Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

JONATHAN BALLIN

BA (University of Victoria, 2008)


Department of History

Friday, January 24, 2020
9:00 A.M.
Human and Social Development Building
Room A264

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Martin Bunton, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Penny Bryden, Department of History, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Scott Watson, Department of Political Science, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Prof. George Spence, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract
Canada has long stood firm against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. When the Conservative government of Stephen Harper was elected in 2006, Canada departed significantly from many traditional aspects of its foreign policy, including some of its anti-nuclear proliferation policies. However, Harper's government continued the previous government’s strong stance against Iran’s secretive nuclear program. Rhetoric from Harper and other members of his government concerning Iran and its nuclear program became increasingly alarmist and belligerent through the course of the administration. This rhetoric reached a peak after the Conservatives were elected to a majority government in 2011, when it started to become intertwined with Canadian policy on Iran. Although the position of the Canadian government had been developed in conjunction with its Western allies, Canadian solidarity with its allies began to unravel after the election of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in August, 2013. Rouhani took a less confrontational approach to Western countries opposed to its nuclear program, and reopened negotiations with the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany, in order to give the international community confidence that Iran’s nuclear program could not create weapons. As negotiations progressed, Harper and his government did not soften their tone or ease their policies regarding the nuclear program. The Conservative Members of Parliament consistently used more hyperbolic rhetoric about the Iranian nuclear program in interviews and public releases than when addressing Parliament. This suggests that part of the motivation for its tough position on Iran’s nuclear program was domestic politics. The Canadian position on Iran’s nuclear program was also driven by Harper and his cabinet ministers’ personal beliefs and the government’s heightened concern for the safety of Israel.