



Background Guide

Iranian Embassy Siege Crisis

1 | Retaking the Iranian embassy in South Kensington, London

JEJUMUN IX

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Committee Introduction

This committee is about the Iranian Embassy Siege that took place from April 30 to May 5th, 1980. Six armed men stormed into Iranian Embassy in Prince's Gate in South Kensington, London. Embassy staff, visitors, and police officers were taken, hostage. This crisis committee explores what could have happened during this ordeal. JEJUMUN has a long history of hosting hostage crises. In 2021, the committee explored the Hotel Mumbai event. Committees like these have proved to be engaging and meaningful to both chairs and delegates as they allow committee members to make creative decisions. Iranian Embassy Siege (IES) Crisis handles issues that are common in hostage crises such as threats from hostages, discordance between delegates, and several unexpected challenges. Delegates must work together to effectively resolve these issues. The committee seeks to emphasize the significance of cooperation in a time-straining environment. By modeling a siege crisis, the delegates would learn how each person, with their own special capabilities, can contribute to improving a community's circumstances. Such a message will teach respect, selflessness, and confidence to delegates. Crisis committees will always remain distinct from other committees such as the General Assembly (GA). To each their own taste, but Crisis might be the most suitable for students who enjoy fast-paced, restless, and committees.

We recommend all delegates to familiarize yourselves with crisis ROPs beforehand, even if you are not a strong crisis delegate.

Agenda Introduction

Delegates of this committee will tackle a difficult hostage situation, with . Collectively, their priorities will be to escape the Iranian embassy with the least amount of harm done to them. However, cooperation will not always be easy, and there will be doubts between delegates, especially, so when obstacles arise. The significance of this Iranian Embassy Siege Crisis is its relevance in current society. Terrorist attacks still exists from the world's most dangerous regions to sometimes the capitals of G7 nations. People are given two choices: to negotiate or fight. The delegates of this crisis will face a dilemma between whether fighting violence with violence is a better alternative to negotiating despite all the risks. Because this Crisis committee is based on a real event, Crisis updates and the chair/director's course of action will be based on and relevant to what happened during the embassy siege. Therefore, it is highly encouraged that delegates do an ample amount of research. Despite the Crisis mainly containing British characters, there will nonetheless be diverse roles. Each character will have different backgrounds and skills, their idiosyncrasies will make up for the lack of national variety in characters.

Letter from the Chairs

Welcome to Iranian Embassy Siege,

Hi I'm Emily Noh, a rising junior attending Korea International School Jeju. I was born in South Korea, but I spent half of my life in Canada. I've been participating in MUN for a total of 2 years. I am very excited to be the Head Chair for JejuMUN IX this year. I hope that I meet more skilled delegates and learn about how to be a better delegate myself.

Hi I'm Justin Hwang, a rising senior attending Korea International School Jeju. JejuMUN 6 was the first MUN conference I attended as a delegate. Though I had participated in a previous conference as a staff the previous year, it was an entirely different experience to actively participate. Despite numerous challenges, we were able to learn more about the inner workings of a MUN conference that we previously were not able to know as delegates. Thank you secretariats and Mr. Harris for making this conference possible. It was truly an eye opening experience.

Greetings delegates! I'm Roy Lee, who will be serving as the deputy chair for this conference. Currently, I am a junior attending Korea International School Jeju, and this is the 6th crisis committee experience for me. In this conference, you as hostages will seek to escape the Iranian Embassy. We hope you make the best out of this conference; we hope you make new friends, have fun, and gain valuable experiences. We're looking forward to seeing you all in the conference! If there are any further inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us via email, thank you.

Key Terms

BBC

Abbreviation for the British Broadcasting Corporation: a British organization that broadcasts on television, radio, and the internet

Embassy

The group of people who represent their country in a foreign country

Iranian Arabs

They are part of the Arab, Arabian people cluster within the Arab World affinity bloc. This people group is only found in Iran. Their primary language is Mesopotamian Arabic. The primary religion practiced by the Iranian Arabs is Shia Islam, one of two major denominations of Islam. The followers of Shia Islam are called 'Shi'as' or 'Shiites'.

1979 Khuzestan insurgency

one of the nationwide uprisings in Iran, which erupted in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution. The unrest was fed by Arab demands for autonomy. The uprising was effectively quelled by Iranian security forces, resulting in more than a hundred people on both sides killed.

Democratic Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Arabistan (DRFLA)

An Iranian Arab militant group founded in 1979, most famous for the 1980 Iranian Embassy siege in London, England. It was led by Arab nationalist Oan Ali Mohammed, who was killed during the siege by British SAS operatives.

Khuzestan Province

One of the 31 provinces of Iran. It is in the southwest of the country, bordering Iraq and the Persian Gulf.

Oan Ali Mohammed

As the DRFLA leader, Mohammed was one of the key figures responsible for the Iranian Embassy Siege.

