Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

**Name:** Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

**Type of Organization:**
- Military
- Terrorist
- Transnational
- Violent

**Ideologies and Affiliations:**
- Islamist
- Khomeinist
- Shiite
- State actor

**Place of Origin:**
Iran

**Year of Origin:**
1979

**Founder(s):**
Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

**Places of Operation:**
Afghanistan, Europe, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, South America, Syria

**Overview**

*Also Known As:*
- Islamic Revolutionary Guards
- Pasdaran (“Guards”)
- Revolutionary Guards
- Sepah (“Corps”)
- Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enghelab-e Eslami ("Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps")

**Executive Summary:**

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is tasked with preserving the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ideals of the 1979 revolution. The IRGC combines traditional military roles with a relentless focus on supposed domestic enemies. The IRGC is Iran’s primary instrument for exporting the ideology of the Islamic Revolution worldwide. It is rigidly loyal to Iran’s clerical elite. The IRGC is Iran’s main link to its terrorist proxies, which the regime uses to boost Iran’s global influence.

Within the IRGC are the Basij militia and the Quds Force (IRGC-QF). The Basij, literally “mobilization,” is a paramilitary organization charged with channeling popular support for the Iranian regime. The Basij is famous for its recruitment of volunteers, many of them teenage children, for human wave attacks during the Iran-Iraq war. Today, the Basij has two missions: to provide defensive military training to protect the regime against foreign invasion, and to suppress domestic anti-regime activity through street violence and intimidation. After the contested 2009 Iranian presidential elections, for example, the Basij brutally quashed protests and attacked student dormitories.

The IRGC’s Quds Force specializes in foreign missions, providing training, funding and weapons to extremist groups, including Iraqi insurgents, Hezbollah, and Hamas. The Quds Force allegedly participated in the 1994 suicide bombing of
an Argentine Jewish community center, killing more than 80 and wounding about 300. In the years since, the Quds Force has armed anti-government militants in Bahrain, and assisted in a 2011 assassination attempt on Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to the United States. The Quds Force also plays a key role in support of Syrian regime forces in that country’s civil war.

**Doctrine:**

The IRGC is an Iranian government agency tasked with defending the regime against internal and external threats. Espousing a radical ideology and a paranoid worldview, the IRGC uses secret police methods against its opponents within Iran, and terrorist tactics against its enemies abroad.

Iranian law defines the IRGC as “an institution commanded by the Supreme Leader whose purpose is to protect the Islamic Revolution of Iran and its accomplishments, while striving continuously . . . to spread the sovereignty of God’s law.”

In the first months after the 1979 Iranian revolution, before its existence was enshrined in law, the IRGC operated as a network of militant activists loyal to revolutionary leader Ruhollah Khomeini. In this role, the IRGC helped to stamp out dissident currents within the revolutionary movement. The IRGC views its task as preserving the “Islamic republican” form of government created by Khomeini, and faithfully implementing the instructions of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who succeeded Khomeini after the latter’s death in 1989. Ahead of Iran’s June 2013 presidential elections, IRGC commanders reportedly made clear through public statements that they would only confirm a president who is loyal to Khamenei.

The IRGC today enjoys the power of a government agency, while still maintaining the zeal and fanaticism of an ideologically motivated terrorist group. The IRGC’s mission combines traditional military roles with a relentless focus on pursuing supposed domestic enemies. According to the Ministry of Defense, the IRGC’s role is to “protect [Iran’s] independence, territorial integrity, and national and revolutionary ideals, under the shadow of the orders given by the Commander in Chief, the Grand Ayatollah Imam Khamenei.”

Political beliefs considered inconsistent with “revolutionary ideals” are treated as military threats. Then-IRGC commander Jafari stated in 2014: “today’s war is not fought on land or sea, it is fought at the level of belief, and the enemy is investing efforts to gain influence inside the Islamic Republican system.”

