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2010-11 INTEGRATED POLICY EXERCISE: CRISIS IN IRAN

Preparatory Memo for World Food Programme

Your team will represent the World Food Programme (WFP) in the negotiations surrounding the UN Security Council. The WFP does not have voting power on the Council, but senior officials from the organization sometimes appear and speak before the Council in an advisory capacity. You should come prepared to provide expert background on food shortage concerns in the midst of a humanitarian crisis and to discuss your organization's possible contribution to the crisis response. This memo introduces some of WFP's engagement with Iran and aims to help orient and kick-start your team's background research.

Overview of the World Food Programme

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. As the United Nations' (UN) frontline agency on the fight against global hunger and food shortage issues, WFP works continuously to respond to worldwide emergencies. In 2006, WFP distributed more than 4 million metric tons of food to 87.8 million people in 78 countries. 63.4 million of WFP's beneficiaries were aided in emergency operations. In addition to WFP's work as a crisis response unit, the organization actively promotes policies to prevent global hunger and help communities become more food secure. From its headquarters in Rome and more than 80 country offices worldwide, the organization's ultimate objective is to create the conditions where food aid is no longer needed.

WFP Emergency Operations (EMOPs)

WFP's emergency response operations cover three main types of crises that include sudden natural disasters, slow-onset disasters and complex emergencies that may involve conflict or widespread social and economic disruption. When a state of emergency has been declared, WFP works quickly to discern how much food assistance is needed and the means in which to deliver such assistance. WFP experts work in tandem with UN Emergency Teams to draw up plans of action and a budget. WFP Country Directors are responsible for addressing immediate needs where \$500,000 is made available for use through WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA). However, the use of IRA funds is limited to within the first three months of the operation. Following rigorous assessment, the Country Director can draw up an EMOP to appeal for international funds and food aid. EMOPs can assist populations in need by food distributions or other projects such as food aid exchange for reconstruction work.

WFP and Iran

The primary threats to Iranian food security include:

1. The high number of Afghan and Iraqi refugees. The latest estimates suggest that Iran continues to host some 950,000 Afghan and 50,000 Iraqi refugees.
2. The need for targeted cash assistance to replace blanket food subsidies, which do not focus aid on the communities most in need.

Under an agreement with the Iranian government and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), WFP has been assisting refugees in Iran to ensure that their basic food needs are met. WFP launched a protracted relief and recovery operation entitled “Food Assistance and Support for Education to Afghan and Iraqi Refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran” in an effort to provide general food distribution to 18 settlements. WFP has also enhanced female school enrolment objectives in Iran by providing take-home oil rations to primary and secondary school-aged girls as an incentive for regular school attendance.

Iranian Refugee Concerns

Iran has been home to refugees for over 25 years and is currently hosting approximately 100,000 Afghan and Iraqi refugees. While the UNHCR and the Governments of Iran and Afghanistan have been actively seeking the repatriation of the refugees for the past four years, the sheer number of refugees in Iran poses immediate pressures on the country’s food security. This delicate balance of food sustainability could be easily swayed in the event of a humanitarian crisis. Currently, WFP field visits to Iran are undertaken twice a year to all 15 refugee camps covered under WFP assistance. WFP operations in Iran include the following:

- *Solicit Donations.* In July 2007, WFP welcomed a donation of \$7,000 from Qatar Airways to WFP’s refugee-assistant programs. WFP’s work in Iran costs a total of \$9 million and is entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions from the public and private sectors.
- *Port Operations.* Iran has four modern and well-equipped main ports on the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Bandar Abbas is currently the entry port for all WFP-imported commodities. No warehouse is required at the port as all items are loaded onto trucks for direct delivery once the containers have been cleared by customs.
- *Road Transportation.* Air cargo transportation is not commonly used in Iran. WFP therefore relies on the extensive Iranian road network that links regional centers. WFP also uses the country’s trucking fleet to reach more disconnected regions. While trucks are largely available in Iran, they are quite obsolete models and consequently lack reliability and regularly cause unexpected delays.
- *Emergency Capacity.* Two domestic airports have been assessed as possible locations for airdrops or airlifts in case an emergency erupts in the western part of the country.

Key Questions

As you conduct your background research for the IPE, you should be thinking about the types of advice WFP might need to give – as well as the types of programs it may need to lead – in an Iranian crisis related to the nuclear program. Key questions include the following:

- What leverage does WFP have in Iran? Can the food security agency influence Iran’s behavior?
- What is the role of a specialized UN agency in the event of a nuclear crisis?
- How can WFP work with other organizations in coordinating emergency relief efforts in Iran to ensure food security?
- How effective are WFP’s programs in the event of a nuclear crisis given its heavy dependence on Iran’s infrastructure networks? How can WFP develop contingency plans for food delivery?

During our pre-IPE sessions in November, we will ask your team to answer some of these questions aloud. You should come prepared with one-minute answers to each of the questions above. One purpose of this exercise is to motivate you to prepare – which will make the IPE more interesting and useful to you. A second purpose is to inform the other teams of the types of positions you are likely to take, which can help them come prepared as well.

A Few Readings

Below are a few recent readings to help you get started. These are not meant to be at all exhaustive; you will need to undertake additional research to prepare for the simulation.

- “World Food Programme, Iran” *WFP*, 2010
<http://www.wfp.org/countries/iran>
- “Food Security in Iran” *A Dorosty, NNFTRI*, 2007
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/iran/action/page.do?id=YCA0922075000E>
- “Iran’s Ahmadinejad slams West over food crisis”, *Forbes*, 2008
<http://www.forbes.com/feeds/afx/2008/06/03/afx5074215.html>