

Jim Clunan's Persian Puzzle: Governance of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Each role was played by an audience "actor" at Jim's Lunch and Conversation talk on May 22.

THE SUPREME LEADER. A cleric who exercises oversight and control over the regular Armed forces, and over the "Army of the Guardians of the Revolution" often abbreviated as the "Revolutionary Guard." The Supreme Leader has oversight and control of the three components of the Judiciary. The Supreme Leader appoints half the members the Council of Guardians. The Supreme Leader appoints members of the Expediency Discernment Council. The Supreme Leader approves the foreign policy formulated by the President.

ASSEMBLY OF EXPERTS. The Supreme Leader is appointed by the Assembly of Experts. They are 86 Islamic Scholars. They are elected by the people. However, to be a candidate for election, the person must be approved by the Council of the Guardians of the Constitution. How does one get to be on the Guardians Council?

COUNCIL OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE CONSTITUTION. This body is a 12 member council to be composed of six Islamic jurists, who are up to date on "the present needs and the issues of the day." These six are appointed by the "Supreme Leader of Iran" Supreme Leader of Iran. The other six are jurists, "specializing in different areas of law," to be elected by the 290-member Parliament, known as the "Majlis of Iran" Islamic Consultative Assembly. These second six are selected from a slate of Muslim jurists nominated by the Head of the "Judicial system of Iran" Judicial Power. The Guardians Council also approves legislation passed by the Parliament, approves a slate of parliamentary candidates for election by the people to the Parliament, and the slate of candidates for the Presidency. [Think of this as an arrangement that has the NRA on one hand, or Ralph Nader on the other, nominating the only candidates for the American Congress.]

THE HEAD OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF IRAN: JUDICIAL POWER. The entire legal system -- "from the Supreme Court to regional courts, all the way down to local and revolutionary courts" -- is under the purview of the "Ministry of Justice (Iran)" Ministry of Justice, but in addition to a Minister of Justice and head of the Supreme Court, there is also a separate Head of the Judiciary. The Justice Minister is to be chosen by the President from a list of candidates proposed by the Head of the Judiciary. The head of the Supreme Court and Prosecutor-General are also to be "nominated" by the Head of the Judiciary "in consultation with the judges of the Supreme Court." The Head of the Judiciary is appointed by the "Supreme Leader of Iran" Supreme Leader.

THE PRESIDENT. Unlike many other countries, in Iran the President does not have full control over foreign policy, the armed forces, or the nuclear policy of the Iranian state, which are under the control of The "Supreme Leader of Iran" Supreme Leader. The President appoints the Secretary of National Security Council. The President formulates the foreign policy through the National Security Council and after seeking Supreme

Leader's approval. These policies are usually executed by Minister of Foreign Affairs in terms of general relationships with other nations and by Secretary General of the Security Council. The latter executes more important and critical issues such as the nuclear energy policies and major economic decisions.

The President is elected by the people. However, to be a candidate for election, the person must be approved by the Council of the Guardians of the Constitution. The current President, Ahmadenijad, is a veteran of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS. The Revolutionary Guards, formally known as the Army of the Guardians of the Revolution, is an ideological fighting force with its own Ministry, separate from the larger regular army. It serves to discipline the people. It is said to be active in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.

The Expediency Discernment Council of the System is an administrative assembly appointed by the "Supreme Leader of Iran" Supreme Leader. It was originally set up to resolve differences or conflicts between the "Majlis of Iran" Parliament and the "Council of Guardians" Council of Guardians, but its true power lies more in its advisory role to the "Supreme Leader of Iran" Supreme Leader. This Council has had supervisory powers over all branches of the government since 2005, further curtailing the power of the President.