**International Atomic Energy Agency**

**Venezuela**

**Represented by Alice Dong (Lorne Park Secondary School)**

**Topic I**

ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM - Ever since nuclear weapons were first produced in the Manhattan Project in 1945, it has created threats of activities involved with these weapons of mass destruction. Due to the rapid growth of use and mass production of nuclear warheads, it has been decided by the UN and other international entities that nuclear weapons should only be used as a deterrent or not at all. This agreement for the use of nuclear weapons is an excellent solution for Venezuela, considering they posses almost no nuclear infrastructure, and nuclear expertise. As both a member of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban, Venezuela has shown little interest in acquiring weapons of mass destruction. However, proliferation concerns are raised within the country's technical alliances, military trade, and nuclear cooperation with Russia and Iran, among other countries.[[1]](#footnote-1)

As nuclear terrorism becomes a greater issue in American rhetoric and culture, the notion of terrorist organizations using nuclear weapons has become more and more common throughout, despite great efforts against such actions. Due to this dilemma, Chávez’s concern for Venezuela’s pursuit of nuclear power in South America, and also partially in the Caribbean, has increased. Chávez’s anti-US rhetoric and support for Iran’s nuclear involvement is a main aspect to the growth of nuclear terrorism within Venezuela, being one of many countries involved in this issue.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Any move taken by Venezuela to pursue nuclear weapons would go against existing international law, as the Treaty of Tlatelolco prohibits nuclear weapon possession in the Caribbean South America. This would lead to the empowerment of Iran’s strategic interests in their goal of nuclear supremacy. The presence of nuclear terrorism in Venezuela becomes a serious security problem for South American and Caribbean nations, due to the combined theft of nuclear waste, fissile material for nuclear bomb, and the complete acquisition of nuclear armed submarines, planes and bases. There has been an increase in numbers of nuclear smugglers, Soviet bloc military and intelligence personnel peddling their trade, and disappearances of enriched uranium from production and storage sites. This ultimately results in the accumulation of fear of nuclear terrorism in the country of Venezuela.

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**Topic II**

NUCLEAR ENERGY AS AN ALTERNATE SOURCE OF ENERGY- A nuclear cooperation agreement with Russia was signed by Venezuela in late November 2008, as Russian President Dmitry Medvedev paid a visit to Caracas. The deal coincides with the commencement of joint Russian-Venezuelan naval activities. (This deal was officially signed after Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin proposed a nuclear cooperation during Chavez’s visit to Moscow in September.) "Our collaboration in recent years has strengthened considerably and is flourishing. I think that it has great prospects for the future and we will actively work on it," Mr Medvedev said after the nuclear pact was signed. [[3]](#footnote-3) The occurrence of this event ultimately shows the issue of Venezuela’s nuclear ambitions, and their extent to achieve them. Despite their involvement in nuclear nonproliferation agreements and their lack of nuclear facilities and expertise, Chávez has maintained his support for Iran’s right to produce a complete nuclear fuel cycle, and has been in search for other nuclear alliances with countries capable of developing nuclear weapons. Additionally, although Venezuela has acted as an extensive oil exporter to the United States, Chávez has grown skeptical of their relationship and believes they are planning to invade his country to seize his oil and overthrow him. Analysts suggest that Chávez could be serious in obtaining nuclear power reactors and nuclear weapons, questioning whether he is searching for a new source of energy, new alliances, or a new weapon. [[4]](#footnote-4)

Since the country has very little nuclear infrastructure and expertise, Venezuela has shown no signs of posing a risk of nuclear proliferation in the past. Venezuela’s vast oil reserves are enough to cover their energy needs, resulting to their little interest in developing nuclear power. In the early 1990’s, Scientists in Venezuela explored the possibility of using nuclear power to process crude oil, but plans were not made to develop this technology. Being the world’s fifth largest oil exporter, also containing rich hydroelectric resources, it is not mandatory for Venezuela further develop nuclear power to meet its energy needs. "There is no constituency for a nuclear program in Venezuela outside of Chávez's inner circle” - Dr. Harold Trinkunas. Ultimately, the belief of the country’s nuclear power needs is not supported by the public, the development of nuclear power is not promoted, and the military has not requested the use of nuclear technology for rational defines purposes. This essentially implements the idea of how nuclear plans appear to be more of Chávez’s personal and political ambitions, rather than Venezuela’s genuine energy needs. [[5]](#footnote-5)

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**Topic III**

MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM IN IRAN- Iran’s nuclear capabilities have been viewed with concern for more than two decades. Their vast amount of nuclear infrastructure and weapons combined with their history of deception create global mistrust. After many negotiations for more that two years, a settlement was finally agreed on in July 2015. This deal creates a compromise, as it establishes limits on Islamic Republic’s nuclear activities in exchange for relief from economic sanctions that crimped oil exports and hobbled its economy. [[6]](#footnote-6) Countries all over the world perceive Iran’s image in a pessimistic way, mainly in Israel and most of Western Europe, based on their lack of respect for their people’s personal freedom, and their nuclear ambition. [[7]](#footnote-7) One way that Iran can gain a more positive reputation is to focus on their domestic policy and be more isolationist rather than foreign towards other nations. By finding ways to cooperate and compromise with other countries through communication, they can come to better conclusions instead of resulting in arguments.

Middle east powers, including Israel and Saudi Arabia view this agreement as a trigger to Iran’s theocratic regime to the mischief of regional security.[[8]](#footnote-8) To find out what members of the agreement can do to assuage the concerns brought by countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, one must examine why these countries have the concerns in the first place. Iran in their eyes, is a sponsor of terrorism that uses their revenues to further their political ambitions which so happen to be the opposite ambitions of Israel and Saudi Arabia. For Saudi Arabia, their interests lie in strengthening and maintaining Sunni governments across the middle east. Iran has directly challenged them in places like Yemen where a Sunni Monarch government allied with Saudi Arabia is being challenged by Shia Houthi rebels paid and armed by Iran. For Israel, its interest lie in protecting itself from threats made by terrorist groups like Hamas and Hizbollah, which coincidentally are also heavily subsidized and armed by Iran. Now that the deal unfreezes Iran’s assets and gives the ability to make more revenue off trade, these worrisome countries believe all the deal has done is expand Iran’s war chest against them. The way to solve this is by keeping certain sanctions on Iran that prohibits them from importing or exporting arms and funnelling money to outside groups. This will ease Saudi Arabia and Israel’s worry of Iran sponsoring these types of groups. A second way to ease these groups is by promising them that with more money, Iran will be less threatening, which is what this deal has exactly done. Finally the third way to calm these countries’ anxiety is to negotiate a measure in the agreement that Iran must use their newly unfrozen money for domestic use to help their crippled economy rather then spending it on foreign policy.

1. <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/venezuela/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.caribbeannewsnow.com/topstory-Commentary%3A-Nuclear-terrorism-in-Venezuela---a-new-security-threat-for-Latin-and-the-Caribbean-2515.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/3529615/Russia-and-Venezuela-sign-nuclear-energy-deal.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/venezuelas-search-nuclear-power/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/venezuelas-search-nuclear-power/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/irans-uranium-enrichment> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/irans-uranium-enrichment> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/irans-uranium-enrichment> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)