

# Timeline of Military and Security Events

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## 1979

May 5 - The Revolutionary Guards were established by decree of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Aug. 10 - Iran canceled a \$9 billion arms deal with the United States made during the shah's reign.

Aug. 18 - Khomeini appointed himself commander-in-chief and ordered a general mobilization against Iran's Kurdish nationalists. Fighting in northern Kurdistan continued until the fall of Kurdish strongholds on September 3.

## 1980

Feb. 19 - Ayatollah Khomeini appointed President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr commander-in-chief of the military. Bani-Sadr was deposed on June 10, 1981.

Sept. 22 - Iraqi troops invaded Iran, following weeks of clashes between their Iraqi forces along the border. Baghdad's conditions for peace included Iranian recognition of Iraqi claims to the entire Shatt al-Arab waterway and disputed territory, and the return of three Persian Gulf islands occupied by Iran in 1971. Iraq quickly penetrated deep into Iranian territory. Oil installations were targeted by both nations, leading to a suspension in oil shipments. PLO chairman Yasir Arafat began the first mediation effort on September 25, which was followed by a similar attempt by an Islamic Conference Organization delegation.

Sept. 28 - The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution calling on both nations to cease hostilities.

Oct. 1 - Iran said it would do its part to keep the Strait of Hormuz open to oil-tanker traffic in spite of regional hostility. Heavy bombardment was reported on cities in both nations, while fighting on the ground centered around the oil-rich southern cities of Khorramshahr and Abadan.

Nov. 12 - Kuwait charged Iran with an attack on its border post with Iraq. A second attack was reported on November 16.

Dec. 5 - As heavy fighting continued in Khuzistan, Iran hit the Iraqi oil terminal at Faw and Iraq struck an Iranian oil pipeline at Bandar Abbas. On December 16, OPEC appealed to the two nations to end the war.

## 1981

Jan. 14 – United Nations envoy Olof Palme began another round of peace talks to end the war, but he reported on January 18 that neither side would back down from their hard-line positions.

Jan. 28 – Iraqi President Saddam Hussein told the Islamic Conference Organization summit in Saudi Arabia that he was prepared to return captured Iranian territory in exchange for recovery of territorial and offshore rights usurped by Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini said troops would fight until final victory.

Feb. 3 – Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati announced that Iran's preconditions for peace were, "withdrawal of Iraqi troops from all Iranian territory and compensation for damage inflicted." He added that Iran was not ready for diplomatic relations with the United States.

Sept. 27-29 – Iran claimed to have driven Iraq back across the Karun River from Abadan to Ahvaz on the southern front, capturing 3,000 Iraqi troops. The breaking of the Iraqi siege of Abadan was considered a turning point in the war.

Oct. 3 – The Supreme Defense Council was formed to coordinate the war effort, supervise a military reorganization, and begin an intense period of training.

Dec. 2 – Iran denied purchasing arms from Israel.

## 1982

Jan. 22 – Parliamentary Speaker Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said, "Iran does not want to attack the small countries of the Persian Gulf and does not want to interfere in their internal affairs." The next day, Bahrain's prime minister accused Iran of instigating Shiite communities throughout the Persian Gulf to overthrow their governments.

March 1 – Following weeks of heavy fighting around Susangerd, Shush and

Bostan, Special U.N. Envoy Palme announced failure to mediate a truce between Iran and Iraq. Jordanian volunteers left to join Iraqi troops.

March 9 – Ayatollah Khomeini announced that President Saddam Hussein was "past salvation and we will not retreat even one step."

May 24 – Iran recaptured the City of Khorramshahr, an oil-rich area in southern Iran, taken by Iraq during its initial attacks in 1980.

June 12 – Iran dispatched a contingent of 1,000 Revolutionary Guards to Lebanon after Israel's invasion. Iranian forces supported the formation of Hezbollah, a Shiite militia, but never directly confronted Israel.

July 19 – American University of Beirut President David Dodge was taken hostage. He spent the next year in Iran, before being released after Syrian intervention.

June 20 – President Hussein announced that Iraq had begun to pull out of Iran. He announced completion of its withdrawal on June 29, which Iran said was "a lie."

July 12 – Iran rejected a U.N. ceasefire resolution. Iraq reported an Iranian attack that same day near the southern oil port of Basra.

Oct. 4 – The United Nations Security Council unanimously voted for an end to the Iran-Iraq War and a withdrawal of all forces from occupied territory. Tehran rejected the move, while Baghdad said it would accept a ceasefire.

### **1983**

April – Washington suspected Iran was indirectly involved in a suicide bombing which killed 63 people at the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon. The Reagan administration blamed Hezbollah for the attack, which U.S. officials believed was being funded by Iran and Syria.

Aug. 23 – Reacting to internal squabbling, Ayatollah Khomeini urged unity between the military and the Revolutionary Guards

Sept. 17 – President Hussein said Baghdad wanted peace with Tehran based on mutual non-interference. The next day Iran repeated threats to block oil exports if its shipments were disrupted.

Oct. 23 – A suicide bomber attacked the barracks of U.S. Marine peacekeepers in Beirut, killing 241 Marines, the largest loss of U.S. military life in a single incident since Iwo Jima in World War II. The United States suspected Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Dec. 3 – The U.S. press reported the Reagan administration's policy shift toward Iraq was because of a belief that an Iraqi defeat would hurt U.S. interests.

### **1984**

Jan. 23 – The Reagan administration put Iran on the State Department list of governments supporting terrorism.

