

Iran v Israel and the USA

Starting during President Carter's administration and continuing until the end of 2020, when President Biden was elected, here are ten (10) key dates or periods, and corresponding actions taken, during those points in time, by Iran and/or one of Iran's known proxy terrorist organizations, which have resulted in Iran becoming identified as a state sponsor of terrorism and an enemy of Israel, the USA and some or all U.S./NATO allies.

The table is a focused timeline of 10 especially important dates/years and actions by Iran and its main proxies (notably Hezbollah, Hamas, and other Iran-backed militias) that cemented Iran's reputation as a state sponsor of terrorism and an enemy of the U.S., Israel, and their allies—from the Carter years through 2020.

#	Year / Date	Main actor(s)	What happened	Why it mattered for Iran's "terror sponsor" status
1	1979–1981	Iranian regime, revolutionary students; Regan Jan 1981 to Jan 1989.	U.S. Embassy hostage crisis in Tehran —52 Americans held for 444 days after the embassy seizure in November 1979. Hostages were released once Regan took office in Jan 1981.	Set the tone for radical Shia post-revolution relations: open hostility toward the U.S., use of hostage-taking as state-backed leverage, and first major U.S. sanctions on Iran.
2	1983 (April & October)	Hezbollah / Islamic Jihad Organization, backed by Iran	Bombing of U.S. Embassy in Beirut (April) and Marine barracks bombing (October 23) —suicide truck bombs kill 63 at the embassy and 241 U.S. service members at the barracks.	Declassified material and later analysis tie the attacks to Iran-directed Hezbollah networks; these attacks were central to the U.S. view of Iran as orchestrating proxy terrorism.
3	1984	U.S. government; Iranian regime; Hezbollah and other proxies	U.S. formally designates Iran a State Sponsor of Terrorism for its support to groups like Hezbollah and Palestinian militants.	This is the legal and political anchor: from Reagan onward, every administration treats Iran as a systemic sponsor of terrorism, shaping sanctions, military posture, and alliance politics.
4	1992 & 1994	Hezbollah, directed and supported by Iran; H. W. Bush Jan 1989 to Jan 1993.	1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires and 1994 AMIA Jewish community center bombing —car bombs kill 29 and 85 respectively. Later Argentine and Israeli investigations, and a 2024 Argentine court ruling, blame Iran and Hezbollah.	These attacks showed Iran exporting terror to the Western Hemisphere against Israeli and Jewish targets, reinforcing its image as a global—not just regional—terror sponsor .
5	1995–1996	Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, backed by Iran; Clinton	Wave of suicide bombings in Israel , including bus bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv that kill Americans and Israelis ; Iran is identified as a key funder and armorer of Hamas and	These attacks drive U.S. moves to sanction Hamas and PIJ as Iranian proxies and deepen the perception that Iran is

		Jan 1993 to Jan 2001.	Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).	central to anti-Israeli terrorism that also kills U.S. citizens.
6	1996 (June 25)	Saudi Hezbollah / Iran-linked operatives	Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia —truck bomb kills 19 U.S. Air Force personnel. U.S. indictments later tie the plot to Saudi Hezbollah with Iranian backing.	A direct mass-casualty attack on U.S. forces in the Gulf, widely seen as an Iranian proxy operation, hardens U.S. military and intelligence views of Iran as an active combatant via terrorism.
7	Early to mid-2000s (Iraq War)	IRGC–Quds Force; Iraqi Shia militias (e.g., Kata’ib Hezbollah, Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq); W. Bush Jan 2001 to Jan 2009.	Provision of explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), training, and funding to Shia militias in Iraq , used to kill and maim U.S. and coalition troops.	Demonstrated Iran’s willingness to bleed U.S. forces indirectly while denying responsibility, cementing its role as a proxy-war sponsor against American troops and Iraqi Sunnis.
8	2006 and after	Hezbollah, IRGC	Hezbollah–Israel war (2006) and subsequent massive Iranian re-arming of Hezbollah with rockets, missiles, and advanced systems in violation of UN resolutions.	Iran’s open, sustained military support to Hezbollah against Israel becomes one of the clearest, ongoing examples of state sponsorship of a designated terrorist group threatening a key U.S. ally.
9	2011 (foiled plot)	IRGC–Quds Force operatives; Obama Jan 2009 to Jan 2017.	Plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in Washington, D.C. — U.S. authorities charge Quds Force–linked figures with planning a bombing at a restaurant in the U.S. capital. Obama looks the other way for the most part no matter what Iran or its proxies decide to do. Instead he appeases Iran with free money.	An attempted mass-casualty attack on U.S. soil , attributed directly to an Iranian state organ, reinforced the view that Iran uses terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy even inside the United States.
10	2019–2020 (the COVID era)	IRGC, Kata’ib Hezbollah and other Iraqi militias, regional proxies; Trump Jan 2017 to Jan 2021.	Escalatory attacks on Gulf shipping and Saudi oil facilities (Abqaiq/Khurais), rocket attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq (e.g., Camp Taji 2020), and continued support to Hezbollah, Hamas, PIJ, Houthis, and Iraqi militias. The democrats attack Trump daily to prevent citizens from supporting him against proxies or Iran in a campaign to regain power.	By 2020, U.S. State Department reports describe Iran as the “world’s worst state sponsor of terrorism,” citing its broad proxy network and direct attacks on U.S. and allied interests across the Middle East.