Historical Background

The Iranian Embassy Siege began when the 6 members of the DRFLA stormed the embassy at South Kensington London. Oppression of the Arab population in the province of Khuzestan by the new Iranian regime motivated the attackers, attempting to draw attention to this issue from the world. During the 1 month preparation time for the terrorists, they armed themselves with machine pistols, semi automatic pistols, a revolver, and several Soviet-manufactured grenades.

At 11:25 the group subdued the police officer Trevor Lock who was still able to press the panic button before being taken down. There were 2 BBC visitors and a total of 26 hostages were kept within the embassy. The terrorists declared their demands, which was to release the 91 Arab prisoners as well as a plane to fly those hostages out of the UK, with the deadline for these demands set as noon of May 1st under the threat that the embassy would be blown up.

Responding to the panic call, police officers sealed the area and tried to establish contact with the terrorists. Soon, the area was filled with journalists. KOBRA, chaired by the Home Secretary, took charge of the emergency crisis team. In case the hostages were harmed, the SAS would now take charge. The British government was determined not to give in to terrorist demands and have no terrorists leave the country. They also considered that the Iranian government would not give in.

DAY 2— the SAS members sneaked into adjacent buildings next to the main hostage building, secretly drilling a hole in the wall to secretly eavesdrop on the terrorists. Chris Kramer, a hostage whose health condition was worsening, had to be released. He would release information to the police afterward. Owen, the terrorists in charge of negotiation and the only one capable of speaking English, realized that his demands were never going to be met after the second setback of the initial deadline, and requested for a plane to guarantee his safe passage.

DAY 3— the 3rd day of the hostage crisis brought nothing but new demands by Owen, for he threatened to kill Abdul Fazi Ezzati since the police refused to reinstall previously cut telephone lines. Owen ordered Sim Harris, a BBC reporter, to dictate his demands in place for him. At 1500 hours, Tony Crabb, a BBC reporter, wrote down Owen's demands, which were:

- The arrival of Arab ambassadors as negotiators
- A coach for the terrorists, hostages, and ambassador to be taken to Heathrow Airport for them to be taken from the Heathrow airport to the Iranian airport.
- An aircraft for the final transport

On the final day (DAY 5), the hostages were let go, but the KOBRA crisis management team from the UK government did not have any hopes of the situation being resolved peacefully, which is when the SAS stormed the embassy.

(We hope that the delegates would be able to resolve the situation before the SAS intervenes, though that may be a difficult task)

Current State of Affairs

The hostage situation itself was already concluded on May 5, 1980. However, it had a lasting legacy. The killing of one of the terrorists by an SAS soldier was brought into light, escalating into a UN-scale debate of whether the killing was justified as hostages reported seeing the intruder throw weapons out the window and hang a white flag.

During the early stages of the siege, the Iranian government was highly willing to use the situation to portray the intruders as martyrs. While this siege did not alter the nature of the Iran-United Kingdom relations, Britain closed its embassy in Tehran, Iran in 1979 following the 1978 Iranian Revolution. Britain did not have an embassy in Iran until 1988, when it was reopened.

Most noticeably, however, many accolades were awarded to the key figures of the siege. Police Constable Trevor Lock was awarded the George Medal—the second-highest civil honor in the UK—for his conduct during the siege. The SAS, previously lesser-known to the world as a military force, is now widely renowned worldwide as one of the most elite task forces globally.

Historically, the siege would take its place in British history as a defining moment. With both the BBC and ITV covering the situation, even the air time for the World Snooker Championship (global pool competition) was cut short. Several journalists saw breakthroughs in their careers, with one receiving a BAFTA nomination.

Stances of Parties

Overall Stances for Parties

Special Air Service (SAS)

As the elite task force of UK serving since WW2, their primary goal is to ensure the elimination of all terrorists while risking minimal hostage lives. As such, maintaining team communication as well as with the UK officials is crucial to their operational success. The SAS was a relatively little known force outside the military circle although they were active since WW2, but following their success on their embassy raid, they solidified their reputation as a fearsome task force.

Hostages

Hostages, like their name suggests, should place their primary goal on survival. As there are 26 hostages trapped in a single building, inappropriate actions of even a single member can bring disastrous results (such as provoking the terrorists). Additionally, each member must do their best with their professional ability to document the situation and strategize new plans to hold out until the rescue arrives. For instance, Sim Harris, a BBC reporter, used the telephone to negotiate for a doctor.

UK Parliament

The government of the UK must consider the diplomatic result of their every action and even their implications. It is critical that they do not simply give in to the requests of the terrorists, for this would devalue the prestige of the nation and even further encourage the terrorists to stretch their demands. However, they must also consider the lives of the hostages, for their deaths would cause imminent diplomatic strains.