Feb. 11 – Iraq attacked civilian targets in Dezful, triggering a new phase of the war. Iran responded on Feb. 12 by shelling seven Iraqi cities. After repeated incidents, Iran accepted an Iraqi ceasefire offer on Feb. 18. Both agreed to allow a U.N. mission to assess damage in civilian areas. But in late February, Iran announced new offensives on the northern and southern fronts.

March 3 – Iran charged Iraq with using chemical weapons, a practice which Iraq continued throughout the war.

March - Hezbollah abducted American hostages in Beirut, including CIA station chief William Buckley, who died in captivity.

May 13 - After a run of at least six Iraqi strikes on tankers doing business with Iran, Iran for the first time attacked a Persian Gulf ship, the Kuwaiti *Umm Casbah*, marking the outbreak of the "tanker war." Parliamentary Speaker Rafsanjani declared on May 15, "Either the Persian Gulf will be safe for all or for no one."

July - The CIA began giving Iraq intelligence that was reportedly used for subsequent mustard gas attacks against Iranian troops.

Sept. 20 - Hezbollah was once again suspected of being behind an attack against the new U.S. Embassy in Beirut, which killed 24 people.

## 1985

Feb. 21 - The United Nations reported that both Iran and Iraq were violating the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war treatment.

March 14 - Iraq began a bombing campaign against Iranian cities, particularly targeting Tehran. Iran responded with its own scud missile attacks. The "war of the cities" air strikes continued until 1988.

Aug. 14 - A shipment of U.S. TOW antitank missiles was shipped to Tehran from Israel as part of the Reagan administration's arms-for-hostage swap. The Reagan administration secretly facilitated the sale of Israeli arms to Iran (which was subject to an arms embargo), in exchange for Iran's help in the release of American hostages in Lebanon.

Nov. 22 - Another shipment of HAWK anti-aircraft missiles was shipped to Tehran from Israel as the second phase of the arms-for-hostage swap. But the deal fell far short of what was promised, and Iran ordered a refund of payment and a resupply.

## 1986

Nov. 3 - The Lebanese magazine *Ash-Shiraa* exposed the secret arms-for-hostage dealings between Iran, Israel, and the United States.

July 20 - The U.N. Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 598, demanding an immediate ceasefire.

October - During Operation Nimble Archer, the United States attacked Iranian oil platforms in retaliation for an Iranian attack on the U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti tanker, *Sea Isle City*.

## 1988

June 2 - Ayatollah Khomeini named Parliamentary Speaker Rafsanjani acting commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

April – The U.S. Department of Commerce reportedly approved the shipment to Iraq of chemicals for agricultural use that were later used to manufacture mustard gas. Four major battles were fought between April and August in which Iraqis used massive amounts of chemical weapons against Iran. By that time, the United States was aiding Saddam Hussein by gathering intelligence and assisting in battle plans.

Apr. 14 – The frigate *USS Samuel B. Roberts* was badly damaged by an Iranian mine. U.S. forces responded with Operation Praying Mantis on April 18, the U. S. Navy’s largest engagement of surface warships since World War II. Two Iranian oil platforms, two Iranian ships and six Iranian gunboats were destroyed.

Aug. 20 – Iran and Iraq accepted U.N. Resolution 598, ending the eight-year war. Iran claimed to suffer over 1 million casualties.

## **1992**

March 17 – A suicide bombing at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires killed around 30 and wounded more than 300 individuals. A group called the Islamic Jihad Organization, with alleged links to Iran and Hezbollah, claimed responsibility for the attack. Iran and Hezbollah denied involvement.

## **1994**

April – Iran expelled workers from the Island of Abu Musa. Tehran began to station Revolutionary Guards on the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs. The islands had been a source of tension between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since Iran seized them in the early 1970s. Both countries claim rights to the islands.

April – President Clinton gave what Congress later termed a “green light” for Iran to transfer arms to the Muslim government of Bosnia fighting Serbian forces. The permission came despite a United Nations arms embargo against Iran. In 1996, the Senate Intelligence Committee and the House Select Subcommittee confirmed the U.S. role in the Iranian arms transfer.

July 18 – The bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, which killed 85 and wounded 300, was blamed on Iran and Hezbollah. The charges were denied by both parties. In 2006, Argentine prosecutors called for the arrest of former President Rafsanjani.

## **1996**

April 6 - Belgian customs officials seized a large mortar from an Iranian shipment of pickles destined for Munich, Germany. Belgian officials speculated the military equipment was meant for attacks targeting Israeli interests in Europe.

June - Iran was suspected of masterminding the June 25 bombing of Khobar Towers, a U.S. Air Force housing complex in Saudi Arabia. Iran denied the allegations.

### **1997**

April 10 - A German court ruled that the Iranian government was behind the murders of four Kurdish dissidents in Berlin in 1992. Iran denied allegations.

### **1998**

Aug. 8 - Nine diplomats were killed by the Taliban militia during an attack on the Iranian consulate in Mazar-e Sharif. At the time, more than 70,000 Iranian troops were deployed along the Afghan border. U.N. mediation defused the situation. Iran and the Taliban held talks in February 1999, but relations did not improve.

### **2001**

April - Iran and Saudi Arabia signed a security agreement with particular emphasis on the fight against drug smuggling and terrorism.

Oct. 2 - Russia signed a military accord with Tehran, six years after it halted arms sales to Iran under U.S. pressure. The agreement included the sale of jets, missiles and other weapons.

Oct. 8 - Supreme Leader Khamenei condemned U.S. strikes on Afghanistan. At the same time, Iran agreed to perform search-and-rescue missions for U.S. pilots who crashed on Iranian soil during the war.