The IRGC’s doctrine combines rigid loyalty to Iran’s clerical elite with deep paranoia about the outside world. In IRGC publications, Iran is portrayed as threatened by American and “Zionist” plots, which are said to be capable of exerting great influence within Iran. Allegations of foreign meddling in Iran provide the justification for terrorism abroad, fueling the high-profile international conflicts that provide the basis for ever harsher crackdowns on internal dissent.

Over time, domestic repression has come to overshadow traditional military missions, as the IRGC’s influence has spread into every aspect of Iranian life. In 2007, following the formal incorporation of the Basij militia into the IRGC, IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari said, “The new strategic guidelines of the IRGC have been changed by the directives of the Leader of the Revolution [i.e., Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei]. The main mission of the IRGC from now on is to deal with the threats from the internal enemies. [The number-two priority of the corps] is to help the military in case of foreign threats.”

The IRGC considers its loyalty to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei a religious imperative. At times, the organization’s devotion to Khamenei slips into hero-worship: deputy IRGC commander Mohammad Hejazi recently credited Khamenei with overruling the objections of scientific experts to direct research towards increased accuracy in ballistic missiles, “resulting in proud accomplishments in this field.”

**Organizational Structure:**

**Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps**

By law, the power to appoint and remove the commander of the IRGC is given to the supreme leader.
also appoints clerical representatives to the various units of the IRGC whose guidance and instructions are binding on commanders.\textsuperscript{10} Iranian law makes “belief and practical obedience to the principle of clerical rule” a condition of membership in the IRGC, further establishing absolute loyalty to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as the IRGC’s guiding principle.\textsuperscript{11}

Efforts to normalize the IRGC’s extraordinary role in Iran over the years have resulted in a complex organization chart. Administratively, the IRGC falls under the Joint Armed Forces General Staff, part of the Ministry of Defense. But these layers of oversight do not give Iran’s nominally elected civilian authorities real control over the IRGC, as the entire military remains subordinate to the Supreme National Security Council, which in turn answers to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.\textsuperscript{12}

Scholars who study the IRGC have concluded that “individuals appear to matter more than institutions when considering national security decision[-]making.”\textsuperscript{13} Consequently, scholars have identified personal networks, often based on ties of family, friendship, or joint service in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War as the key factors in IRGC leadership.\textsuperscript{14} The opacity of the IRGC’s real command structure helps make Iran an erratic and therefore especially dangerous player in regional affairs.

**Basij**

The Basij militia, whose name means “mobilization,” is a paramilitary organization tasked with channeling popular support for the Islamic Republican regime. The Basij is most famous for its recruitment of volunteers, many of them teenage children, for human wave attacks on Iraqi forces during the Iran-Iraq War in which thousands died. Today, the Basij has two missions: giving military training to regime supporters to prepare them to resist foreign invasion, and helping suppress domestic opposition to the regime through street violence and intimidation.

The Basij presents itself as a popular volunteer association, although it is very much an organ of the state. The group’s “regular members,” said to number more than ten million, are unpaid volunteers motivated by ideological zeal or the hopes of advancement. Its “active members,” whose exact number is unknown, receive salaries and work full time to organize the volunteer members. The group has been nominally subordinate to the IRGC since the early 1980s, and organizational changes in recent years have increased the IRGC’s direct control over the Basij, apparently to better manage the two groups’ repression of internal dissent.\textsuperscript{15}

**Khatam al-Anbia**

Created in 1989, Iran’s Khatam al-Anbia (KAA) is an IRGC-controlled engineering firm that acts as the organization’s construction arm.\textsuperscript{16} KAA maintains more than 800 subsidiaries, collectively employing more than 40,000 people.\textsuperscript{17} Approximately 70 percent of the firm’s business is believed to be military-related.\textsuperscript{18} KAA has played a role in building Iran’s nuclear infrastructure, including the country’s nuclear facilities at Qom and Fordow.\textsuperscript{19}

