***Iran Briefing Paper* Study Guide**

*Instructions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper OR type them into this document*

**Preface:**

1. What two events led to a strain in the relationship between the U.S. and Iran.

2. What event helped “inaugurate a wave of political activism” in the Muslim world? Describe the Muslim World

3. theocracy-

4. What principle guides the Iranian Theocracy?

5. Democratic elements of Iran’s political system?

6. Conflicts of legitimacy in Iran?

7. Summarize the history, economy, and religious culture of Iran in a few sentences.

**Brief Political History**

8. Describe the Shi’ite/Sunni split by summarizing the major beliefs of each.

9. Islamic doctrine’s view of religion and politics (traditionally)?

***Legacy of Authoritarianism***

10. What empire, which came to power in 1501, declared Shi’ism as their official “state religion”?

11. Describe events of 1921 in Persia?

12. Describe the structure of Reza Shah’s government.

13. Summarize Muhammad Reza Shah’s time as leader.

14. Describe the importance of oil on Iran’s economy under Muhammad Reza Shah’s leadership. (give statistical data to support your answer)

15. Rentier state-

16. Describe the modernization of the Iranian economy.

17. Ultimate result of Iran’s modernization process on the economy? Political life?

***The 1979 Revolution***

18. What factors make this revolution unique from other modern revolutions?

19. What policies did Muhammad Reza Shah put into place that made so many Iranian’s unhappy?

20. 2 “sides” of the Iranian conflict before the revolution?  
21. 2 factors that “combined to bring about a revolutionary crisis?”

22. Describe each of the following members of the “revolutionary coalition”

a. Urban poor

b. Moderate middle class

c. Leftist opposition

d. Bazaar Merchants

e. clergy-

23. Describe the period of “dual sovereignty”.

24. What event ensured that the shah was “finished”?

25. Why did Barzargan’s provincial government get taken over by “radical revolutionaries.”

**Political Institutions**

***Branches of Government***

26. Is Iran presidential/parliamentary? Unitary/federal?

27. Describe the election of, term, duties, and limits of the Iranian President-

28. Describe the powers and sources of legitimacy of Iran’s Supreme Leader-

29. Terms of members of the Council of Guardians? Duties?

30. Basic duties of the Assembly of Religious Experts? Election Procedures?

31. Terms of members of the Iranian Parliament? Duties?

32. Terms of members of the Expediency Council? Duties?

33. Describe the role of the Judiciary in Iran.

34. What two institutions are the “unofficial watchdogs and storm troopers of the clerical establishment”? How do they perform this function?

***Parties and Elections***

35. Who is eligible to vote in Iran? How many eligible voters are there?

36. What electoral features make Iran democratic? Non democratic?

***Constitution***

37. List some “oddities” and paradoxes” of the Iranian Constitution.

***Bureaucracy***

38. Describe the “second stratum” of Islamic society in Iran. Where are they most prominent?

39. What distinguishes the Revolutionary Guards (the Iranian military) from Nigeria’s military?

**Citizens and Society**

***Cleavages***

40. Describe the relationship between the middle class and the clergy in Iran. Why does this type of relationship exist?

41. How have the clergy been viewed by the general public since the Iranian Revolution? Why? (use page 29 to help, as well)

***Civil Society***

42. Describe the goals and methods used to achieve them in the Iranian Cultural Revolution

43. How is western society viewed in Iran among some segments of the population?

44. What is the “paradox of post-revolutionary politics” in Iran?

***Participation***

45. What is the role of “students”( in Iranian politics? Why?

***Belief Systems***

46. velayate-e faqih-

47. From what type of legitimacy does Khomeini derive his power? Examples?

***Elites***

48. What are some features of Iran’s government that make it a “semi-theocratic” government?

***Gender***

49. What has been Iran’s approach to women’s rights since the revolution in 1979?

50. Define “equality-with-difference”. Examples? Consequences for some women?

51. Examples of improvements made in women’s status in Iran?

**Political Economy**

***Role of Government in Economy***

52. Summarize the “pressures” that weakened Iran’s economy in the 1980’s.

53. Summarize the beliefs of each of the following regarding Iran’s economy:

Pragmatists-

Radicals-

Conservatives-

***Formal Economy***

54. What percentage of Iran’s economy is accounted for by oil?

55. What are the most difficult problems facing Iran’s economy? Defend this answer with data/economic indicators.

56. Describe Iran’s reaction to these problems.

***Informal Economy***

57. Describe the influence of the Bazaar merchants on Iran’s economy. What other country’s elite can they be compared to?

58. Bonyads-

59. Explain what is meant by “public money is like holy water; everyone helps himself to it.”

***Interface with Global Economy***

60. Describe “Islam Internationalism” and give examples of this.

61. Potential vulnerabilities of relying on oil as a principle export?

62. How does Iran’s relationship with the West complicate its economic policy?

**Public Policy**

*Common Issues*

63. Key players in policymaking in Iran? What causes reform to be difficult?

64. Describe the “social justice legacy” of the revolution.

65. What were the main motivations for bringing down Iran’s high birth rate in the 1980’s?

66. What policies did the government put into place to reduce the fertility rate in Iran?

67. Examples of human rights violations in Iran?

68. Which three restrictions draw the most criticism?

**Major Challenges**

***Domestic Challenges***

69. What is the major domestic challenge in Iran?