### **2002**

January - Israel seized the *Karina A*, a ship carrying 50 tons of arms which Israeli officials claimed were supplied by Iran for the Palestinian authority.

### **2005**

June - Former Revolutionary Guards commander and presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei said Iran played a more significant part in the overthrow of the Taliban than given credit for by the United States. Washington consistently denied that Iranians made meaningful contributions.

June 16 - Iran and Syria signed an agreement for military cooperation against what they called the "common threats" presented by Israel and the United States. In a joint press conference, the defense ministers from the two countries said their talks had been aimed at consolidating their defense efforts and strengthening mutual support.

June 6 – Iran was given observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security organization including China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It applied for full membership on March 24, 2008. But its admission was blocked because of ongoing sanctions levied by the United Nations.

## **2007**

February – Iran denied accusations by the United States that it was stirring violence in the Iraq.

May 28 – Iran and the United States held the first official high-level talks in 27 years. The meeting, which took place in Baghdad, came after Iraq hosted a security conference attended by regional states and the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. The talks were on Iraq's security and were followed by two more rounds in July and November. The United States urged Tehran to stop supporting Shiite militias in Iraq. The talks ultimately did not lead anywhere and stopped after three meetings.

Sept. 6 – NATO forces in Afghanistan intercepted a large Iranian shipment of arms destined for the Taliban. The shipment included armor-piercing bombs. Washington said that the shipment's large quantity was a sign that Iranian officials were at least aware of the shipment, even if not directly involved. Tehran denied the charges.

October – U.S. military commander Gen. David Petraeus claimed Iran was triggering violence in Iraq. Petraeus also accused Iran's ambassador to Iraq of being a member of the elite Qods Force, a wing of the Revolutionary Guards responsible for foreign operations.

## **2008**

April – The United States accused Iran of continuing its alleged support of Taliban insurgents.

July 9 – Iran test-fired a new version of the Shahab-3 long-range missile with a range of 1,240 miles, which Iran said was capable of hitting targets in Israel.

## **2009**

Feb. 2 – President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced the launch of Iran's first domestically produced satellite, Omid, prompting fears in the West that it would enable Iran to launch long-range ballistic missiles.

May 1 – The State Department designated Iran as the "most active state sponsor of terrorism." Tehran countered that the United States could not accuse others of terrorism after its actions at Iraq's Abu Graib prison and Guantanamo Bay.

May 20 – Iran successfully tested the Sejil-2 ballistic missile which has a range between 1,200 and 1,500 miles. The Obama administration said the missile was "a significant step," and indicated that Tehran was enhancing its weapons delivery capability.

Sept. 22 – Iran held a military parade showing off its Shahab-3 and Sejil ballistic missiles and, for the first time, the Russian-built Tor-M1 air defense system. The medium-range ballistic missiles both have a range that can reach Israel.

Sept. 27-28 – Iran carried out a series of missile tests as part of a military exercise called Operation Great Prophet IV. Short-range missiles included the Shahab-1, Shahab-2, Fateh-110 and Tondar-69.

December – Gen. Petraeus accused Iran of backing Shiite militants in Iraq and giving a "modest level" of support to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

## **2010**

March – Iran and Qatar signed a security agreement, underlying the need for security cooperation and a fight against terrorism.

August – Iran successfully test-fired a new generation of the Fateh-110, a medium-range ballistic missile with a 155-mile range.

## **2011**

February – Iran sent two warships through Suez Canal for first time since the 1979 revolution.

Dec. 4 – Iran captured a U.S. drone near the northeastern city of Kashmar and refused to return it to the United States.

December 2011 - January 2012 – Iran threatened to close off the Strait of Hormuz.

## **2012**

Jan. 1 – Iran test-fired an advanced surface-to-air missile during a drill in international waters near the Strait of Hormuz.

Aug. 21 – Iran unveiled an upgraded version of a short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, known as the Fateh-110.

Nov. 1 – Iranian jets fired on a U.S. drone over the Persian Gulf. The drone was not damaged and was able to return to its base.

Nov. 4 – Iran inaugurated a new naval base near three disputed Persian Gulf islands also claimed by the United Arab Emirates.

Dec. 4 – Iran reported that it had captured a U.S. drone that entered its airspace over the Gulf, but the United States denied this claim.

## 2013

Feb. 2 – Tehran unveiled the new Qaher F313 fighter and claimed that it could evade radar.

Feb. 7 – Iran released footage it claimed to have salvaged from a U.S. drone that it reportedly downed in 2011.

March 14 – The Pentagon reported that an Iranian fighter jet targeted a U.S. drone over the Gulf. No shots were fired and the jet left the area after a verbal warning.

April 18 – Iran unveiled the H-110 Sarir long-range drone, equipped with cameras and air-to-air missiles.

May 9 – Iran unveiled the Hemaseh combat drone, capable of surveillance, reconnaissance, and missile and rocket attacks.

Sept. 28 – Iran unveiled the Yasir combat drone, equipped with an advanced reconnaissance system and capable of detecting remote targets.

Nov. 18 – Iran unveiled its largest missile-equipped drone to date, known as the Fotros drone. It supposedly had a range of 2,000 km.

## 2014

Aug. 24 – Iran unveiled two new drones, the Karar-4 and Mohajer-4, and two new missiles, the Ghadir ground-to-sea and sea-to-sea missile and the Nasr-e Basir missile.

Aug 28 – Iran test-fired the Talaash 3 missile defense system successfully.

Sept. 2 – Iran unveiled the Keyhan and Arash 2 radar systems, which can intercept fighter jets and stealth aircraft.

Sept. 23 – Iran introduced a new missile-equipped drone capable of destroying different types of aircraft.

