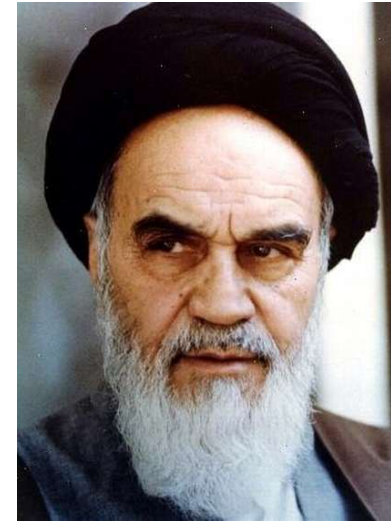




IRAN

The Islamic State



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Suggested reading:

Books:

- Polk, William R. *Understanding Iran: Everything You Need to Know, From Persia to the Islamic Republic, From Cyrus to Ahmadinejad.*
- Xenophon. *Cyropaedia: the Education of Cyrus.* (An early biography of Cyrus the Great.)
- Herodotus. *The Histories.* (Story of the wars between the Greek city-states and Cyrus' Persian Empire. Herodotus is sometimes referred to as the "father of history," but he wrote what he heard about without doing much research related to accuracy. Some of what he says is reflective of the times, but not true.)
- Xenophon. *Anabasis of Cyrus* (i.e., *The Persian Expedition*). (First-person account of a failed Greek mercenary expedition into Persia in support of Cyrus the Younger, son of Darius II.)
- Harasta, Jesse. *The History of the Sunni-Shia Split: Understanding the Divisions Within Islam.*
- Shuster, William Morgan, *The Strangling of Persia.*
- Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace.* (The legacy of World War I)
- Kinzer, Stephen. *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror.* (Excellent analysis of the Mossadegh Affair.)
- Roosevelt, Kermit. *Countercoup: The Struggle for Control of Iran.* (the Mossadegh Affair straight from the horse's mouth)
- United States Army Command and General Staff College. *After the Countercoup: Advising the Imperial Armed Forces of Iran.*
- Ram, Haggai. *Iranophobia: The Logic of an Israeli Obsession.*
- Eltahawy, Mona. *Headscarves & Hymens: Why the Middle East Needs a Sexual Revolution.*

Movies:

- *Coup 53.* Documentary on British involvement in the Mossadegh Affair.
- *Evolution of a Revolution: Live from Tehran.* Peter Jennings covers the Iranian Revolution. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aFnGhr_JD8.
- *Rosewater.* Movie by Jon Stewart, based on the book *Then They Came for Me* by Maziar Bahan. Story of a journalist arrested for covering the 2009 Iranian elections.

News sources:

- Al Monitor. An independent Middle East news service based in Washington, D.C. Go to www.al-monitor.com. Click on the blue box labeled "Sign Up for our Newsletters" to the right of the headlines. Click "Daily Briefing," enter your e-mail address and click "Subscribe." They will send you an e-mail. In the e-mail, click "Yes, subscribe me to this list."
- Press TV. The official Iranian news agency broadcasts on some U.S. cable channels. Good examples of the one-sided news coverage which Iranians are allowed to watch--although somewhat toned-down for U.S. consumption.

The Women's Institute of Houston

Continuing Education

Iran: History, Religion, Politics & War

Iranian governance:

The Supreme Leader. (originally Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and now Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei) Elected by the Assembly of Experts.

- commander-in-chief of the armed forces,
- can veto any law passed by the legislature and President as "un-Islamic,"
- appoints top judges, and members of the Expediency Council,
- appoints six clerics to be members of the Council of Guardians.

Assembly of Experts. 86 Shi'a clerics, popularly elected for eight-year terms. They elect the Supreme Leader.

Council of Guardians. The Supreme Leader is the chairman of the Council of Guardians.

- It screens candidates for President and candidates for the legislature, and can reject any candidate.
- It reviews laws passed by the legislature (Majlis) and can veto any law for being incompatible with Islamic law (sharia) or the constitution.
- It can override or dismiss the President and the Majlis.
- Six members are appointed by the Supreme Leader
- Six members are Muslim jurists elected by the legislature.

The Expediency Council. Appointed by the Supreme Leader, to advise him on matters of concern between the Majlis and the Council of Guardians, and to arbitrate legislative disputes.