The company has won more than 17,000 no-bid contracts from the government.\textsuperscript{20} For example, in December 2012, KAA was reportedly set to begin construction of the “world’s tallest dam” in Iran after the government canceled a $2 billion contract with a Chinese firm and turned the project over to the IRGC.\textsuperscript{21} According to United Against Nuclear Iran, “Through Khatam al-Anbia, the IRGC has succeeded in assuming a dominant role in Iran’s oil and gas industry.”\textsuperscript{22}

**Quds Force**

The Quds Force (IRGC-QF) is a special branch of the IRGC tasked with achieving sensitive missions beyond Iran’s borders. The IRGC-QF has played an active role in providing training and weapons to extremist groups including Iraqi insurgents, Lebanese Hezbollah, and others. The group’s commander is Major General Qasem Soleimani. In addition to overseeing the group’s violent attacks, Soleimani serves as an emissary of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, reportedly using a combination of violence and bribes to wield enormous influence over the politics of neighboring Iraq. He is also said to coordinate much of Iran’s support for the Ba’ath regime in the Syrian civil war.\textsuperscript{23} Soleimani’s prominence has aroused jealousy in some
circles, and he has clashed at times with IRGC commanders over the extent of his authority. General Hossein Hamedani, deputy commander of an IRGC volunteer unit, told an Iranian news agency in 2008 that the IRGC is providing weapons to “liberation armies” in the Middle East, including groups in Lebanon and Iraq. Such liaisons are the responsibility of the IRGC-QF.

Training and Recruitment:

General

The IRGC is the third-wealthiest organization in Iran after the National Iranian Oil Company and the Imam Reza Endowment. Due to its vast wealth, the IRGC is able to use a very simple recruitment tactic: money. The IRGC attracts young men by paying them up to $265 a month. In 1982, the IRGC created its first high school in Tehran to train and indoctrinate young men into the organization. The IRGC opened similar schools throughout the country. Graduates went on to join the IRGC and Basij. The program ended and the schools closed in 1999, but the IRGC announced plans in early 2015 to reopen affiliated high schools.

The Basij and Quds Force operate under the IRGC and are responsible for the bulk of the umbrella organization’s recruitment. Both groups have developed an organized method of enrollment and training. Both the Basij and the Quds Force strategically place recruiters near holy sites, mosques, schools, and community centers to attract volunteers. The IRGC also trains foreign fighters from groups like Hezbollah and Hamas.

Basij

Training

The Basij is a paramilitary organization operating under the IRGC that relies heavily on volunteers as well as paid members. The Basij constitution highlights the importance of training, stating that one of the force’s most important responsibilities is to train volunteers to “defend the country and the Islamic Republic regime.” The Basij is increasingly being used to quell internal unrest in Iran and, consequently, has become highly organized.

The Basij has an extensive membership of regular, active, and special recruits. Each classification is based on the volunteer’s level of training and, to a lesser degree, on his level of commitment.

The Basij relies heavily on Ideological-Political Trainers (IPTs) to indoctrinate and educate its fledgling members. IPTs are divided into three groups: organizational, non-organizational, and invited members. Organizational and non-organizational IPTs typically hold high school degrees, while invited trainers are usually well-connected and well-educated. Trainees are also required to attend at least 18 hours of ideological and political courses on subjects like “Major Islamic Commandments.”

The next level of training consists of courses that include “Jihad and Defense of the Quran,” and “Fluency in Reading the Quran.” Specialized training courses in areas such as advanced psychological warfare and anti-riot training last even longer but are not mandatory. Only after completing this final level of training can Basij members go to mosques, schools, and factories to organize. Basic Basij members are also trained in practical matters such as weaponry, guard duty, civil defense, and first aid.

