. Jones (National Security Advisor)  
 Rahm Emanuel (Chief of Staff to the President)  
 Tim Geithner (Secretary of the Treasury)  
 Eric Holder (Attorney General)  
 Janet Napolitano (Secretary of Homeland Security)  
 Robert Bauer (Counsel to the President)  
 Susan Rice (Ambassador to the United Nations)

For more information, you can visit the National Security Council Website:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nsc/>

### **Committee Format and Rules of Debate**

As is the case for all crisis committees at BUSUN, debate in the USNSC will be conducted in moderated caucus, with speaking times being proposed by either the delegates or the chair. Delegates may also motion to enter into unmoderated caucus, during which they are encouraged to break into small groups related to their area of expertise (military, financial, domestic, etc) in order to come to some kind of agreement on the topic at hand. Additionally, the chair reserves the right to suspend debate at any time following the appearance of a guest speaker or any new information that might be relevant to debate.

Unlike non-crisis committees, the goal of the USNSC is not to pass resolutions. Rather, our aim is to address pressing issues of national security and foreign policy through the passage of directives, or policy decisions that will result in a specific action by an institution under the President's control. We have the power, for instance, to order an attack on another nation, but we could just as easily order that a diplomat be sent to that nation to begin a negotiation process. Directives may be drafted by any member of the committee, and are passed by a simple majority vote, though unanimously supported action is strongly encouraged if possible. Delegates may also choose to send out press releases to the world at large, as well as private communiqués to specific countries; these are also passed by simple majority.

### **Topics for Research**

I have chosen to focus in this background guide on Iran's nuclear program and China's changing role as an economic power, two issues of great importance to American foreign policy. However, I have also chosen these specific topics because I think they will give you a more holistic sense of the United States' approach to international relations. Extensive knowledge of the US stance on Iran, for example, will hopefully make it easier for you to understand the logic of similar US policies towards states such as North Korea. Similarly, much of the rationale behind the US approach to China holds true in the United States' relationship with India, another country that is undergoing rapid economic expansion. In other words, while these two issues provide a good starting point, they are far from the only topics of great relevance to the United States, and there are many other issues with which you must be familiar as a member of the USNSC.

## Topic 1: Iranian Nuclear Ambitions

US-Iran relations have been quite strained for some time. Interventionist actions such as the CIA-backed Iranian coup d'état in 1953 or the US support of Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s are seen in Iran as indications of a contradiction between the professed American values of freedom and democracy and a desire to protect American interests in the Middle East by having as direct a role in the region as possible. This, along with Iran's more general desire to reestablish its status as a powerful actor in regional politics, has led to a conflict of interests between the two nations on countless issues of international politics. On the top of this list, of course, is Iran's nuclear program, which the United States sees a direct threat to both its own security and the security of its allies in the Middle East.

Iran's nuclear ambitions first emerged in the 1960s under the US-supported regime of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. At that time, the United States and many other Western nations supported and, in fact, assisted Iran in developing a non-military nuclear energy program. This stance was a direct result of the fact that Iran signed and then ratified the 1969 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This document was the first international treaty to address the question of nuclear power, and while it prohibits any nation from attaining nuclear weapon technology, the NPT allows signatories to develop nuclear technology as a peaceful source of energy. The tenets of this agreement are enforced by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). While many states to later develop nuclear weapons never signed the NPT, such as India, Pakistan and Israel, Iran, as a signatory, received strong US support in the early days of its nuclear program. In addition to acting in compliance with the NPT, however, the US also recognized internally that cooperation facilitated their

ability to monitor the distinct possibility that Iran would attempt to develop nuclear weapons.

After Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, relations between Iran and the US, aided by the Iran hostage crisis beginning that same year, quickly deteriorated. Diplomatic relations were completely broken in 1980, at which point the US firmly believed that Iran was working to move towards nuclear weapon technology. It should be noted that in 1980, the Iranian nuclear program remained in compliance with the NPT. Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton all worked through various channels to deter Iran from continuing to pursue its nuclear ambitions. Most US allies eventually agreed to end cooperation with Iran on nuclear development, and the IAEA was similarly discouraged from working with Iran. The US has also imposed various trade embargoes and sanctions on Iran as a means of deterring further nuclear development. However, Iran does continue to receive some limited support in the international community, most notably from China and Russia (though even these alliances have begun to weaken in recent years).

The United States took a particularly hard-line stance against Iran under President George W. Bush, who famously included Iran in his 2002 "axis of evil" State of the Union address. Following the 2005 presidential election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran has become even more confrontational, repeatedly refusing to comply with IAEA and UN Security Council demands that it halt its enrichment of uranium. This led to 2007 and 2008 UN resolutions freezing the assets of some Iranian firms and individuals as well as imposing sanctions. Chinese and Russian resistance to these measures has made these economic repercussions less severe than the US would have hoped. Despite Iran's actions, many US

allies argue that Iran's right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the NPT should be honored, and that negotiation and diplomacy should be encouraged as a means of reaching an agreement.