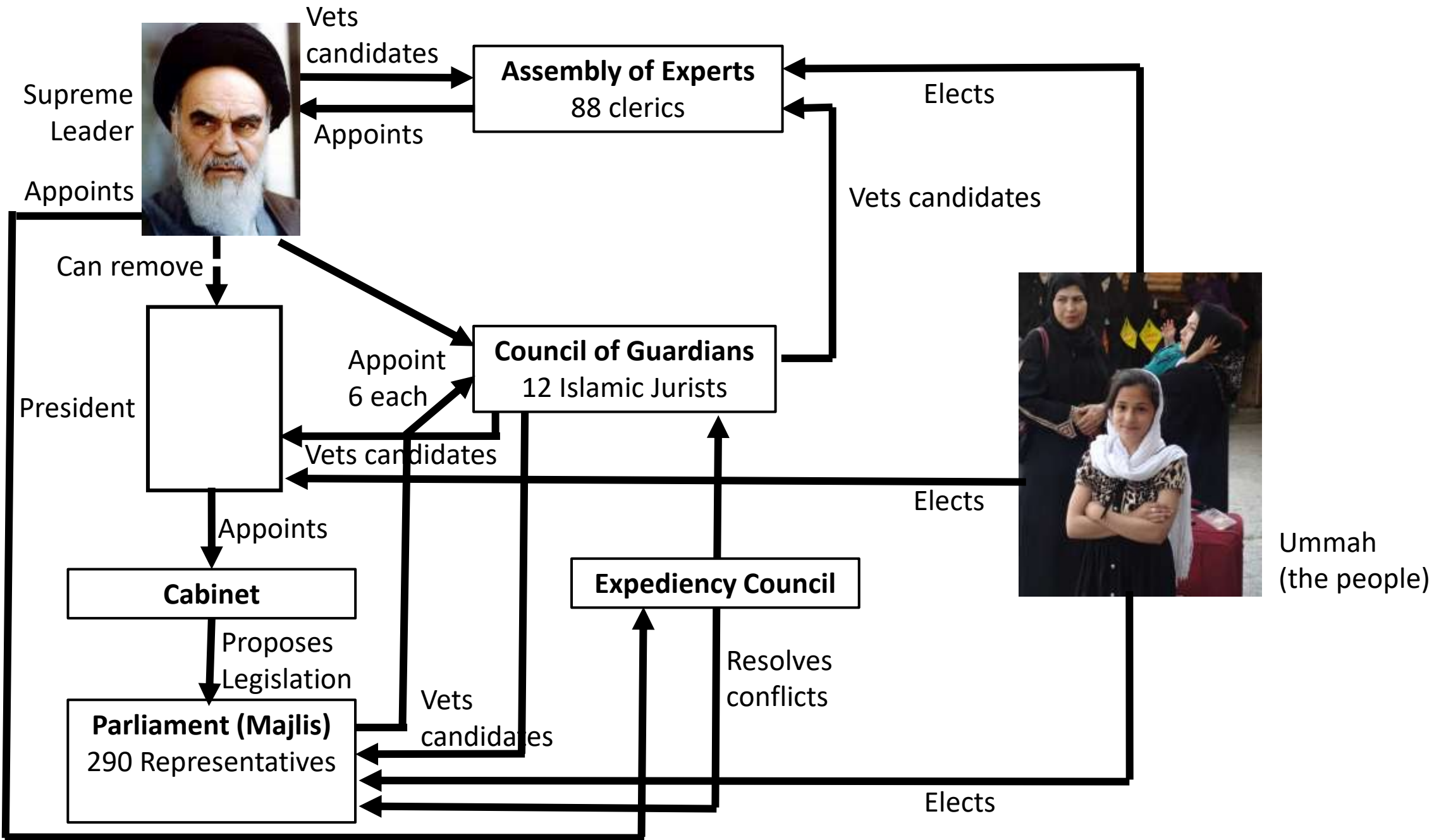
The President. Currently Masoud Pezeshkian, a moderate who was elected on June 28, 2024 after the death of conservative President Ebrahim Raisi. The President is responsible for the functioning of the government, he appoints the cabinet, and he proposes legislation for consideration by the legislature. He is popularly elected from candidates approved by the Council of Guardians. He is the second most powerful official in the government after the Supreme Leader.

Iranian legislature (Majlis). There are 290 seats in the Majlis. They propose, debate and pass legislation. In the 2020 election, 14,444 people registered to run for parliament, but almost half of them were disqualified by the Council of Guardians including 90 sitting members. About 8% of the members are women. Currently composed of:

- 199 **Principlist** (conservative) members from six parties
- 45 Reformist members from eight parties
- 46 independent members
- 5 of the independent members are religious minority (non-Islamic) **members** (1 Zoroastrian, 1 Jew, 1 Assyrian Christian and 2 Armenian Christians)

Revolutionary Guards. A separate army, not part of the regular Iranian military, it is responsible to the Council of Guardians and is commanded by the Supreme Leader.

- 100,000 ground troops, 20,000 naval, 5,000 marines



<https://www.pri.org/stories/2004-10-26/us-and-iran-part-ii-shah-and-revolution>



The US and Iran part II - the Shah and the revolution

[The World](#)

October 26, 2004 - 2:30 PM EDT

Reporter [Jeb Sharp](#)



Protestors during Iran's 1979 revolution.

Credit: Iran Persian Gulf Forever/Wikipedia

After the 1953 coup, the United States lost no time in shoring up the Shah's regime. Washington poured money into Iran for economic recovery. It began providing military aid. The United States took one other fateful step: it sent CIA experts to Iran to train a new intelligence agency. That agency grew into the Shah's notorious secret police force, SAVAK.

Review

Iran

The good times

Cyrus the Great
550 BC – 330 BC

The Parthians and Sassanids
63 BC – 651 AD

The Safavids and Ashfars
1501 - 1796

Reza Shah Pahlavi
1925 - 1941

The Islamic Republic (??)
1979 - present

Not so much

Alexander and the Greeks
330 BC – 63 BC

Arabs, Mongols and Tamerlane
651 AD – 1405 AD

The Qajars (and British and Russians)
1796 - 1925

Mohammad Shah Pahlavi
1941 – 1979



Reza Shah Pahlavi kicked the British and Russians out of Iran (except Anglo-Iranian Oil Company).