Character Introduction

Abolhassan Banisadr (Iranian President)

President of Iran during the time of the attack in 1980.

Mohammad-Ali Rajai (Prime Minister of Iran)

The Prime Minister of Iran selected by President Abolhassan Banisadr

Sadegh Ghotbzadeh

The Foreign Minister of Iran.

Peter de la Billière (Real)

Posted as a G2 special force at Army Strategic Command and commanded SAS Group.

Michael Rose (Real)

General; Commands the 22 Regiment, SAS, which performed the assault on the embassy building.

John Dellow

The director of operations for the UK's police force.

David McNee

Commissioner of the Metropolitan police force.

Max Vernon

Police negotiator that attempted to negotiate with Oan (Leader of the attackers).

Sonia Beaubois

Psychiatrist that assisted Max Vernon in his negotiation with attackers.

William Whitelaw

The Home Secretary and De-facto Prime Minister of the UK.

Cllr George Pole

Mayor of South Kensington (Where the Iranian Embassy is located) in 1980.

Saddam Hussein

Leader of the Iraqi government, which trained the 6 attackers of the embassy.

Ayad Futaih al-Rawi

Saddam Hussein's top general of the Iraqi military.

Melanie Davis

The Chief Executive of ITN, a British television network that managed to bypass the UK police and plant a live camera showing the SAS assault.

Ian Trethowan (Director-General of the BBC)

Director-General (Chief Executive) of the British Broadcasting Channel during the time of the siege.

Stephen Egerton

British ambassador to the Republic of Iraq from 1980 to 1982.

Possible Solutions

Solution #1: THIS IS SPARTA!!!



Request the full mobilization of the SAS to storm the embassy. The SAS will arrive at some point whether or not the delegate with military power requests it, but calling early for support will certainly reduce any potential delays. This decision cannot be made without thorough planning and consideration of the situation before a public directive (meaning mutual agreements are required) can be submitted. If, for example, there is minimal risk of violence but a delegate (hostage) attempts to mobilize air support, the chairs likely will disapprove of such bold decisions. Note that this request cannot be made late in the conference, for it takes time to plan the siege and train the soldiers (in real life the SAS even built a mock building to practice in—a thoroughness to keep in mind).

Chairs' discretion note: In real life, none of the hostages had the permission or affiliation required to authorize such movement. In fact, only the COBRA and the commander of the regiment involved had this authority. However, to reduce predictability and allow for more room for thought for the delegates, we decided to place one or more roles possessing military connection.

Solution #2: Meditate



Alternatively, should the situation get out of hand, delegates may continue to peacefully negotiate the terrorists until the SAS arrives. This may be beneficial since true privacy cannot be achieved as long as the terrorists are in the vicinity. If a poorly made

attempt to contact the SAS early is caught by the terrorists, however, then not even the UK government can guarantee what will happen...

Solution #2: Be Sneaky



Note: This method in itself is not a solution, but certainly has the potential to resolve impending issues within the embassy.

It is possible to lie to the terrorists with a very convincing reason why the telephone must be used, talk with the officers to somehow request for specific or special items the delegate wishes to acquire without the terrorists overhearing, and then miraculously bring the item into the embassy under their captors' close scrutiny. This is a possible scenario, but it would be very difficult to pull off, as the reasons given to the terrorists for telephone use must be very convincing, and Oan Mohammed, one of the terrorists, understands English. Mohammed most certainly would like to listen to diplomatic conversations, and his gunmen would most certainly be interested in inspecting whatever package is brought into the embassy. If a delegate lied that it contains medicine, they will make sure it is, in fact, medicine, so be very sure to devise a clever plan.

Be careful, because the terrorists are quite unpredictable; they may suddenly conduct a search at random times, and if any suspicious items are found, they will be put on high alert. This means that no delegates can request for a firearm and hold on to it for the rest of the conference for the right moment to use it, if they ever did manage to smuggle it.

This is a very rare opportunity. There may be many negotiation attempts, but only a select few will actually happen throughout the entire conference. We highly discourage using it for selfish or superficial purposes, such as trading in a firearm when medicine is needed.

The chairs will not reply to any directives regarding the importing of items, public or private, to provide feedback on how well thought out the plan is. This means that, **without warning**, the slightest mistake in wording can result in severe retaliation or instant death from the unimpressed captors should they find something there should not be.

Questions to Consider

1. How will the delegates conserve resources and their health while being confined in the embassy?
2. How will the delegates persuade the terrorists to allow in a doctor for a sick hostage, or, let out a hostage should the need for a hospital arise?
3. Delegates in charge of the KOBRA committee, how will you manage the SAS team to successfully intervene in the situation with minimal hostage casualties?
4. What diplomatical strategies are needed to carefully finesse the balance between listening to the demands of the terrorists enough so that they relax and not giving in to evil deeds?

Bibliography

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