Sept. 29 – Iran unveiled the Sadeq 1 drone and Fath 2 radar system.

Nov. 13 – Iran announced that it had reverse-engineered a version of the American RQ-170 Sentinel drone it captured in 2011, improving its speed and fuel efficiency. But a Pentagon spokesperson claimed there was “no way” the Iranian drone matched American technology.

## 2015

Jul. 4 – Iran [unveiled](#) a second Ghadir long-range early warning radar system able to track aircraft from 600 km away and ballistic missiles up to 1.100 km away.

Oct. 11 – Iran [test-fired](#) the new Emad ballistic missile. It was a surface-to-surface missile with the supposed ability to be precision guided to its target. Washington called

it a clear violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, which prohibits Iran from test launching ballistic missiles.

Oct. 14 – The IRGC [allowed](#) broadcasting of rare images from inside an underground missile bunker.

Nov. 21 – Iran reportedly [tested](#) a Ghadr-110 medium-range ballistic missile near the port city of Chabahar on November 21.

## 2016

Jan. 12 – Iranian military forces [seized](#) two U.S. Navy vessels and held them on Farsi Island in the Persian Gulf. Nine men and one woman were aboard the small riverine boats. The Pentagon received assurances from Iran that the crew and vessels would be returned promptly.

Jan. 13 – U.S. sailors detained by Iran were safely [released](#) to the U.S. Navy after an overnight flurry of diplomatic efforts. Secretary of State John Kerry and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif spoke at least five times about the incident.

Jan. 17 – The United States [imposed](#) new sanctions on 11 individuals and entities for supporting Iran’s ballistic missile program. The new measures followed a December report by U.N. experts that [concluded](#) that an Iranian test launch in October violated sanctions banning Iran from test firing missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Mar. 8 – The IRGC test [fired](#) Shahab-1, Shahab-2, as well as Ghadr-H and Ghadr-F ballistic missiles as part of a large-scale military drill. The launches, publicized widely by Iranian media outlets, were intended to display Iran’s “deterrence power” and “full readiness to confront all kinds of threats against the Revolution, establishment and territorial integrity,” according to the IRGC.

Aug. 23 – Four Iranian small boats [harassed](#) the USS Nitze, a guided missile destroyer, in the Strait of Hormuz. The boats, approached the Nitze at a high speed, in an unsafe and unprofessional manner, according to a U.S. defense official, prompting the Nitze to fire ten flares and sound its whistle several times. The Iranian boats ignored the warnings and attempts at radio communication. They finally stopped within 300 yards of the ship.

Aug. 24 – Three IRGC boats [crisscrossed](#) the USS Tempest’s bow and “created a possible collision hazard” in the Northern Persian Gulf. Later, an Iranian patrol vessel approached the Tempest head-on despite multiple warnings. The USS Squall eventually resorted to [firing](#) warning shots.

Later that day, an Iranian Nassar-class boat made a run against the USS Stout, a guided missile destroyer. The Stout changed course to avoid the Iranian vessel and used unspecified devices to discourage it from approaching again. "These are incidents that carry a risk of escalation and we don't desire any kind of escalation," Pentagon Spokesman Peter Cook told reporters. "At this point, it's not clear what the intentions of the Iranian ships were, but the behavior is not acceptable, given that this U.S. ship was in international waters," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said.

Aug. 29 - Iran deployed a Russian-supplied S-300 SAM defense system at its Fordow nuclear facility. "Our main priority is to protect Iran's nuclear facilities under any circumstances," said Brigadier General Farzad Esmaili.

Sep. 1 - Iran unveiled new radar technology, the Nazir and Bina systems, increasing its missile defense capabilities.

Dec. 14 - Iran declared victory in the Battle of Aleppo, after an offensive by IRGC-operated Shia militias captured most of the city from rebel forces. The Shia militias played the decisive role in ground operations, and Iran presented the battle as driven by sectarianism and religion.

## 2017

Jan. 9 - The USS Mahan, a destroyer, fired warning shots and used radio calls, flares, bells, and whistles to signal five Iranian ships to stay away. The ships came within 900 yards of three U.S. vessels that were entering the Strait of Hormuz, according to Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis. They eventually left the area after a U.S. helicopter also dropped smoke grenades.

Feb. 3 - The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned 25 individuals and entities for supporting the IRGC and its ballistic missile development. The targets of the sanctions package were involved in IRGC procurement networks in Iran, the Persian Gulf, and China, as well as affiliates of Hezbollah.

Mar. 9 - The IRGC announced that they had successfully tested a Hormuz 2 ballistic missile the previous week. It was reportedly capable of hitting floating targets within a 186-mile range.

Apr. 18 - Iran revealed its new Sayyad 3 air defense missile for the first time during nationwide Army Day parades.

Apr. 22 - The IRGC equipped its Navy with new Nasir cruise missiles supposedly capable of precise navigation and equipped to resist signal jamming.

Jun. 7 - ISIS terrorists conducted a dual attack in the heart of Tehran, targeting the mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian Majlis. The attacks killed 18 civilians and left 50 wounded. Iran responded with surface-to-surface missiles targeting ISIS facilities in Deir ez-Zor.

Jun. 18 – Iran [launched](#) missiles at ISIS targets in Deir Ezzor in eastern Syria in retaliation for the June 7<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks in Tehran. The missiles [used](#) in the strikes were Zolfagar and Qiam class missiles.

Jul. 18 – Iranian parliament [passed](#) a bill introduced to “fight American adventurous and terrorist actions in the region” which expanded funding for the Quds force and missile programs by 1,000 billion tomans (\$600 million).