During that same timeframe one might list ten (10) or more important attempts made by Israel, the USA and/or their allies which were made to stimulate Iran to stop being a terrorist threat, stop developing WMD components such as Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) and instead develop their resources, government and social structures which would better result in them

joining the free world as a nation of peace and prosperity (such as what President Trump has suggested several times, to many nations, that might be a better path to follow).

Below is a clear, historically grounded list of candidates for the **top 10 major diplomatic, economic, and strategic efforts**—by the **United States, Israel, and U.S. allies**—intended to **reduce Iran’s support for terrorism, halt its pursuit of nuclear weapons capability, and encourage Iran to integrate into the global economy** from the **Carter administration through 2020**. These are **not endorsements** of any political figure or policy; they are **factual descriptions** of attempts made.

Top 10 Major Efforts (1979–2020) to Encourage Iran Toward Peace, Non-Proliferation, and Normalization

1. 1981 – Algiers Accords

Actors: United States (Carter/Reagan transition), Algeria (mediator), Iran

Goal: End the hostage crisis and open the door to normalized relations.

Approach:

- U.S. agreed to unfreeze some Iranian assets.
- Iran agreed to release the 52 American hostages.

Intended effect: Establish a foundation for future diplomatic engagement and reduce hostility.

2. 1980s–1990s – European “Critical Dialogue” with Iran

Actors: European Community / EU states, Iran

Goal: Encourage Iran to moderate its regional behavior and reduce support for terrorism.

Approach:

- High-level diplomatic engagement.
- Economic incentives tied to improved behavior.

Intended effect: Draw Iran toward European-style political and economic norms.

3. 1995–1997 – U.S. Sanctions + Offers of Conditional Engagement

Actors: United States (Clinton admin)

Goal: Pressure Iran to stop supporting terrorism and halt nuclear ambitions while offering a path to reintegration.

Approach:

- Executive orders banning U.S. investment in Iran’s energy sector.
- Public statements that the U.S. was open to dialogue if Iran changed course.

Intended effect: Combine pressure with a diplomatic off-ramp.

4. 2001–2003 – U.S.–Iran Cooperation Against the Taliban

Actors: United States (Bush admin), Iran, European allies

Goal: Build trust through shared opposition to the Taliban after 9/11.

Approach:

- Iran provided intelligence and diplomatic support at the Bonn Conference.
- U.S. officials acknowledged Iran’s constructive role.

Intended effect: Explore whether cooperation on Afghanistan could lead to broader normalization.

5. 2003 – The “Grand Bargain” Proposal (Iranian initiative, U.S. response debated)

Actors: Iran (via Swiss intermediaries), United States (Bush admin)

Goal: Comprehensive settlement covering nuclear issues, terrorism, and regional behavior.

Approach:

- Iran signaled willingness to discuss Hezbollah, Hamas, nuclear transparency, and relations with the U.S.

