Iran

- **1941**: Reza Shah's pro-Axis allegiance in WWII leads to Anglo-Russian military occupation of Iran. Reza Shah replaced by his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.
- **1950:** Mohammad Mossadeq becomes prime minister of a democratically elected government.
- **1951-April**: Parliament, under Mossadeq, votes to nationalize the oil industry, which is dominated by the British owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Britain imposes an embargo and blockade against Iran, stopping oil exports. A power struggle between the Shah and Mossadeq ends when the Shah flees in August 1953.
- **1953-August**: CIA organizes a coup against Mossadeq and the democratic government. Mossadeq is deposed and the Shah returns.
- **1953-1979:** Shah becomes increasingly dependent on the secret police (Savak) to control opposition movements critical of his policies of land redistribution and economic modernization. Tens of thousands are imprisoned, tortured or murdered by Savak.
- **September 1978—January 1979**: Shah's policies alienate the Shia clergy and his despotic rule causes strikes, riots, and mass demonstrations. Political instability increases, Shah goes into exile.
- **1979 February – April**: Ayatollah Khomeini returns from 14 years of exile in Iraq and France for opposing the Shah. Islamic Republic of Iran is proclaimed after a referendum.
- **1979 November:** Militant Islamic students take over the US Embassy in Tehran. 52 Americans are held hostage to demand the extradition of the Shah from the US to face trial. The Shah was seeking asylum and medical for cancer. He dies in Egypt in 1980.
- **1980 September**: Start of eight year Iran-Iraq war. Under President Carter, the US supports Iraq with intelligence, weapons and money.
- **1981 January 20**: American hostages released after 444 days of captivity as Ronald Reagan is inaugurated president. Some have alleged that a deal to keep the hostages captive was made to secure Reagan's election.
- **1985:** Iran-Contra Affair. Reagan administration attempted to win the release of American hostages held in Lebanon by Iran's ally, Hizbollah, by secretly selling weapons to Iran and using the money to finance the contras in Nicaragua in violation of US law.
- **1988 July**: USS Vincennes shoots down and Iranian passenger jet flying to Mecca. 290 passengers and crew are killed.
- **1995:** US imposes oil and trade sanctions over alleged Iranian sponsorship of "terrorism," seeking nuclear weapons, and hostility to Israeli-US peace process.
- **2002:** President George Bush includes Iran in the "axis of evil" with Iraq and North Korea. Iranians are outraged.
- **2002:** Iran starts construction of first nuclear reactor over US objection.
- **2007:** US announces comprehensive new trade sanctions against Iran.