Jul. 22 – Iran [began](#) mass production of the new Sayyad-3 missile, used in missile shield systems. The missile reportedly has a range of 120 kilometers and can achieve an altitude of 27 kilometers, and is designed to target incoming aircraft and missiles.

Jul. 27 – Iran [announced](#) that it had successfully launched a Simorgh SLV (space-launch vehicle). The Simorgh was claimed to be Iran’s most advanced satellite-carrying rocket yet produced.

Jul. 31 – Iran [claimed](#) that U.S. naval forces including the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier had acted provocatively and unprofessionally by flying a helicopter close to IRGC ships. Iranian General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri issued a warning to U.S. naval forces not to continue the alleged provocation.

Aug. 13 – Iranian lawmakers overwhelmingly [voted](#) to increase spending on ballistic missile development and foreign operations of the IRGC. At the session, 240 out of 247 legislators voted to [allocate](#) some \$260 million to the missile program, \$300 million to the IRGC Qods Force and \$240 million to other military and intelligence-related projects. The move came as a reaction to new U.S. sanctions.

Sept. 14 – The U.S. Treasury Department [sanctioned](#) 11 individuals and entities for supporting the IRGC ballistic missile program, transporting IRGC-operated militias, and engaging in cyber attacks.

Sept. 23 – Iran test [launched](#) the Khorramshahr ballistic missile. The missile, with a range of approximately 2000km, was likely modeled on the Hwasong-10, which North Korea previously transferred to Iran.

Oct. 13 – The U.S. Treasury Department [issued](#) sanctions on the IRGC for its support for terrorism, and on three IRGC affiliates for proliferation violations. The move designated the IRGC under the Terrorism Authority, but stopped [short](#) of labeling the IRGC a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

Nov. 21 – President Rouhani [declared](#) victory over ISIS in Iraq and Syria following the capture of Abu Kamal in Syria and Rawa in Iraq, the last significant sized town under ISIS control in each country.

Dec. 2 – Israeli planes flying from Lebanon [reportedly](#) bombed an Iranian military base 13km south of Damascus at al-Kiswa. The Syrian government deployed its air-defense system and claimed to have shot down two Israeli surface-to-surface missiles during the attack.

Dec. 14 – The United States [presented](#) evidence for the first time of Iranian support for Houthi militants in Yemen, in violation of UN resolutions. The evidence included a drone, an anti-tank weapon, and a short-range ballistic missile, all of which the United States claimed to be Iranian-made and supplied.

## 2018

Jan. 25 – Israel [accused](#) Iran at the UN Security Council of controlling 82,000 militants in Syria, including both foreign and Syrian fighters, with the intent of attacking Israel and destabilizing the region. Iran denied the charges and accused Israel of being the main regional source of instability.

Feb. 10 – Israel [shot down](#) an Iranian drone flying over Israeli territory. The incident kicked off a series of Israeli airstrikes and Syrian surface-to-air engagement that resulted in an Israeli F-16 being shot down in northern Israel.

April 9-10 – Israel [reportedly](#) hit the T-4 airfield and command center near Palmyra with missiles in an overnight strike. Seven Iranian military advisors were [reportedly](#) killed. “Israel’s crime... will not go unanswered,” [warned](#) Ali Akbar Velayati, foreign policy advisor to the supreme leader.

April 29 - May 1 – Israel [allegedly](#) struck two Iran-linked military bases in Syria, killing at least 26 people, including 11 Iranian fighters. “We don’t comment on foreign reports and we have no information at this time,” [said](#) Israel’s military spokesman Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus. The strikes reportedly hit a weapons depot for surface-to-surface missiles in northern Syria, [destroying](#) 200 missiles. The second target was the Neirab military base southeast of Aleppo. “We will respond to any aggression on Iran at the right time and place,” [said](#) Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Commission.

May 8 – Israel [reportedly](#) struck Iranian military facilities south of Damascus, killing 15 people, eight of whom were Iranian, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

May 10 – The Israeli military [claimed](#) to have struck 70 Iranian targets inside Syria in its largest air operation of the Syrian Civil War, after Iran’s Qods Force launched 20 rockets at the Israeli Golan Heights. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights claimed Israeli fire on targets in Baath, Syria triggered the engagement.

May 15 – The U.S. Treasury Department [sanctioned](#) four individuals and one bank for moving millions of dollars on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force (IRGC-QF) to the Lebanese militia and political movement Hezbollah.

May 22 – The U.S. Treasury Department [announced](#) sanctions against five Iranian IRGC members for providing technical ballistic missile assistance to Houthi forces in Yemen.

Sept. 22 – Gunmen [attacked](#) a military parade in the southwestern Iranian city of Ahvaz. The attackers killed at least 29 people and wounded 70, including IRGC soldiers and civilians. Arab separatists claimed responsibility. Iranian leaders blamed the United States’ regional allies for plotting the attack.

Nov. 13 – Ambassador-at-Large Nathan Sales, the State Department’s coordinator for counterterrorism, said that Tehran provides nearly one billion dollars a year to terrorist groups including Lebanese Hezbollah, Hamas in Gaza, the Houthis in Yemen, and various groups in Iraq and Syria. “We will continue to ratchet up the pressure until Iran comes to its senses, joins the community of civilized nations, and ends its support for murder and mayhem across the globe,” Sales [told](#) an audience at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Nov. 22 – The U.S. ambassador to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) alleged that Iran failed to declare all its chemical weapons to the group. “The United States is also concerned that Iran is pursuing Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for offensive purposes,” Ambassador Kenneth Ward [told](#) participants at an OPCW conference. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif dismissed the U.S. claim. “US wants to resort to int’l conventions to make allegations against Iran when it’s made a policy of violating them itself. WMD allegations – by a country that supported Iraq’s use of CW against Iran; then invaded Iraq to allegedly rid it of them – is not just obscene, it’s dangerous,” [said](#) Zarif.

