

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

In December, a new U.S. National Intelligence Estimate surprisingly concludes that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003.



Guided by Jewish values, the JCRC informs, collaborates, advocates and takes action on issues in the public arena that are of central concern to the Jewish community.

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