Intended effect: A sweeping diplomatic reset (though the proposal was not pursued by Washington and possibly seen as an Iran stall tactic).

6. 2003–2005 – EU-3 Nuclear Negotiations

Actors: EU-3 (UK, France, Germany), Iran

Goal: Halt Iran’s uranium enrichment and prevent nuclear weapons development.

Approach:

- Iran agreed to temporarily suspend enrichment.
- EU offered trade and technology incentives.

Intended effect: Build a long-term framework for peaceful nuclear energy only.

7. 2009–2013 – U.S. “Engagement Strategy”

Actors: United States (Obama administration), Iran, P5+1

Goal: Reduce nuclear tensions and open diplomatic channels.

Approach:

- Direct letters from the U.S. president to Iran’s leadership.
- Offers of sanctions relief in exchange for nuclear transparency.

Intended effect: Encourage Iran to shift from confrontation to diplomacy.

8. 2015 and 2016 – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), etc.

Actors: U.S.–Obama admin, EU P5+1 (UK, France, Germany, Russia, China), Iran

Goal: Limit Iran’s nuclear program and prevent development of weapons-grade uranium.

Approach:

- Iran agreed to cap enrichment levels, reduce centrifuges, and allow inspections (similar to the tactic Saddam used years before in Iraq).
- U.S. and EU provided sanctions relief.
- Final JCPOA agreement reached: July 14, 2015
- Adoption Day (when parties began preparing to implement it): October 18, 2015.
- Implementation Day (when Iran completed initial steps and sanctions relief began): January 16, 2016.
- On **January 17, 2016**, the U.S. delivered **\$400 million** in foreign currency to Iran, flown in on pallets.
- Additional cash transfers totaling **\$1.3 billion** followed on **January 22** and **February 5, 2016**.
- The total was **\$1.7 billion**, supposedly with a cover story given to U.S. citizens that it was meant to resolve a decades-old legal dispute over money Iran paid the U.S. in the 1970s for military equipment that was never delivered after the Iranian Revolution.
- Termination Day (the built-in 10-year sunset): October 18, 2025.

Intended effect: Create economic incentives for Iran to pursue peaceful development.

9. 2017–2020 – “Maximum Pressure” + Offers of Negotiation

Actors: United States (**Trump administration**), Israel, Gulf allies

Goal: Force Iran to curb terrorism support, halt missile development, and negotiate a broader agreement that can be verified and enforced.

Approach:

- Re-imposition of sanctions.
- Public statements that the U.S. was willing to negotiate a “better deal” that could lead to prosperity for Iran.

Intended effect: Pressure Iran economically while offering a path to normalization and economic growth.

10. 2020 – Abraham Accords (U.S.-brokered)

Actors: United States (**Trump administration**), Israel, UAE, Bahrain, later others

Goal: Shift regional dynamics to reduce Iran’s influence and create incentives for Iran to moderate.

Approach:

- Normalization agreements between Israel and Arab states.
- Economic and security cooperation designed to isolate terrorism and reward peaceful integration.

Intended effect: Demonstrate that regional prosperity comes from cooperation, not confrontation.

Summary: What These Efforts Had in Common

Across four decades, the U.S., Israel, and allies repeatedly tried to:

- **Offer diplomatic engagement** if Iran reduced terrorism and nuclear activities.
- **Provide economic incentives** (trade, sanctions relief, investment).
- **Demonstrate regional models of peace and prosperity** (e.g., Abraham Accords).
- **Use pressure and negotiation together** to encourage Iran to choose a different path.

These attempts varied in strategy—some emphasized diplomacy, others sanctions—but all shared the goal of encouraging Iran to **abandon terrorism, halt nuclear weapons development, and join the global community peacefully.**

I. Ten Key Iran / Iran-Proxy Actions (2021–Present)

Actions by Iran, the IRGC, Hezbollah, Hamas, Houthis, and Iraqi/Syrian militias that escalated conflict or targeted U.S./Israeli interests.

1. 2021–2022: Continued Iranian proxy attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria

Pro-Iran militias repeatedly launched drone and rocket attacks on U.S. bases, including Al Asad, Erbil, and Al Tanf.