Red Army supply train in Iran during World War II

Today:

- Iran and Iraq
- Hostage Crisis
- Birth of Radical Islam
- Iran–Contra Affair
- Flight 655 and the USS Vincennes
- 9/11, Iran and the Taliban

THE SHAH AND SADDAM



1961, 1968, 1974—Kurds revolt in Iraq, backed by the Shah.



1968—Saddam Hussein becomes vice-president of Iraq.



3/6/75 Saddam and the Shah cut a deal on the Shatt al-'Arab.



Iraqi soldiers execute Kurds.

GUESS WHO'S BUILDING NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS.



The Shah of Iran is sitting on top of one of the largest reservoirs of oil in the world.

Yet he's building two nuclear plants and planning two more to provide electricity for his country.

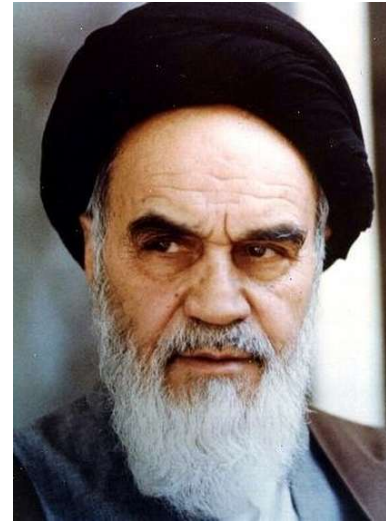
He knows the oil is running out — and time with it.

But he wouldn't build the plants now if he doubted their safety. He'd wait. As many Americans want to do.

The Shah knows that nuclear energy is not only economical, it has enjoyed a remarkable 30-year safety record. A record that was good enough for the citizens of Plymouth, Massachusetts, too. They've approved their second nuclear plant by a vote of almost 4 to 1. Which shows you don't have to go as far as Iran for an endorsement of nuclear power.

NUCLEAR ENERGY. TODAY'S ANSWER.

BOSTON EDISON EASTERN UTILITIES ASSOCIATES NEW ENGLAND POWER COMPANY
PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE NEW ENGLAND GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANIES





Iran plunges into near-chaos after the Shah and his government depart.



1979—The Islamic Republic of Iran is the first
“Islamic state.”

HOSTAGE CRISIS



Nov. 4, 1979, “students” storm the U.S. Embassy.



U.S. Embassy employees held as hostages.



U.S. Embassy employees held as hostages.



4/1/1980, Operation Eagle Claw



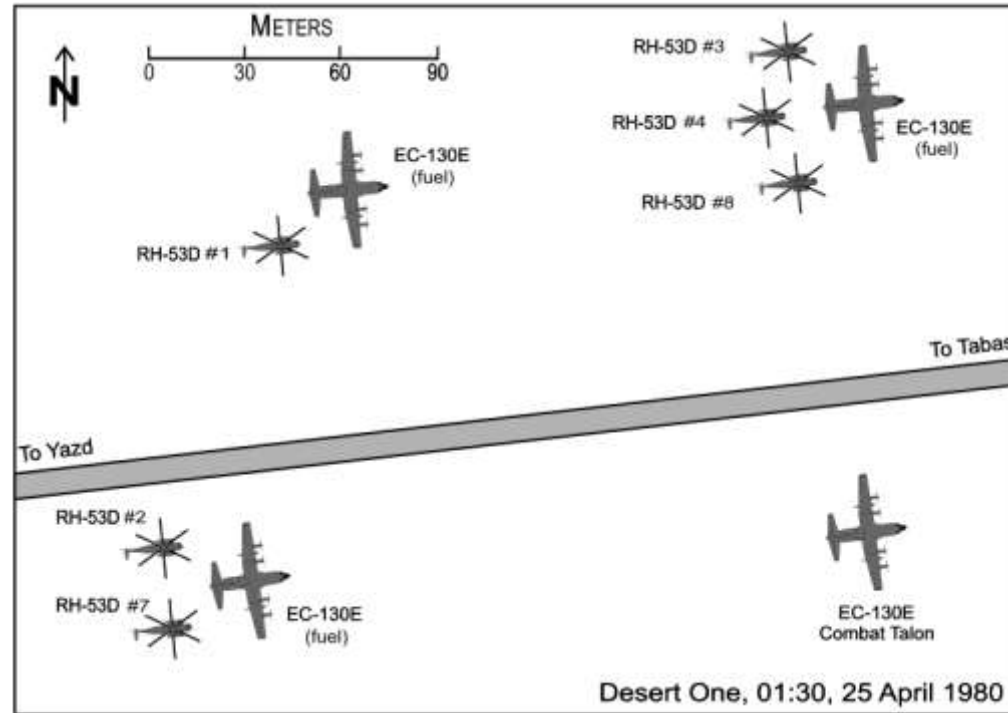
Operation Eagle Claw



Eagle Claw



Operation Eagle Claw



Desert One



Col. Charlie Beckwith





U.S. Embassy, Tehran.



IRAN-IRAQ WAR



Ayatollah Khomeini vowed to export his Iranian Revolution.



September 22, 1980, Saddam Hussein invades Iran.



Jan 20, 1981, 52 American hostages are back in the U.S.



Donald Rumsfeld and Saddam Hussein in Baghdad.



September 22, 1980, Saddam Hussein invades Iran.