While President Barack Obama has been more receptive to the option of diplomacy, attempts to engage in direct negotiation have been largely unsuccessful, and the Obama administration has begun to explore the possibility of instead imposing harsher and more extensive sanctions on Iran. Recently, President Obama participated in an April 2010 summit on nuclear energy during which he worked with Russia and China to reach a consensus on the question of sanctions. As of the writing of this background guide, no agreement seems to have been made on this issue. Within Iran, President Ahmadinejad, with the apparent full support of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, continues to exert his nation's right to nuclear energy. Ahmadinejad officially declared Iran to be a nuclear state on February 11, 2010. However, opposition to Ahmadinejad within Iran is not insignificant, especially following the disputed 2009 presidential elections. Although the opposition Green Movement received strong support from certain segments of the population, it continues to be repressed by the Iranian state. It remains to be seen how domestic affairs will affect the status of Iran's nuclear program.

Moving forward, there are many aspects of the Iran issue for the United States to consider. First of all, what is the appropriate strategy to adopt in terms of more severe sanctions? How can international cooperation on sanctions be achieved? On the other hand, has the possibility of diplomacy been completely exhausted, or should it be further explored? Are there any other means that might be used to influence Iran? What is the stance of other Middle Eastern nations on Iran's nuclear

program, and how do their positions affect the development of situation? Similarly, how can the US best take advantage of sympathetic elements both around the Middle East and within Iran itself to exert pressure on Ahmadinejad and his government?

Additional Resources:

- <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/index-of-countries-on-the-security-council-agenda/iran.html>
- <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iran/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=iran&st=cse>
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4031603.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4031603.stm)
- <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5370436>

## Topic 2: US-China Trade Relations

US-China relations began to shift considerably following the market-oriented economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. President Nixon's policy of détente had already led the US away from viewing as simply a Soviet ally and a communist state. However, Deng's policies, by making business in China possible for, and quite attractive to, foreign firms, set in motion a series of changes that have a significant impact on Sino-American relations today.

There is no doubt that China and the United States have now become incredibly economically interdependent, and this has led to a great degree of political cooperation between the two nations as well. For instance, it has been estimated that roughly two-thirds of China's \$1.95 trillion in foreign reserves are in American securities, and it is clear that this

and other such connections make each nation in some way invested in the economic and political well-being of the other. Nevertheless, a number of social and political issues have stood in the way of the United States' ability to cooperate fully with China, with arguably the most prominent among these being China's history of human rights violations.

US-China tensions over human rights violations first came to prominence following the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, when, in response to the government's violent repression of a peaceful demonstration, the US imposed several economic sanctions on China. Given China's continues human rights violations since that time, as well as the controversial Chinese position on issues such as pollution and freedom of the press, many special interest groups and international organizations continue to push for the US to be more assertive in influencing Chinese action. However, US-China relations remained strong under President Bill Clinton, who believed that China could more easily be brought into compliance with international human rights norms following strong economic integration. Under the Clinton administration, the US granted China permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status and also supported China's bid for World Trade Organization (WTO) membership, which was approved in 2001. More recently, China's notable assistance in various US counterterrorism efforts has further increased ties, and despite continued debate on the domestic level, it is very likely that relations will remain strong for the foreseeable future.

It should be noted that extensive Sino-American economic ties does not mean that the US and China are in accord on matters of international politics. For instance, little agreement between the countries has been reached on issues such as the status of Taiwan or the nuclear programs of both Iran and North

Korea. In fact, many of the recent political disputes between the two nations are linked to their economic interdependence. For instance, President Obama has expressed some concern over China's unwillingness to let the value of their currency increase (although it now seems likely that the Chinese position on this issue will change in the near future). Similarly, in light of the recent financial crisis, China has become much less comfortable with the extent of their investment in the United States. In fact, data was recently released by the Chinese government showing that in January and February of 2010, China sold a notable amount of US Treasury bonds (purchasing has since been resumed at relatively normal levels). The Chinese continue to monitor the US economy carefully, and they are particularly concerned about the possibility that inflation of the dollar will have a detrimental effect on the value of US bonds. Additionally, the influence that China can exert through its considerable investment in the US is of increasing concern within the United States government. The US-China relationship is far from one-sided and American market share is arguably just as valuable to China as Chinese lending is to the United States. With economic factors providing a large enough incentive, it is unlikely, though certainly not impossible, that their various political and economic disputes will lead to some kind of Sino-American conflict. It is therefore in the interest of both nations that their relationship remain stable.

The complexity of the US-China trade relations raises many questions that are essential to current American foreign policy. What action, if any, should the US take in response to continued Chinese human rights violations? Would the impact of sanctions or other economic penalties be too great to consider such action? More broadly, how should human rights, climate change and other political concerns be balanced with the economic

realities of the US-China relationship? Is there any way to decrease American reliance on Chinese investors without having a detrimental effect on the US economy? How should the United States address the prospect of China's continued increase in economic and political power on the world stage?

#### Additional Resources:

- <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/china/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=china&st=cse>
- [http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia\\_policy/ap9/AP9\\_F\\_ChinaQA.pdf](http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia_policy/ap9/AP9_F_ChinaQA.pdf)
- <http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB396.pdf>
- <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=257>

#### Further Research

Though exploring the above topics is a good place to begin your research, please keep in mind that they are only a few of the many issues that could be addressed during this year's BUSUN crisis. As such, I strongly encourage you to keep up to date with both US and world politics between now and when you arrive at Brown in November, paying particular attention to those issues that would be most relevant given the nations participating in this crisis. Listed below are a few news sources I would recommend, though you are certainly welcome to use any others with which you are already familiar.

- <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/>
- <http://www.npr.org/>
- <http://www.economist.com/>