2. 2021–2023: Hezbollah weapons expansion and cross-border fire into Israel

Iran continued supplying Hezbollah with precision-guided munitions and drones, enabling periodic escalations along the Lebanon–Israel border.

3. 2021–2024: Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Red Sea shipping

Iran-backed Houthis targeted civilian airports, oil facilities, and international shipping, threatening global trade routes.

4. 2022: Intensified IRGC support to militias in Syria

Iran expanded its “Axis of Resistance” footprint, reinforcing Syrian regime forces and enabling attacks on U.S. positions.

5. 2022–2023: Hamas and PIJ rearmament with Iranian assistance

Iran continued supplying Palestinian groups with rockets, funds, and training, contributing to repeated Gaza–Israel escalations.

6. October 7, 2023: Hamas mass-casualty attack on Israel

While Hamas executed the attack, Iran has long been its primary external supporter. The attack killed ~1,200 people and triggered the Gaza war. Many Americans living and traveling beyond U.S. borders were killed while apx 47 held captive for years until the Trump administration finally secured their release with help from Israel.

7. October 8, 2023–Present: Hezbollah joins the conflict

Hezbollah opened a northern front against Israel with sustained rocket, missile, and drone fire.

8. November 2023–Present: Houthi Red Sea attacks

Houthis launched anti-ship missiles and drones at commercial vessels and U.S. naval ships, disrupting global shipping lanes.

9. January 2024: Drone attack on U.S. base in Jordan

A pro-Iran militia attack killed three U.S. service members and wounded dozens, marking one of the deadliest Iran-proxy attacks on Americans in years.

10. April 14, 2024: Iran’s first direct large-scale missile and drone attack on Israel

Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel in retaliation for earlier strikes in Syria. This was Iran’s first direct attack on Israeli territory.

II. Ten Key U.S.–Israel–Allied Efforts (2021–Present) to Deter Iran or Encourage Peaceful Behavior

1. 2021–2022: Renewed U.S. diplomatic engagement to restore the JCPOA

The U.S. via the Biden administration and European allies attempted to revive the nuclear agreement to cap enrichment and reduce tensions. (General diplomatic context from Iran–Israel conflict timeline)

2. 2021–2023: U.S. and EU sanctions targeting IRGC and proxy networks

Sanctions expanded against Hezbollah, Hamas, PIJ, Houthis, and Iraqi militias to curb Iran’s regional influence.

3. 2021–2024: U.S. military deterrence deployments to the Middle East

Carrier strike groups, missile defenses, and air assets were deployed to prevent escalation and protect U.S. forces.

4. 2022: Israel’s “Campaign Between Wars” strikes in Syria

Israel continued precision strikes on Iranian weapons shipments to Hezbollah, aiming to prevent regional war.

5. 2022–2024: U.S. diplomatic pressure on Iran via the IAEA

The U.S. and European allies pushed for inspections, censures, and monitoring of Iran’s enrichment activities.

6. 2023: U.S. warnings to Iran after Hamas attack

President Biden publicly warned Iran (“Don’t?”) and its proxies not to widen the conflict, while deploying U.S. forces to deter escalation.

7. 2023–2024: Multinational naval task forces to protect Red Sea shipping

The U.S., UK, and allies formed maritime coalitions to intercept Houthi missiles and drones threatening global trade.

8. 2024: U.S. retaliatory strikes on Iran-backed militias

Following the Jordan attack, the U.S. struck IRGC-linked facilities in Iraq and Syria to deter further attacks.

9. 2021–Present: Continued U.S. and allied sanctions on Iranian missile and drone programs

Sanctions targeted suppliers, financiers, and IRGC procurement networks to slow Iran’s weapons development.

10. 2021–Present: Regional diplomatic normalization efforts (Abraham Accords expansion)

The U.S. continued encouraging Arab–Israeli cooperation, creating a regional bloc aimed at countering Iran’s destabilizing activities. (Context from Iran–Israel conflict dynamics)

Beyond the above one might ask a simple question: how many years has Israel (with U.S. assistance and expenditures) been dealing with Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, Houthi, etc. missile attacks on their cities and citizens (and whom else has had to endure such random terrorist attacks while being expected to never retaliate or ask for help to deal with such foes)?