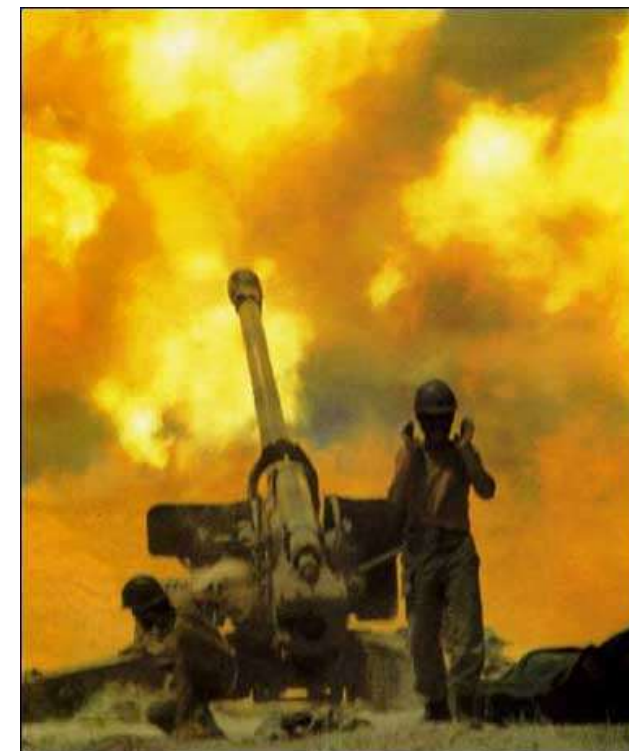




Basij militia soldiers.



Russian-made Iraqi tank.



Iranian artillery.

SEYED ALI HOSSEINI KHAMENEI



Ali Khamenei,
About age 16



Seyyed Ali Hoseyni Khamenei serves as a liaison officer during the Iran-Iraq war.





June 1981 Khamenei severely injured by a bomb set by the dissident group MEK.



6/20/81 President Bani-Sadr
is impeached.



As a wounded war hero, Khamenei is elected
war-time President of Iran in October 1981.





HEZBOLLAH AND RADICAL ISLAM



June 6, 1982, Israel invades Lebanon.



Khomeini sends 1,500 Republican Guards to Lebanon to organize and train a Shi'a militia.



Qassem Soleimani speaks to troops during the Iran-Iraq War.





1982: Qassem Soleimani helps organize Hezbollah in Lebanon.



Hezbollah headed by Shi'ite cleric Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah



September 1982, Soleimani, Nasrallah and the Hezbollah militia expands into southern Lebanon.



October 1983: Nasrallah orders Hezbollah to Bomb the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut—241 killed.



Hezbollah headed by Shi'ite cleric Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah

IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIR



TOW anti-tank missile.



HAWK anti-aircraft missile.

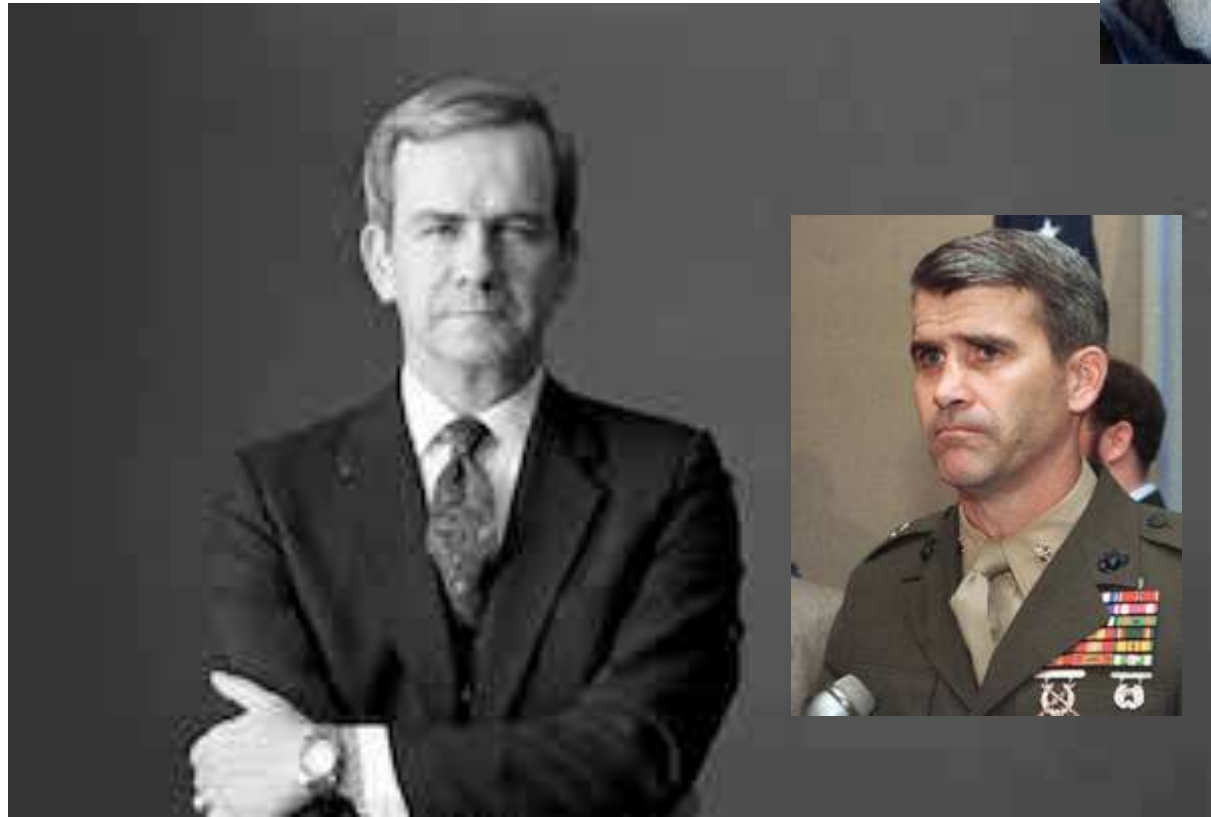


Iran makes an arms deal with Israel.