Nov. 29 – Brian Hook, the State Department’s special representative for Iran, unveiled what he called new evidence of Iranian weapons proliferation. He delivered a briefing in front of a display of missiles, rockets, drones and other equipment that were allegedly transferred to the Houthis in Yemen or the Taliban in Afghanistan. “The new weapons we are disclosing today illustrate the scale of Iran’s destructive role across the region. The same kind of rockets here today could tomorrow land in a public market in Kabul or an international airport,” [said](#) Hook.

Dec. 1 – The United States condemned Iran’s test of a medium range ballistic missile reportedly capable of striking parts of Europe and anywhere in the Middle East. “This test violates U.N. Security Council resolution 2231 that bans Iran from undertaking ‘any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology,’” [claimed](#) Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. “Making a mockery of the UNSC won’t obscure failure to fulfill obligations & to hold US to account over non-compliance. Esp when even US admits that UNSCR2231 does NOT prohibit Iran’s deterrent capabilities. Rather than undermining 2231, better to work towards its adherence by all,” [replied](#) Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif. Resolution 2231 only “calls upon” Iran to not test missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Jan. 15 – Iran [attempted](#) and failed to launch a Payam satellite into orbit. On February 6, Iran tried and [failed again](#) to launch a Doosti satellite into orbit. Iranian officials claimed that their satellite program is solely for peaceful purposes. The U.S. State Department [condemned](#) both launches, alleging that they violated UN Security Council Resolution 2231 by incorporating ballistic missile technology into their rocket design.

Jan. 29 – U.S. Intelligence agencies [released](#) their annual Worldwide Threat Assessment and discussed Iran during a Senate hearing. “We continue to assess that Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities we judge necessary to produce a nuclear device,” said the report. “Iran almost certainly will continue to develop and maintain terrorist capabilities as an option to deter or retaliate against its perceived adversaries,” it added.

President Trump rejected the intelligence agencies’ assessment. “The Intelligence people seem to be extremely passive and naive when it comes to the dangers of Iran. They are wrong!” he [tweeted](#).

Feb. 2 – Iran unveiled a new surface-to-surface cruise missile during celebrations leading up to the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. State television [claimed](#) that the new Hoveizeh missile had a range of 810 miles. On February 7, IRGC Commander Mohammed Ali Jafari [unveiled](#) the Dezful short-range ballistic missile, with a reported range of 621 miles. Jafari also [announced](#) the establishment of an underground facility in Iran for mass-producing precision missiles. On February 11, President Hassan Rouhani addressed the nation. “We have not –and will not– ask for permission from anybody for improving our defensive power. We will continue this path and I say this clearly to the people of Iran that Iran’s military power in the past 40 years, especially in the recent 5 years has amazed the entire world,” he [said](#).

Feb. 4 – President Donald Trump said that U.S. forces departing Syria would shift to bases in Iraq to “watch” Iran, in an interview with CBS news. Iraqi leaders quickly condemned his remark. “Do not burden Iraq with your own policy priorities,” [said](#) Iraqi President Barham Salih.

Feb. 14 – A suicide bombing in the Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchestan [killed](#) 27 IRGC soldiers. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani blamed the United States and Israel for the attack.

March 5 – The U.S. State Department and Treasury [sanctioned](#) Harakat al Nujaba (HAN), an Iran-backed militia in Iraq, and its leader, Akram Abbas al Kabi. The State Department designated them as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. “These designations demonstrate the United States’ unwavering commitment to isolate and deny funding to the Iranian regime’s terrorist proxies,” said the State Department.

April 8 – The United States announced the [designation](#) of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), effective April 15. The IRGC is Iran’s most powerful military and security organization as well as a key

economic player. “This unprecedented step, led by the Department of State, recognizes the reality that Iran is not only a State Sponsor of Terrorism, but that the IRGC actively participates in, finances, and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft,” said President Donald Trump. He noted that it was the “first time that the United States has ever named part of another government as a FTO.” In response, Iran’s Supreme National Security Council designated U.S. Central Command forces as terrorists and the U.S. as a “sponsor of terrorism.”

May 5 - National Security Advisor John Bolton [announced](#) the deployment of the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force to the Middle East “to send a clear and unmistakable message to the Iranian regime that any attack on United States interests or on those of our allies will be met with unrelenting force.” He said the move was in response to “a number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings,” but did not specify further. The White House did not specify what Iranian activities it was responding to, but they were widely reported by the media to be related to intelligence citing U.S. interests in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and the Persian Gulf. The carrier strike group, however, was part of regularly scheduled deployment.

May 9 - Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan reportedly presented an updated plan for 120,000 U.S. troops to be deployed to the region in the event of an Iranian attack on U.S. forces or sprint towards attaining a nuclear weapon, according to [The New York Times](#). On May 14, President Trump [said](#) the report was “fake news.” But he said that if the United States were to implement such a plan, “we’d send a hell of a lot more” troops. U.S. officials told NBC News that Shanahan had presented a range of options to Trump’s national security team.

May 10 - The Pentagon [announced](#) that additional forces would join the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier group in the Persian Gulf – the USS Arlington (capable of supporting amphibious assault, special operations or expeditionary warfare missions) and a Patriot missile defense battery.