That’s a big, painful question, and the honest answer is: it depends which group you mean—but we’re talking **decades**, not years.

Approximate timelines by group

- **Hamas (Gaza): Around 23–25 years.** Hamas and other Gaza factions began firing homemade Qassam rockets into Israel in **2001**, and rocket fire has continued—on and off, in escalations and wars—ever since.
- **Hezbollah (Lebanon): Roughly 30–40 years, depending on where you start.**
 - Hezbollah was founded in the early **1980s**, and used rockets against northern Israel during the **1990s** and especially the **2006 Lebanon War**.
 - Since then, there have been repeated flare-ups, with a major ongoing escalation again since **October 2023**.
- **Iran (direct attacks): Only a few years of direct missile/drone barrages, but decades of indirect involvement.**
 - Iran has backed and armed Hezbollah, Hamas, and others since the **1980s**, so its role in rocket/missile threats is about **40+ years**.
 - Direct, openly acknowledged missile and drone barrages on Israel (from Iranian territory) are a **very recent** phenomenon, mainly **since 2024**, tied to the wider regional escalation.
- **Houthis (Yemen): Several years, but still relatively recent.** The Yemen-based Houthis, aligned with Iran, began launching long-range missiles and drones toward Israel during the **Gaza war after October 7, 2023**, and have continued intermittently since.

If you zoom out

If you're asking, in spirit, "*How long have Israeli civilians lived under the terrorizing threat of rockets and missiles from these kinds of actors?*" then:

- **From Hezbollah and Iran-backed groups:** on the order of **3–4 decades**.
- **From Hamas and Gaza factions:** a bit over **2 decades**.
- **From the current multi-front Hamas–Hezbollah–Iran–Houthi missile environment:** **since late 2023**, but built on those earlier decades.

As is often the case history repeats itself, in so far as tyranny is concerned. For example, in Saddam's case in Iraq, the lessons learned seem to indicate that you cannot negotiate with tyrants who wish to use deception, repeated lies and stall tactics rather than embracing cooperation, diplomatic approaches and other options which will lead to a flourishing civilization. Tyrants like Saddam, Putin or Iran's police state leaders impose extremist forms of government leading to extreme uncertainty and extreme difficulty when it comes to trusting them; especially when many of their negotiations an agreements are eventually proven to be stall tactics and false or deceptive maneuvers simply to buy time while they attempt to build up military power in order to rule and control others around them and to protect their tyrannical forms of government. Iran has repeatedly claimed that they wish "death to Israel" and "death to America" and they have carried out actions which have, in fact, repeatedly caused death and destruction to both. Most logical thinkers cannot see a single reason to believe that the tyrannical government of Iran can be trusted with the ability to create weapons of mass destruction and not use them.

Acknowledgement

This should be a clear argument that Iran's behavior—support for proxies, hostile rhetoric, and concealment around its nuclear program—creates a security dilemma that can justify preventive measures by other states. That perspective is widely held by many policymakers and analysts.

Why that view is persuasive

- **Documented hostile actions and proxy support** create a credible threat perception among regional states and their allies.
- **Technical reality of enrichment** means large stocks of near-weapons-grade material (e.g., 60% HEU) greatly shorten breakout timelines, raising urgency for states that fear a rapid weaponization.
- **Historical precedent** (cases, such as North Korea, where regimes used deception or stalled inspections) reinforces skepticism about trusting opaque, authoritarian programs.
- **Deterrence logic:** removing or degrading capabilities can buy time and reduce immediate risk to defensive forces and allies, as well as civilians living and working abroad within reach of tyrannical actors.

Counterarguments and strategic cautions

- **Escalation risk:** military strikes can provoke wider conflict, strengthen hardliners, and accelerate clandestine programs.
- **Durability and verification:** without a verifiable, long-term diplomatic framework, military action may only delay rather than eliminate a program.
- **Norms and precedent:** unilateral use of force to address proliferation raises political questions and generates pushback from those who fail to see the bigger picture and can weaken international non-proliferation regimes.
- **Uncertainty in public evidence:** many crucial facts (what survived, where material was moved) remain classified or disputed, complicating clear causal judgments.

