

## **Threat From Iran**

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Many Americans might wonder why the president has focused so much attention on Iran. After all, it is a country 6,000 miles away in the Middle East. And they might also conclude that any military action against the Iranian leadership might not even be warranted since the previous administration didn't deploy troops and military hardware to the region.

Two years ago, the Biden administration considered taking some action after more than 160 attacks on US troops took place in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan. There were also about 40 different clashes with the Houthis in the Red Sea. Iran funded these attacks (either directly or indirectly). They were part of the mounting proxy battle the US was in with Iran.

At the time, some reporters asked what President Biden would do. Many were merely saying that the US and Iran have essentially been at war for decades. Even the Pentagon press secretary had to admit that was true if you look at the larger conflict. To understand why reporters were asking that question, we need to review some history.

### **Modern History of Iran**

It is possible to trace the conflict between Iran and the US back to 1953 when our country cooperated in overthrowing Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. Then the Shah of Iran (Mohammad Reza Pahlavi) was put into power.

The US considered the Shah to be a key ally and a pillar of security in the Middle East. It was a pro-Western regime that was seen as a way to advance pro-Western interests. Foreign policy experts considered Iran acting to be a Cold War "policeman" against Soviet influence in the region. The US provided massive arms sales and had strong economic ties with the country, despite concerns over the Shah's authoritarianism.

The turning point came in 1979 when the Shah was overthrown by Soviet-backed Communists and radical Islamic clerics led by the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Iranian Revolution changed the perception of the US being an ally to becoming "The Great Satan" in the eyes of the hostile Islamic regime.

That was evident from the beginning when the Iranian Revolutionary Guard seized the US Embassy and took hostage 52 American diplomats and staff. They were only released when President Reagan was sworn in on January 20, 1981. This was the beginning event in what has become a half century undeclared war against the US.

The US strategy was to promote stability in the Middle East, but that became more difficult because of Iran. But the US also faced problems because Saudi Arabia also supported such anti-Western Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. And though Turkey is a member

of NATO, the leadership there saw itself as the vanguard of a new Islamic caliphate and built alliances with other Islamic forces in the region.

Iran has been engaged in a proxy war against the US for decades. In April 1983, Iranians used Hezbollah forces to blow up the US Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. That action killed 63 people. In October of that year, Iran also used Hezbollah forces to blow up the US Marine barracks, killing 241 service members. These actions should have been met with decisive action, but were not, even though Ronald Reagan was president.

It was well known and documented that Iran was attacking our troops while the US was engaged in a war in Iraq after 9/11. We understood that Iraq was our enemy but didn't also acknowledge that Iran was killing American soldiers using munitions made in Iran and with the coordination of Iranian operatives.

Iran has often been called the chief sponsor of terrorism in the Middle East. Iran has been funding the attacks by Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis against Israel and the US. Responses from Israel and the US against those terrorists and against Iran itself are changing some of the power dynamic in the Middle East.

### **Missiles and Nuclear Weapons**

Iran has the largest stockpile of ballistic missiles in the Middle East. Their missiles have a range of 2,000 kilometers and therefore can reach Israel and other countries in the Middle East.

Iran also has clearly illustrated its future intentions toward other Western countries. Earlier in this century, it launched ballistic missiles from ships in the Caspian Sea. The test missile did not have a nuclear warhead, but it illustrated how the weapon could be used against the US. A missile launched in the high atmosphere could produce an electromagnetic pulse. This would destroy the US energy grid and lead to the deaths of millions of Americans.

If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, it would be destabilizing in the Middle East and nearby regions. But the latest assessment from Tulsi Gabbard (Director of National Intelligence) has been that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and the Supreme Leaders has not authorized a nuclear weapons program since it was suspended in 2003. But others in the administration dismiss this finding since it likely has come from bureaucrats inherited from the Biden administration.

The Trump administration has resumed talks with Iran for the first time since it withdrew from the accord seven years ago. The initial negotiations in Trump's first timer didn't produce any concrete proposals. A UN nuclear watchdog found that Iran was in violation of its nuclear nonproliferation agreements.

Iran has developed a civilian nuclear energy program, but few believe that all the development of nuclear materials is merely for energy use. The existence of secret nuclear sites raised concerns

about what Iran planned. Concern heightened when Iran unleashed massive ballistic missile attack on Israel in retaliating for its attack on Iran.

In June 2025, Israel launched Operation Rising Lion, which targeted critical nuclear and military targets and attempted to destroy Iran's nuclear enrichment site but lacked bunker-busting capability. Then the US struck several Iranian nuclear sites through Operation Midnight Hammer.

The Trump administration announced that the Iranian nuclear sites were "obliterated." But satellite imagery suggests Iran is already rebuilding the damaged sites to rebuild its nuclear program.

Bilateral talks between Iran and the US haven't produced any significant results. The goal would be for Iran to limit uranium enrichment and development of ballistic missiles. Also, on the table are talks about how the Iranian leadership treats its citizens.

If diplomatic options no longer are achieving any meaningful result, the military option becomes more significant. But most Americans are not interested in the US engaging in another military campaign in the Middle East. Targeted strikes might be able to destroy nuclear sites, but regime change could probably only be achieved with a massive, ground invasion.

## **Religious Component**

There is an additional reason why Iran should not develop a nuclear weapon: the religious worldview of the Iranian leadership. Iranians Muslims are Shia, but a large branch are known as "the Twelvers." We have talked about this sect of Islam on our radio program.

They recognize twelve divinely ordained leaders (known as Imams) that lived in the past. But the 12th Imam (who is often referred to as the Mahdi or Messiah) is in hiding and will return during a global confrontation.

Just as Christians have an eschatology (doctrine of end times), so Muslims have an eschatology, which is the photographic negative of what we read about in the book of Revelation. We know there will be a great conflict in the end that will culminate in the return of Christ. Shia Muslims who are part of "the Twelvers" believe that the Mahdi will come when Muslim leaders create a global conflict and final battle. Using nuclear weapons against Israel and the US (the Great Satan) can be a way to usher in the Muslim messiah.

During the Cold War, the US had a doctrine known as MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction). The Soviet Union wouldn't want to launch nuclear weapons at the US because they knew that US missile would be launched toward them in response and assure their destruction.

The Shia Twelvers might not be as fearful of a nuclear retaliation because they would assume that the Mahdi would enter the conflict and protect them from annihilation. Joel Rosenberg even

wrote a political thriller, *The Twelfth Iman*, to develop what such a scenario might look like if Iran were to have nuclear weapons.

The other side of this religious issue is the encouraging news of the many Iranians who have become Christians. We have reported that the Iranian church is the fastest growing in the world. We should also be praying for those Christians, who are often persecuted for their faith. We should be praying for them and praying for the leaders in the US and its allies.

The Persians are an ancient people who deserve to live in peace and without persecution in their own country. Unfortunately, they are pawns in a larger struggle and face hardships from the sanctions we have placed on the country in addition to the persecution from the harsh authoritarian leadership from the Iranian mullahs. They deserve our prayers and compassion.