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FOIA Case #07-0222

Pages 1 through 4 redacted for the following reasons:

(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(5)

Constitutional Powers of Iranian Governmental Bodies

Assembly of Experts. This body of 86 clerics who are elected by popular vote elects the Supreme Leader from its own ranks. Most of its members occupy prominent governmental, clerical, and societal positions.

Council of Guardians. This body consists of twelve clerical and lay jurists who have the authority to veto legislation passed by the Parliament, or *Majles*, which they deem as being inconsistent with Shari'a law. Additionally, the Council approves all candidates for election to the Assembly of Experts, the Presidency, and the *Majles*. This authority give the Council significant influence in shaping the composition of these bodies, and the exclusion of candidates, particularly the Reformists, has been the source of much political debate.

Expediency Council. This body resolves deadlocks between the Council of Guardians and the *Majles*. As a result, its importance depends upon the degree of alignment between these two parliamentary houses. Under Khatami's presidency the Council of Guardians vetoed much of the *Majles*' legislation increasing the Expediency Council's influence. Additionally, the Council has supervisory powers over all the branches of government, making the Council's chairman second in power to the Supreme Leader.

Supreme Leader. Ultimate political authority in the regime lies clearly with the Supreme Leader. He appoints the Expediency Council, selects the six clerical members of the Council of Guardians, and appoints the head of the judiciary, who selects the other six jurist on the Council of Guardians. The Supreme Leader also appoints and directs the commanders of the military and police forces.

President. Given the powers of these bodies, the Iranian President has extremely limited powers. His authority is limited to social, cultural, and economic matters not foreign policy.

Ad Hoc Structures. The Expediency Council and the Supreme National Security Council are not constitutionally chartered bodies. They were created by the Supreme Leader Khamene'i to consolidate his power demonstrating the flexibility of his authority to manipulate the formal system. However, such dramatic measures have been rare.

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(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(5)

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11 June 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR Col (b)(6)

SUBJECT: Trip Report and Report of Meetings Concerning the Iran Project

(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(5)

4. **Ken Pollack, Brookings Institution, 5 June 06, Washington, DC.**

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