May 12 - Four ships off the coast of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were sabotaged, including two Saudi Arabian oil tankers. One was due to take a delivery of Saudi oil to the United States. “Fortunately, the attack didn’t lead to any casualties or oil spill; however, it caused significant damage to the structures of the two vessels,” said Khalid al-Falih, the kingdom’s energy minister. The UAE did not [speculate](#) on who might have been responsible, but the alleged attack came as the United States warned that “Iran or its proxies” could target maritime traffic in and around the Persian Gulf. Iran [denied](#) any involvement and accused the Trump administration officials of trying to frame it.

May 13-14 - On May 13, President Trump warned that Iran “will suffer greatly” if it attacks U.S. interests in the Gulf. “We will see what happens with Iran. If they do anything, it’ll be a big mistake,” he told the press. Supreme Leader Khamenei [retorted](#) that his country was not interested in a military conflict, but would “resist” the United States.

May 15 - The United States [ordered](#) the immediate departure of all non-emergency U.S. government employees from Iraq, citing security concerns. The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), which is responsible for U.S. military forces in the Middle East, [contradicted](#) a comment made a day earlier by Major General Chris Ghika, the British deputy commander of anti-ISIS coalition forces, that Iran-backed militias in Iraq did not pose an increased threat to coalition personnel. "Recent comments from OIR's Deputy Commander run counter to the identified credible threats available to intelligence from U.S. and allies regarding Iranian backed forces in the region," the CENTCOM statement [said](#).

The New York Times [reported](#) that photographs of missiles on small boats in the Persian Gulf were the cause of the White House's increased warnings about the threat from Iran. The concern was that the IRGC would fire them at U.S. naval vessels or disrupt commercial shipping. Intelligence also suggested American troops in Iraq could be targeted by militias with ties to Tehran.

May 17 - The IRGC deputy for parliamentary affairs warned that U.S. forces in the Gulf are vulnerable. "Even our short-range missiles can easily reach (U.S.) warships in the Persian Gulf," [said](#) Mohammad Saleh Jokar, according to Fars News Agency via Reuters. "America cannot afford the costs of a new war, and the country is in a bad situation in terms of manpower and social conditions."

A Defense Department official and a congressional official told [The New York Times](#) that Iran unloaded missiles from at least two small boats in its territorial waters. The move was seen as a de-escalation in tensions.

May 20 - A Katyusha rocket was fired into Baghdad's Green Zone, a heavily fortified area that houses Iraqi government offices and foreign embassies. It fell near the U.S. Embassy but did not harm anyone, according to the Iraqi military. A State Department official [warned](#) that the United States would hold Iran responsible for any attacks conducted by proxy militia forces. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

May 22 - Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, the chairman of Parliament's national security and foreign policy committee said that Iran will "under no circumstances" enter a war with the United States. "No group can announce that it has entered a proxy war from Iran's side," he said, according to ILNA via the [Associated Press](#).

Supreme Leader Khamenei's [website](#) posted a graphic on the website calling the U.S. deployment of forces a "[futile uproar](#)." It melded a photograph of an aircraft carrier and a megaphone together with a crosshair superimposed on top.

May 24 - Acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan announced that 1,500 additional troops would be deployed to the Middle East. The Pentagon [clarified](#) that, of the 1,500, only 900 additional troops would be sent to the region and 600 personnel manning Patriot missile batteries would have their deployment extended. Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense Katie Wheelbarger emphasized that U.S. policy with respect to Iran had not

changed. "As the president and the secretary have been clear, we do not seek conflict with Iran. We do not see these additional capabilities as urging hostilities. We see them as defensive in nature," she [said](#).

Rear Admiral Michael Gilday, the director of the Joint Staff, said the IRGC was responsible for the attack on tankers earlier in May. He said limpet mines were used but did not specify how they were delivered.

Secretary Pompeo issued an emergency [notification](#) of arms sales to Jordan, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. "These sales will support our allies, enhance Middle East stability, and help these nations to deter and defend themselves from the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said. He invoked a seldom used executive authority that would bypass the usual arms review process with Congress. Pompeo said he intended the transfers, worth some \$8 billion, to be a "one-time event."

May 29 - National Security Advisor Bolton [told](#) reporters that it was "clear that Iran is behind" the attack on tankers. "There's no doubt in anybody's mind in Washington who's responsible for this," he added. "Who else would you think is doing it? Someone from Nepal?" Bolton did not provide evidence. Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Abbas Mousavi, [called](#) the charge "ludicrous."

In a speech to academics, Supreme Leader Khamenei said Iran would not negotiate on the core values of the Islamic Revolution or give up military capabilities. "The only way for us is to apply our tactics of pressure in face of the pressures that the U.S. applies. Contrary to their propaganda, these tactics are not military--though we might use military means if we find it necessary."

June 6 - General Frank McKenzie, the commander of U.S. Central Command, met with Iraqi officials in Baghdad. Afterwards, he told NBC News that threat from Iran and its proxies was "imminent" and had not diminished. "I believe the threat is still very real. They probe for weakness all the time," he said in an exclusive [interview](#). He told the [Associated Press](#) that the U.S. deployment of additional forces may have "caused the Iranians to back up a little bit" but that he was "not sure they are strategically backing down."

Houthi rebels in Yemen [shot down](#) a U.S. MQ-9 drone. The U.S. military concluded that the rebels had received help from Iran to down the drone.