Hassan Rouhani
Commander of Iran's
Joint Military Operations Center



Robert C. McFarland
President Reagan's
National Security Advisor



Marine Lt. Col.
Oliver North





TOW anti-tank missile.



HAWK anti-aircraft missile.



Donald Rumsfeld and Saddam Hussein in Baghdad.



“TANKER WAR” AND FLIGHT 655



President Ali Khamenei visits
an Iran-Iraq War battlefield in August 1988.



Tanker convoy No. 12 underway in the gulf, including the reflagged tanker GAS KING, the guided missile cruiser USS WILLIAM H. STANDLEY (CG-32) and the amphibious assault ship USS GUADALCANAL (LPH-7) .

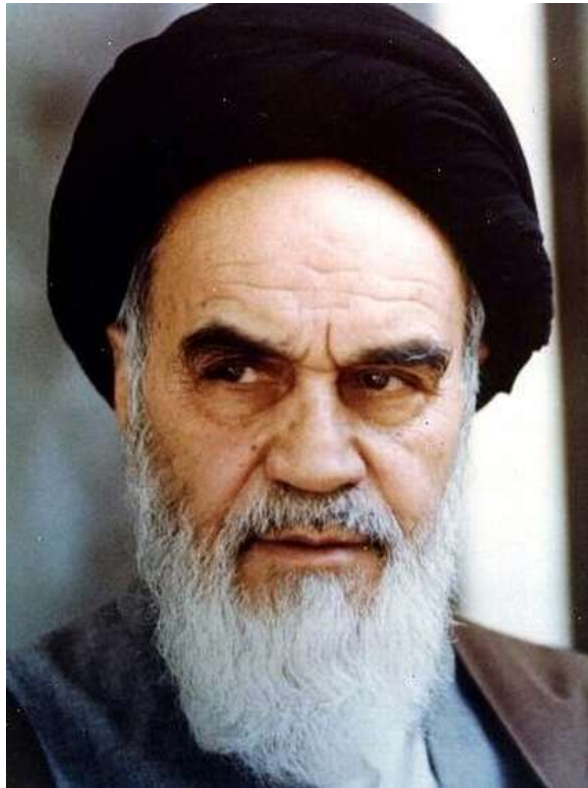


Guided missile cruiser USS VINCENNES (CG-49)



July 3, 1988 USS Vincennes shoots down Iran Air flight 655. 290 killed.





Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini



Maybod, Iran



Shiraz, Iran



Pasargadae, Iran

**Imam Khomeini ;
The world should know that all Iran and
muslims problems are due to the politics
of aliens. Of the USA muslims generally
hate Alies and specially hate the USA.**



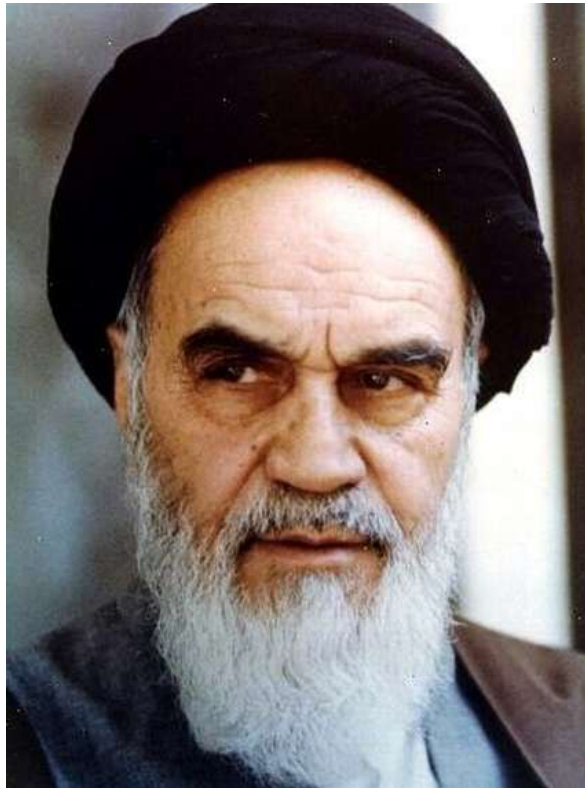
امام خمینی (ره):

دنیا بداند که هر گرفتاری که ملت ایران و ملل مسلمین دارند

از اجانب است ، از آمریکا است .

ملل اسلام از اجانب عموماً و از آمریکا خصوصاً متنفر است .





Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini
Dies June 3, 1989

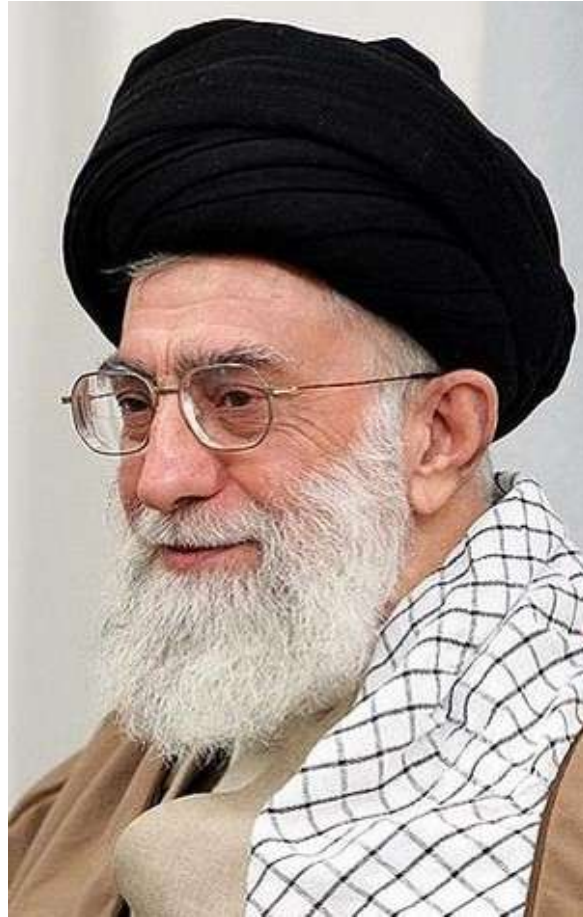




June 4, 1989 Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei elected Supreme Leader by the Assembly of Experts.



6/3/89 Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini died.