Neutral synthesis

Both lines of reasoning have merit; one far more than the other. The first argument presented captures the preventive logic that motivates many decision makers: when a state combines hostile behavior with a narrowing technical timeline to WMD, other states may feel compelled to act. At the same time, credible strategic objections emphasize second-order effects, verification limits, and the risk that force can make the problem harder to solve in the long run. Which side is more persuasive depends on how one weights immediate risk reduction versus long-term stability and on unresolved factual questions about what actually survives a given test case and how quickly weaponization could proceed.

Question: In Iran's case, if we assume that the enriched uranium was moved to better protected facilities, as suspected, and those facilities contain the necessary equipment to begin enrichment and that process has begun before Raging Fury was actually initiated is it now possible that Iran has a stockpile of highly enriched weapons-grade material which could be used to create an atomic weapon or other WMD **and** does Iran still have the technical expertise (still alive and available) to complete this final creation of such a nuclear weapon **or** are there some serious doubts still remaining as to this possibility?

Answer: **It is technically possible but not publicly verifiable** that Iran could now possess weapons-grade material if (a) declared or undeclared stocks of 60% HEU survived prior strikes (quite probable) and concealment moves, and (b) intact centrifuge cascades were available to finish enrichment (also quite possible). Public technical assessments and IAEA-based stock estimates make this a highly realistic risk, but the *exact status* is uncertain because inspectors have been denied access and strike damage is incompletely verified.

Why the final enrichment step is comparatively easy

- **From 60% to 90% is a small fraction of the full process timeline.** Analysts show the **separative work** already embodied in a 60% stockpile is very large, while the additional SWU (SWU stands for **Separative Work Unit**... the standard measure of the *effort* required to enrich uranium in centrifuges) needed to go from 60% to 90% is relatively small — meaning the *technical* enrichment time can be short if centrifuge cascades and feedstock are available.

Centrifuges and industrial capacity

- **Iran has deployed advanced centrifuges (IR-2m, IR-4, IR-6, etc.) that shorten breakout timelines** compared with older IR-1 machines; if those cascades survived or were reconstituted, enrichment to 90% could be done far faster than it took earlier in the decade.

Weaponization and delivery remain separate challenges

- **Turning HEU into a deliverable nuclear warhead requires additional steps** (metallurgy, high-explosive lens design, integration with a delivery system, and testing or validated design work). Experts generally estimate **months** for weaponization even after HEU is available, not just days. Public assessments therefore separate “enough fissile material” from “an assembled, deliverable weapon.”

Key uncertainties that determine whether Iran actually has a weapon now

- **Survivability of the 60% stockpile:** IAEA figures before the strikes put the 60% stockpile in the hundreds of kilograms (and may be based on figures Iran officials publically boasted about already), but post-strike survival is unknown because Iran cut IAEA access and their track records of deception is well known.
- **Damage to centrifuge cascades and facilities:** Reported strike damage to Natanz, Fordow and other sites (via Midnight Hammer for example) likely has reduced capacity; how much can be repaired or run covertly is disputed.
- **Hidden or dispersed covert facilities:** If material and cascades were moved (as reported per prior imagery and prior to Midnight Hammer) to hardened or undisclosed sites, timelines shorten; if not, timelines lengthen.

Bottom line

Possible but unproven. Technically, Iran had the materials and centrifuge technology that could make the final enrichment step short; whether that capability and the necessary stockpiles survived the strikes and concealment moves is not publicly verifiable because of IAEA access limits and conflicting damage assessments. The risk that Iran could produce weapons-grade HEU quickly remains credible to many experts, but a confirmed, assembled weapon would still require additional technical work and time.

One thing is known for sure. Iran's leaders, both political and military, have likely painted themselves into a corner due to their own actions; by generating HEU, refusing to allow open inspections, terrorizing others for decades, using deceptive actions to create doubts and treating their own population with such deadly force (to name a few problems) there is little reason for anyone to support or trust them going forward. Their time has come to an end and they have no cards left in their hand to play. Only fools would allow Iran to play any more games any longer.