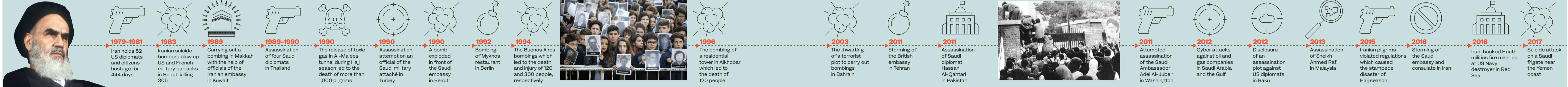


# Special essay Iran

1979 REVOLUTION: THE BIRTH OF GLOBAL TERRORISM Source: Infographic\_KSA



# Why Iran's malign behavior must be confronted — not appeased

For nearly 40 years, the theocratic regime in Tehran has sown the seeds of division, mayhem and terror, not just in its own Middle East backyard, but worldwide. The world learned to its cost in the 1930s that allowing these seeds to take root and grow leads only to disaster

I was born just three decades ago, long after the "The Greatest Generation" endured the darkest chapter in human history. I can only think their survival and ultimate triumph over the forces of evil were meant to impart lessons to us all, so that such horror never befalls the world again. It is encouraging to hear US President Donald Trump make clear that we will not approach Iran with the sort of appeasement policies that failed so miserably to halt Nazi Germany's rise to power, or avert the costliest war ever waged. Now, we all need to unite on a broader strategy to address the Iranian regime's destabilizing behavior.

At a time of thunderous echoes of the 1930s — the sustained fallout from an economic crisis, extreme polarization of the political spectrum from the far right to the hard left, inaction from the global community and malignant actors determined to fill a void in leadership by spreading their ideology of hate and violence — it is incumbent on the global community to act with resolve. As the philosopher George Santayana famously declared: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." In the appeasement of Iran, we are clearly seeing something we have seen before. It is equally obvious that the strategy has already failed.

Despite the best intentions of its architects, the 2015 nuclear deal and subsequent easing of financial restrictions on Tehran did nothing to stem the regime's expansionist ambitions or eliminate its support for the Middle East's most destabilizing extremists — in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and elsewhere. Instead, it served only to grant the world's most egregious sponsor of global terrorism rewards for temporarily suspending its apocalyptic pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The deal was but part of a worrying pattern of appeasement. As Iran threw more and more economic and military muscle behind the murderous government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, it was not punished. Instead, governments responded by offering Tehran a seat at successive Syrian peace tables. The result was predictable: No peace, and nothing that resembled a more accommodating Iran, which to this day stands by Assad, even chemical weapons attack after the next.

President Trump has declared that his administration "will be working with our allies to find a real, comprehensive, and lasting solution to the Iranian nuclear threat. This will include efforts to eliminate the threat of Iran's ballistic missile program, to stop its terrorist activities worldwide, and to block its menacing activity across the Middle East."

Saudi Arabia is committed to doing everything we can to help the United States. There is still time for a determined international response that stops Iran from spreading its tentacles of mischief to every corner of the region — from the Hezbollah terrorist organization that has put a stranglehold on Lebanon's



A military exhibition displays a Revolutionary Guard missile, the Shahab-3, which is claimed to be capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and reaching Europe, Israel and other countries in the Middle East, seen under a picture of the Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in Tehran. AP

## By Prince Khalid bin Salman | Saudi Ambassador to the United States

Prince Khalid bin Salman was appointed ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States of America on April 22, 2017, by King Salman. He presented his credentials to US President Donald J. Trump and officially assumed his position on July 21, 2017.



Before that, Prince Khalid was an adviser at the Saudi Embassy in Washington and at the Ministry of Defense in Riyadh. Previously, he was an F-15 pilot and tactical intelligence officer in the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF). Before a back injury ended his flying

career, Prince Khalid flew more than 50 combat missions as part of the international coalition campaign against Daesh in Syria and as part of Operations Decisive Storm and Renewal of Hope in Yemen. Prince Khalid graduated from the King Faisal Air Academy in Riyadh and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the RSAF. He received his initial pilot training at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, and advanced training at Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus, Mississippi. He also studied advanced electronic warfare in France.

future, to the Houthi militia that has wrought misery on Yemen and tried, unsuccessfully, to intimidate my country by firing Iranian-provided missiles into Saudi Arabian territory. Whatever your position on the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal, we all should now answer a higher calling: Detering Iran and its minions from their campaign of chaos. Even leaders who sought to salvage the nuclear deal recognize the importance of combating Iran now. As the French President Emmanuel Macron said after the US withdrew from the agreement: "We will work collectively on a broader framework, covering nuclear activity, the post-2025 period, ballistic activity, and stability in the Middle-East, notably Syria, Yemen, and Iraq."