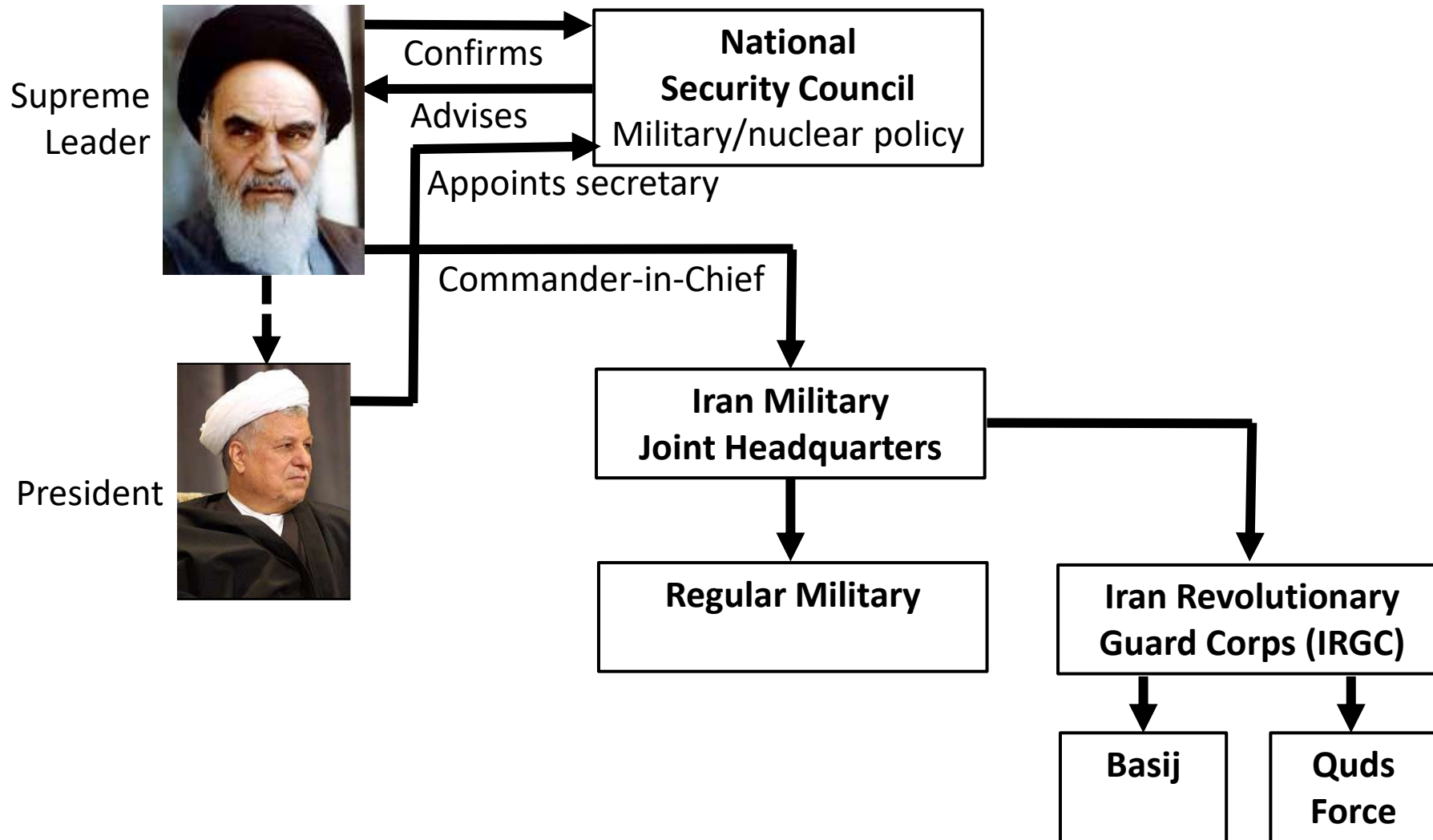
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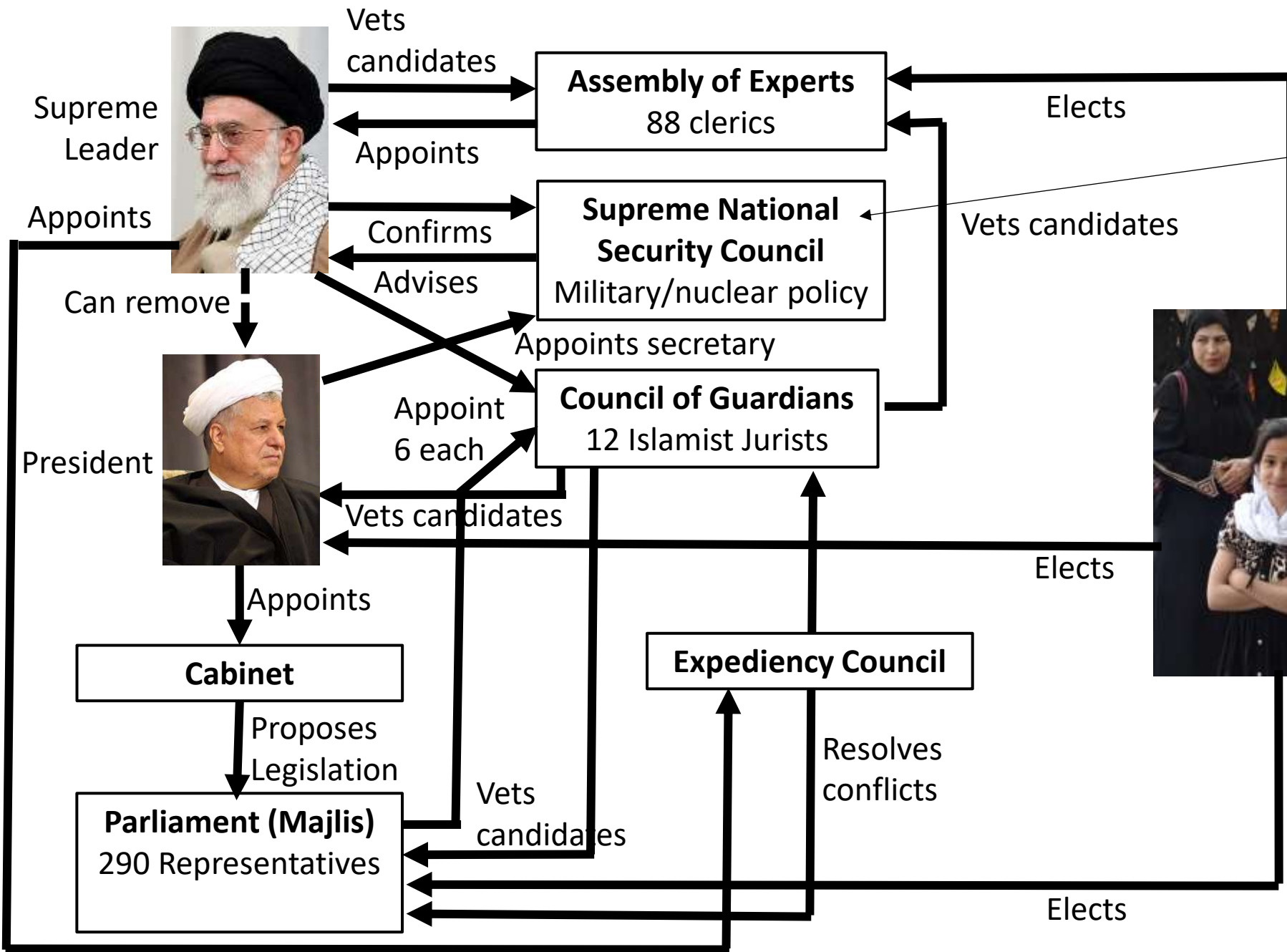


Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani,
President, 1989-1997



Seyyed Ali Hoseyni Khamenei,
The new Supreme Leader





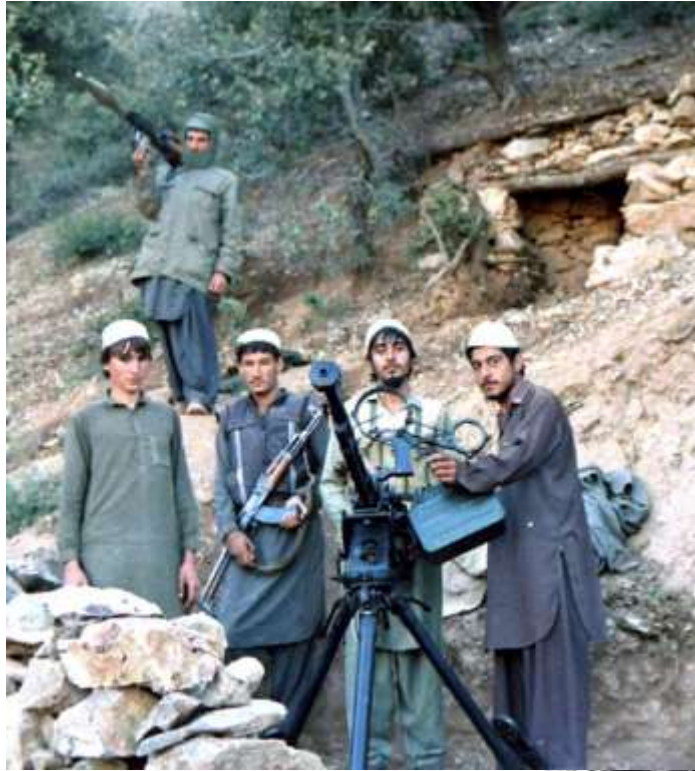
Hassan Rouhani appointed secretary Of the Supreme National Security Council, and National Security Advisor To President Rafsanjani.