June 13 - Two more tankers - one owned by Japan and one owned by Norway - were attacked in the Gulf of Oman. The second ship, the Front Altair, may have been targeted by a [torpedo](#), according to CPC Corp, which chartered the ship. The Front Altair's crew of 23 were reportedly rescued by the Hyundai Dubai vessel and were transferred to an Iranian navy vessel bound for the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. Iranian state media claimed that all 44 crew members from both ships were rescued by Iranian teams. The U.S. Navy offered aid in dealing with the two damaged tankers.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blamed the attacks – and other incidents in Iraq and Afghanistan – on Iran. He said the U.S. judgement was based on intelligence, “weapons used, the level of expertise needed to execute the operation, recent similar Iranian attacks on shipping, and the fact that no proxy group operating in the area has the resources and proficiency to act with such a high degree of sophistication.” U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) released a video allegedly showing Iranian sailors removing a mine from the *Kokura Courageous*’ hull. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif denied Iran’s responsibility and said the timing was beyond “suspicious.”

A CENTCOM spokesman [claimed](#) that Iran attempted to shoot down a U.S. surveillance drone to prevent the United States from detecting Iran’s role in the attack.

June 17 - Acting Defense Secretary Shanahan [authorized](#) the deployment of 1,000 additional troops to the Middle East. “The recent Iranian attacks validate the reliable, credible intelligence we have received on hostile behavior by Iranian forces and their proxy groups that threaten United States personnel and interests across the region,” he said. Shanahan reiterated that the United States was not seeking a conflict with Iran and that the action was solely “defensive.”

June 20 – Iran shot down a U.S. military surveillance drone. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) [claimed](#) it downed an RQ-4 Global Hawk after it violated Iranian airspace. “Our air space is our red line and Iran has always responded and will continue to respond strongly to any country that violates our air space,” [said](#) Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council. The United States acknowledged that the drone was shot down by a surface-to-air missile system. But it said the incident occurred in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz. “Iranian reports that the aircraft was over Iran are false,” said CENTCOM spokesperson Navy Captain Bill Urban. “This was an unprovoked attack on a U.S. surveillance asset in international airspace.”

Aug. 6 – Iran presented three new precision-guided [missiles](#) – the Yasin, Balaban and a new series of the “Ghaem.” Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Amir Hatami said their development “shows that despite the viciousness and conspiracies of the Great Satan America and its mercenaries, the defence ministry will not hesitate for a moment to defend the Islamic republic and to expand security.” Fars news agency reported that the Yasin, equipped with folding wings, could be fired from manned or unmanned aircraft 30 miles from its target. The Balaban, also with folding wings, was meant to be mounted under aircraft. The latest version of the Ghaem was a heat-seeking missile reportedly capable of hitting with 50 centimeters of its target.

Aug. 22 – Tehran [unveiled](#) a long-range, surface-to-air defense system that can target planes up to 190 miles away. Rouhani called negotiations with the U.S. “useless” during the unveiling ceremony. “Now that our enemies do not accept logic, we cannot respond with logic,” he said.

Sept. 14 –The Abqaiq and Khurais facilities – both run by the state-owned company Saudi Aramco – were [struck](#) by projectiles in a pre-dawn attack. [Abqaiq](#), the kingdom’s largest oil processing facility, was considered one of the most important oil infrastructure sites in the world. It had the capacity to process 7 million barrels of oil per day. [Khurais](#), one of Saudi Arabia’s largest oil fields, added an additional 1.5 million barrels per day in production. The attacks [suspended](#) production of 5.7 million barrels per day – about 6 percent of global oil supply – according to Saudi Aramco.

The United States accused Iran of facilitating the drone attacks. "Amid all the calls for de-escalation, Iran has now launched an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply. There is no evidence the attacks came from Yemen," said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. He added that Tehran had “pretended to engage in diplomacy” with the United States.

Iran denied any responsibility for the attacks. On September 15, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said blaming Iran would not end the regional conflict. "Having failed at max pressure, Sec Pompeo is turning to max deceit," Zarif tweeted.

Sept 18 – Saudi Arabia’s Defense Ministry held a press conference to display material evidence allegedly proving Iranian involvement in attacks on two oil facilities. “Despite Iran's best efforts to make it appear so, their collaboration with their proxy in the region to create this false narrative is clear,” said Saudi military spokesman Colonel Turki al Malki. Riyadh [concluded](#) that Iran or one of its proxies launched a sophisticated assault involving drones and cruise missiles from a location north of Saudi Arabia. Al Malki [said](#) the attacks were “unquestionably sponsored by Iran” but stopped short of explicitly accusing Tehran for the attack. The Saudis said they were still “working to know exactly the launch point.”

Al Malki [told](#) reporters that both drones and missiles were launched at Abqaiq and that cruise missiles struck the Khurais facility. Riyadh [said](#) eighteen drones and seven cruise missiles were used in the attacks, with three missiles falling short of their target. The cruise missiles had a [range](#) of 700 kilometers (435 miles), according to al Maliki, which meant they could not have been fired from inside Yemen. The Saudi government also presented video footage of a drone striking from the north.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [called](#) the attacks on Saudi Arabian oil facilities an “act of war.” He denied claims that the attacks originated in Yemen. "As for how we know, the equipment used is unknown to be in the Houthi arsenal. These line attack cruise missiles we have never seen there and we think we’ve seen most everything,” Pompeo said. President Trump [said](#) the United States would “substantially increase sanctions” against Tehran within the next 48 hours.

Sept. 19 – Iranian Foreign Minister [warned](#) that Tehran could respond to a U.S. or Saudi military strike with “all-out war.” He questioned Saudi resolve and told CNN that the kingdom was prepared to fight "to the last American soldier." Zarif said Tehran hoped to avoid conflict but added, “We won't blink to defend our territory.”

*The following individuals have contributed to updates to this timeline: Garrett Nada, Eli Pollock  
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