As other nations and their peoples weigh the matter, it is worth considering the abundant and disturbing parallels between 2018 and 1938. Eighty years ago, the guardians of global order looked on powerlessly as expansionist forces in Europe, Asia and Africa pierced what faith remained in the ideal of international

law or in the League of Nations. A similar danger presents itself now as Iran runs roughshod over the international order, stoking conflict beyond its borders and arming the extremists who do its bidding in pursuit of regional domination. Iranian expansionism fuels and foments most of the Middle East's crises — the sectarian strife that pits neighbor against neighbor, the militant movements that shatter legitimate state institutions, and the terrorist forces that kill innocent men, women and children. "Everywhere you look, if there is trouble in the region, you find Iran." Note, it was not a Saudi leader who said that — it was the US secretary of defense, Jim Mattis. The pernicious threat posed by Iran is at the core of its regime. The Iranian constitution calls for spreading "the ideological mission of jihad" throughout the world. And from its first days, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini exhorted his followers to conquer Muslim and non-Muslim land alike. In 2015, Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC),

proclaimed: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is at its best. The Iranian revolution is quickly spreading beyond the republic's borders; with the same speed it opens the front lines of revolution, achieving [Khomeini's] goals." This statement was made while the JCPOA was being concluded and during the Iran-backed Houthi takeover of Yemen. The Iranian state ideology is based on the concept of Wilayat Al-Faqih, a guardianship-based political system in which the people owe their allegiance to a supreme religious jurist (who also becomes the Supreme Leader) regardless of their nationality, geography or form of government. This supra-national doctrine aims to undermine the influence of legitimate state government by theocratic rule, and does not recognize the legitimate international order of governments. But is religion really at the heart of Iran's interpretation of Wilayat Al-Faqih? If it were, then why wouldn't a Supreme Leader emerge from Iraq's religious centers, and under Wilayat Al-Faqih the people of Iran would pledge allegiance to him?

In its findings, the Iraq Study Group reported: "Iran has supplied improvised explosive devices to groups ... that attack U.S. forces. These types of weapons were responsible for almost 40 percent of all US casualties." In concert with Iran, Bashar Assad released hundreds of terrorists from Syrian prisons and moved them into Iraq for the purpose of attacking US interests there. In recent years, Iran has insidiously expanded its control or influence in Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. It has also filled voids created by the US withdrawal from Iraq. Everywhere Iran has gone, its methods of terrorism and assassination have followed. The lack of concrete reactions to these activities, and the fading of "red lines" in Syria, made the Iranian view clear: The US — and the world — was handcuffed and had only words of condemnation in response. That message is changing now and we believe President Trump when he says: "The United States no longer makes empty threats." Saudi Arabia has always believed the international community cannot address Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, while ignoring the mass destruction Iran is inflicting daily on its neighbors. Any future deal must address Iran's ballistic missile program, its increasing financial and military support for terrorism, and its interference in the internal affairs of countries in the region. Today, Saudis live within minutes of new Iranian ballistic missiles pointed at them by the Houthis in Yemen. More than 160 Iranian missiles have been fired into Saudi Arabia. It is an intolerable situation and one, thankfully, Americans do not have to endure from a drug cartel or terrorist state shooting at Washington, DC, from just across the US border.

Saudi Arabia's policy is to confront evil wherever it may be found and in whatever form it takes. We are aggressively fighting Daesh and Al-Qaeda, and the extremist ideologies that underpin them. (Both terror organizations see Saudi Arabia and the United States as their primary enemies. In fact, Osama bin Laden's first declaration of war in 1996 was on just those two countries.) Our war on terror is not limited to those groups, but is waged against all who inflict or condone violent extremism. Those who adhere to terrorism and violent extremism are but a small minority in both Saudi Arabia and Iran. The difference is that in Saudi Arabia these terrorists are on the run, while in Iran they are running the country. At home, we are pushing ahead with implementing a positive vision of a modern and engaging partner to the world. It is an agenda that stands in sharp contrast to the Iranian menace that aspires to put everyone back against the tide of modernity. This is the real conflict at the heart of the Middle East, not the Sunni vs. Shiite divide that Iran wants you to see. It is a clash of two very different visions of the future. Saudi Arabia's vision is inclusive, guided by the rule of law and international order, and promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity for all. That means supporting legitimate state institutions throughout the region, irrespective of sect. For example, in Iraq, Saudi Arabia supports the legitimate government against (Sunni) Daesh, and in Yemen we support the legitimate government against the (Shiite) Houthis. Iran's vision is the opposite, shaped by its nature as an expansionist power that propagates sectarianism, hatred and violence as a means to expand its influence on Arab countries and impose its will on

Evidence of terror: US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley briefs the media in front of remains of Iranian 'Qiam' ballistic missile in December, 2017. Reuters