9/11 and the Taliban



1979, Soviet Union invades Afghanistan



U.S., Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China and Iran support the *Mujahideen*.



February 1989. The last Soviet troops leave Afghanistan.



1992-1994, Taliban takes over Afghanistan



1990s, Using its IRGC, Iran supplies weapons to Hezbollah and develops relationships with Islamic Jihad, Hamas.

September 11, 2001



Attack on the World Trade Center



Sponsored by al Qaeda



Executed by
Mohammad Atta and Kahlid Sheikh Mohammad



November 2001. U.S. Special Forces arm and train the *Mujahideen* to fight the Taliban.



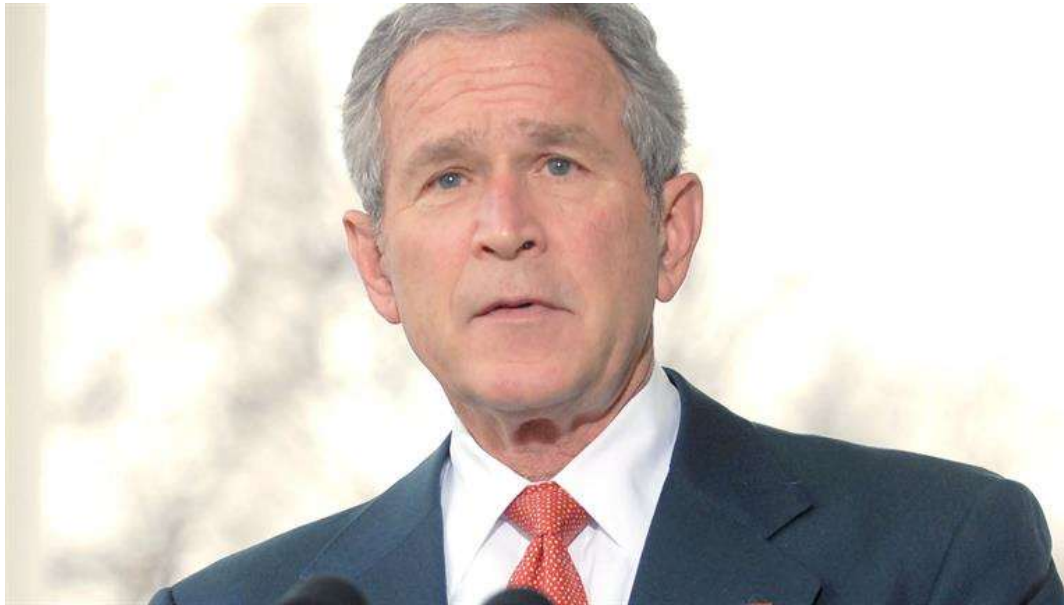
November 2001, Iran allows U.S. to use its airfields, port of Chabahar.



1/29/2002. George W. Bush declares that North Korea, Iraq and Iran constitute an “Axis of Evil.”



3/20/2003. Operation Iraqi Freedom—U.S. invades Iraq.



2/26/03. George Bush predicts that the invasion of Iraq will be the first step in the democratization of the Middle East.



3/21/03. Neocons William Kristol, Richard Perle and Michael Ledeen say that Syria and Iran are next.



8/29/03. Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi truck-bombs the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, the most sacred site in Shi'a Islam. The driver of the suicide truck was Yassin Jarad, abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's father-in-law.





Shi'a insurgents, spurred on by cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, strike out across Iraq, but particularly in Baghdad and southern Iraq.



Moqtada al-Sadr, Shi'a Mahdi Army.



Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al Qaeda.



Iran sees the opportunity to step in and provide funding, weapons, organization and leadership to the Shi'a. Chaos in Iraq protects Iran from the U.S. and from Iraq.



Moqtada al-Sadr, Shi'a Mahdi Army.



Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al Qaeda.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,
President, 2005-2014





2006. In response to Hezbollah kidnappings and rocket attacks, Israel invades Lebanon



When Israel withdraws, Hezbollah claims victory and becomes enormously popular in Lebanon.



Mir Hossein Mousavi



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

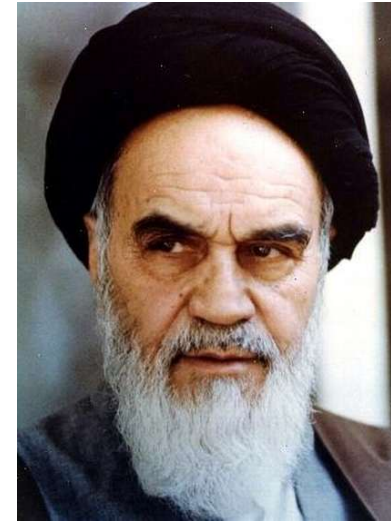
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GREEN MOVEMENT





IRAN



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