

## TEACHER KEY

### Iran's Islamic Republic

#### Part A: History of Iran

1. When did Persia become Iran? How did the modern state of Iran with its current political system come to exist?

*Persia was renamed Iran in 1935. The Shah (king) was overthrown in the 1979 Revolution. The Constitution was affirmed by the people in 1979, making Iran an Islamic Republic.*

2. Identify (define and explain the significance of) the following events in U.S.-Iran relations.

**1979 Revolution** – *the shah fled during unrest, under Ayatollah Khomeini Iran becomes theocratic republic*

**Hostage Crisis** – *in Nov. 1979, Islamic students take 52 Americans hostage from the U.S. Embassy demanding that the shah be returned from the U.S. to face trial, they are released in 1981 after 444 days, the crisis was a major source of tension between the U.S. and Iran*

**Iran-Iraq War** - *Iraq invades Iran in 1980 over disputed territory starting an 8-year war in which the U.S. and U.S.S.R. become involved*

**Iran-Contra scandal** – *in 1985 the U.S. tries to secretly sell arms to Iran in exchange for hostages being held in Lebanon and funds to be used to aid the Nicaraguan rebels, prompting a massive scandal involving President Reagan and his aids*

**U.S.S. Vincennes** – *this navy ship shoots down an Iranian civilian airplane in 1988, killing all 290 aboard, the U.S. later apologizes*

**U.S. trade embargo** – *in 1995 the U.S. places oil and trade sanctions on Iran saying the country supports terrorism*

**“axis of evil”** – *in Jan. 2002, President Bush refers to Iran as part of an “axis of evil,” saying Iran is pursuing WMD*

#### Part B: The Government of Iran

1. Who was the first Supreme Leader? Who is the current Supreme Leader? How is he chosen? What powers does the Supreme Leader have?

*The first was Ayatollah Khomeini; since 1989: Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamanei;*

*elected by Assembly of Experts; the Leader sets the direction of Iran's policies and is responsible for security*

2. Who is the current President? What powers does he have? How is the president's power limited in Iran?

*The second highest leader is the president, currently Mohammad Khatami; head of executive branch but coordinates all 3 branches, selects PM and Cabinet; popularly elected; limited by constitutional checks on his power and the Supreme Leader*

3. Who controls the military in Iran? How is this unique?

*The Supreme Leader rather than the President/Executive as is the case in other nations*

4. Identify the selection, membership and major responsibilities of the following institutions.

**Majlis (parliament)** – 290 members directly elected for 4 years, must be Islamic, (religious minorities have few representatives); pass legislation

**Guardian Council** – upper house that ratifies legislation, serve 6-year terms, 6 appointed by Leader and 6 elected by Majlis, 6 are Muslim lawyers and 6 are religious scholars

**Assembly of Experts** – clerics that determine successor and constitutional amendments

**Expediency Council** – deals with differences of views between the Majlis and the Council of Guardians

5. In what important ways does the Iranian judicial system differ from that in the U.S.?

*not independent of political influence, laws are based on Sharia*

### **Part C: Iranian Society**

1. Describe Iran's population in terms of the following characteristics.

**ethnic groups** - over half are Persian, other ethnic groups include Azeri, Gilaki, Mazandarani, Kurd, and Arab

**languages spoken** - Persian (Farsi) and Persian dialects, Kurdish, and Turkic

**age** - about 70% are under age 30

**education / literacy** - female literacy rate is 73 percent; male literacy rate is 86 percent (total 79%)

2. What is Iran's national religion? What are the main tenets and requirements of this religion?

*Shia Islam (about 90% of population); Sunni Muslims make up most of the rest*

*Shia Muslims believe there are seven pillars of faith -- the first five of these pillars are shared with Sunni Muslims:*

- *creed (shahada)*
- *prayer (namaz)*
- *almsgiving (zakat)*
- *fasting / Ramadan (sawm)*
- *pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)*

*the other two pillars are:*

- *crusade to protect Islamic lands, beliefs, and institutions (jihad)*
- *requirement to do good and avoid evil*

3. Describe the economy of Iran. What is the basis of Iran's economy? With what countries does Iran mostly trade? What is the standard of living in Iran?

*second-largest oil producer among OPEC nations, oil is its leading export*

*also exports agricultural products although agriculture's share of Iran's GDP has been declining; services make up more than half of Iran's GDP*

*Japan and China are leading export partners; Germany and Italy leading import partners*

*only 10 percent of Iran's women are part of the workforce*

*average monthly income in Iran today is about US \$100; about 40% live below the poverty line*

*problems include high unemployment and inflation*

#### **Part D: Iran's Nuclear Program**

1. What is the status of Iran's nuclear program? What evidence exists that Iran may be able to produce nuclear weapons soon?

*Iran is a few years from finishing a facility that could be set up to produce highly-enriched uranium; Iran appears to be pursuing nuclear weapons capability*

2. Why does Iran claim to need nuclear plants? Analyze Iran's apparent nuclear strategy.

*Iran insists it wants to produce nuclear energy for civilian purposes only. Perhaps this does not make sense since Russia has agreed to provide fuel for one nuclear power plant, a more economical option.*

3. What has the role and response of the U.S. been with regard to the development of Iran's nuclear capabilities? European nations? Russia and China?

*The U.S. has continuously worked to persuade other nations not to give Iran nuclear technology – with more success in the case of Europe and limited success with China and Russia.*

4. What impact is the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq likely to have on U.S. efforts to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power?

*Will the U.S. be able to pay more attention to Iran? Will Iran be more concerned about a possible military action? Will the U.S. help reformers in Iran? Will the U.S. act unilaterally or gain the assistance of other nations in dealing with Iran?*