A missile component recovered in Saudi Arabia reveals identity and logo of Iranian manufacturer Shahid Bagher Industries. AFP

Western sanctions, they cry, or the lingering effects of the Iran-Iraq war. When these excuses are disproved, they readily come up with others. But this gap in achievement is real and pervasive, and only likely to accelerate as Saudi Arabia speeds up transformation, reform, and economic and social change, while the Iranian regime remains obsessed with inflicting as much death and destruction as possible. Iran's theocratic rulers won't have it any other way. With his English-language tweets and Facebook postings, the Iranian regime's foreign minister Javad Zarif desperately attempts to present a moderate face outside his country. He doesn't even try at home, where such networks are banned, demonstrating that what he says is mere lip service to the West. President Hassan Rouhani similarly seeks to beguile the world with talk of reformers who might one day replace the "hardliners" holding the levers of Iranian power. It is an elaborate ruse from leaders who are part of, and benefit from, the same system of repression. From 1989 to 2005, Rouhani was secretary of the Supreme National

Security Council, in which post he helped oversee Iran's campaign of assassinations and embassy bombings. And in 2013, as he ran for president, Rouhani sang a similar tune. "We need to express 'Death to America' with action," he exhorted his fellow Iranians in a speech in the city of Karaj. I even have heard directly from a former US government official that Zarif whispers privately that the Supreme Leader is "disconnected from reality" and that the United States needs to back Iran so the moderates can take over when he passes. This is not reality; it is a deceptive strategy meant to lull America into inaction. And should you look at the jockey or the horse? The true "jockeys" in Iran's leadership today are not the Zarifs. They are individuals such as Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, who has commanded the Quds Force for 15 years and, according to Time magazine, is "responsible for exporting Iran's revolution, supporting terrorists, subverting pro-Western governments and waging Iran's foreign wars. Soleimani is also a master of propaganda, posting selfies from

battlefields across the region to convince one and all that he is the master of the Middle Eastern chessboard." This is the real face of Iran's leadership. Five years into Rouhani's presidency, the West's policy of appeasement to "empower" him clearly has not done much good for ordinary Iranians. The nuclear deal provided Iran with more than \$100 billion in concessions. But look at Iran's budget the following year. That money did not go into schools, or roads or hospitals. No wonder Iranian citizens took to the streets this year crying out for improvements in their country, wondering into whose pockets the benefits of the nuclear deal disappeared. Following the agreement, the Iranian budget showed significant funding increases for the IRGC and the Quds Force. The available data on Iran's official fiscal budgets show that between 2014 and 2017, the defense budget grew by 71 percent, from \$9.29 billion to \$15.9 billion. Available information also shows the budget rose even further last year to \$19 billion.

Following the path of appeasement will lead countries in the region to lose faith in international law. They will see that proxy militias can be tools of foreign policy, unchecked by the world community. They will change and adapt to this new reality — and not for the better, I fear. We cannot pass the buck and hope things get better. Committing to a firm policy of containing Iran, and all its mischievous activity, will solve more problems than just saying: "Something must be done." The world must join us to confront Iran with seriousness and intent. Iran needs to know it will pay a price if it continues to violate international law and interfere in the affairs of its neighbors. Iran must be punished economically and diplomatically, with all options kept on the table to ensure the strength and integrity of diplomacy. And the Middle East's legitimate state institutions — in Yemen, Iraq and elsewhere — need to be supported as they fight Iran's proxies of chaos. Only such a course of action will allow the seeds of modernization, growth, and innovation to flourish across the Middle East. Saudi Arabia will do its part. We need as many partners as possible.

## The consequences of appeasement in the 1930s

Ross Anderson Dubai

The 2015 agreement aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear program was not the first "piece of paper" to lull the world into a false sense of security. In September 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returned to the UK after a meeting in Munich with Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. The meeting was the culmination of three years of the policy known as "appeasement" — a series of conces-

sions that allowed Hitler to annex Austria, rebuild the German navy and remilitarize the Rhineland, with the eventual aim of dominating Europe. Supporters of appeasement believed that each new concession made a European war less likely, even as Hitler made his intentions clear. In the summer of 1938, the Nazi leader sent 750,000 German troops to the German-Czech border as a prelude to the invasion of the Sudetenland, an ethnically German part of Czechoslo-

vakia. Chamberlain flew to Munich for talks, and accepted an assurance from Hitler that, with the Sudetenland incorporated into Germany, his territorial ambitions were at an end. "I hold in my hand a waiting crowd at Heston aerodrome when he returned to Britain. 'I believe it is peace for our time.'" A year later, Germany invaded Poland — and the world embarked on the most destructive war in history.



Chamberlain's 'piece of paper' in 1938.