

TIMELINE OF IRANIAN AMERICAN RELATIONS

1953-The Coup

The government of Iranian Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadeq is overthrown in a coup orchestrated by American and British intelligence agencies. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi is reinstated as the Shah of Iran.

1979-Khomeini Rises & The Beginning of the Hostage Crisis

Widespread unrest in Iran forces the Shah to flee. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, an Islamic religious leader returns to Iran from exile and takes power. Iranian students storm the United States embassy in Tehran and hold scores of hostages, most for 444 days. The United States cuts all diplomatic relations with Iran and imposes economic sanctions. In 1980, the United States stages an attempt to rescue the American hostages in Iran. The attempt is unsuccessful and 8 U.S. servicemen die. Khomeini said the hostages would be released if Jimmy Carter was not reelected. In 1981, the American hostages are released moments after Ronald Reagan succeeds Jimmy Carter as President of the United States.

1986-Iran-Contra

The public learns of an American effort to sell arms to Iran as a way of raising funds for anti-Communist fighters (known as Contras) in Nicaragua. In 1985, Iran made a secret request to the United States to buy weaponry. Despite the embargo, the U.S. agreed in the hopes that it would improve relations with Iran, help free hostages held in Lebanon by Hezbollah, as well as help fund the Contras who were fighting the Cuban-backed Sandinistas.

1988-Shot Down

The USS Vincennes mistakenly shoots down an Iran Air flight over the Persian Gulf killing 290 people.

1993-Dual Containment

The United States implements a policy toward Iran and Iraq known as "dual containment" in an effort to isolate both countries and contain their regional ambitions.

2002-"Axis of Evil"

U.S. President George W. Bush refers to Iran as part of an "Axis of Evil."

2002-Nuclear Fears

US alleges Iran is attempting to build nuclear weapons.

2003-Earthquake

An earthquake kills 50,000 people in the Iranian city of Bam. The United States provides direct aid to victims.

2005-Uranium Dispute

Iran resumes uranium conversion. The International Atomic Energy Agency says Iran is violating the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

2006-The Letter

President Ahmadinejad sends a letter to President Bush calling for dialogue. No direct response is sent from President Bush.

2006-Talks Resume

The United States say it will join European nations in talks with Iran if Iran agrees to suspend uranium enrichment,

2007-American Imprisoned in Iran

Iran imprisons Iranian-American scholar Haleh Esfandiari.

2007-U.S. and Iran Talk

For the first time in 27 years, officials of Iran and the United States meet face-to-face for Memorial Day talks.

2007-Contradictory Claims

In September, Iran claims it has 3,000 centrifuges working on uranium enrichment just days after an International Atomic Energy Agency report put the number closer to 2,000.

2007- About Face

A US intelligence assessment said that Iran had halted a nuclear weapons program in 2003. The National Intelligence Estimate assessment said Tehran was, however, continuing to enrich uranium. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called the US report a "great victory" for Iran. President Bush said that Iran should reveal the full extent of its nuclear program, or risk further international isolation.

2007 Still A Threat

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Iran still posed a serious threat to the Middle East and the US. Mr. Gates told a Bahrain conference Iran may have restarted its nuclear weapons program, despite a US intelligence report saying it had stopped.

2007 Spying

Iran sends a formal protest letter to the United States, accusing it of spying on Iran's nuclear activities.

2008 State Sponsor of Terrorism

Describing Iran as "the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism", President Bush says he is rallying friends to confront it "before it's too late".

2008 Congratulations

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad offers congratulations to Barack Obama after his election as US president. During the election campaign, Mr. Obama had offered talks with Iran without preconditions.

2009 Hidden Nuclear Site

Iran announces another nuclear site near Qom, International inspectors have never been allowed in the Qom site.

2009 Talks

Multiple nations including Iran and the United States enter into talks about the Iranian nuclear program.

2010 Obama Nuclear Summit

Iran said it would not be bound by any decision made by the 47 nations at this week's nuclear security summit in Washington.



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