IPTs are themselves educated by a network of political guides. IPTs are taught subjects like Islamic commandments, the Quran, the history of Islam, sociopolitical knowledge, and the fundamentals of belief.
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Basij recruitment relies heavily on the cooperation of local and regional mosques. Members are recruited under “clerical [sic] supervision and trusted citizens.” Paid Basij positions are available by application at Basij central offices.\(^{38}\)

**Quds Force**

**Training**

The Quds Force is a special unit of the Revolutionary Guard that oversees weapons and training.\(^{39}\) The Quds Force’s commander is Qasem Soleimani. Basic training can last anywhere from three to nine months and takes place at three main facilities in Iran. The first is the Imam Ali Base near Tehran, which specializes in ground training for foreign fighters. The second is the Wali-e-Assar Base in Shiraz and the third is the “Jerusalem Operation” College in Qom, where trainees study spirituality and ideology. There are other smaller training facilities throughout the country that are used to train armed groups from foreign countries as well.\(^{40}\) The Quds Force helps operate the Manzariyah training center in Iran near the holy city of Qom. The Manzariyah training center recruits from a pool of foreign students studying at a nearby religious seminary.\(^{41}\)

**Recruitment**

The Quds Force sets up recruitment offices near Islamic holy sites to attract a wide variety of devout people from many nationalities throughout the Muslim world, including Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iraq. The most important recruitment office is in the “Dar al-Tawahid” hotel in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.\(^{42}\) The Quds Force helps operate the Manzariyah training center in Iran near the holy city of Qom. The Manzariyah training center recruits from a pool of foreign students studying at a nearby religious seminary.\(^{43}\) The Quds Force also recruits in Iraq, where they reportedly paid Iraqi Shiites up to $150 per month to go to Iran to train during the anti-U.S. insurgency.\(^{44}\)

**Financing:**

**IRGC**

The IRGC received a reported 24 percent increase in Iran’s proposed 2017-18 fiscal budget, up from $4.5 billion to $7.4 billion. The IRGC’s allocation represented 53 percent of Iran’s defense budget.\(^{45}\) Iran’s military budget has reportedly experienced a 70 percent increase in funding during President Hassan Rouhani’s tenure,\(^{46}\) growing from $3.3 billion in FY 2013-14 to more than $5 billion after Rouhani assumed the presidency in 2013. Ahead of the FY 2016 budget, however, Rouhani reportedly sought to cut the IRGC’s budget in favor of Iran’s army.\(^{47}\) The Iranian parliament rejected the cut and raised the IRGC’s budgetary allocation.\(^{48}\) Rouhani reportedly cut the IRGC’s budget by 17 percent in his proposed 2019-2020 budget submitted in December 2018.\(^{49}\)

The IRGC is also Iran’s most powerful economic actor, according to the U.S. Treasury Department, which labeled the National Iranian Oil Company “an agent or affiliate of the Revolutionary Guards.”\(^{50}\) According to a 2017 assessment by then-CIA Director Mike Pompeo, IRGC-linked companies control up to 20 percent of Iran’s economy.\(^{51}\) In July 2018, the city council of Tehran announced that the IRGC Cooperative Foundation, which manages the IRGC’s investments, had embezzled more than $1 billion from the city of Tehran.\(^{52}\)

Within the IRGC, the Quds Force exerts control over strategic industries, commercial services, and black-market enterprises.\(^{53}\) According to a 2007 Los Angeles Times report, the IRGC has ties to over 100 companies, controlling over $12 billion.\(^{54}\) These funds are used to exert influence in Iran and Iranian proxies. According to Ray Takeyh of the Council on Foreign Relations, the IRGC is “heavily involved in everything from pharmaceuticals to telecommunications and pipelines – even the new Imam Khomeini Airport and a great deal of smuggling. Many of the front companies engaged in procuring
nuclear technology are owned and run by the Revolutionary Guards. They're developing along the lines of the Chinese military, which is involved in many business enterprises. It's a huge business conglomeration.  

After the 2015 nuclear agreement—which opened Iran's economy to the international market, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's government attempted to restrict the IRGC's economic power in Iran, open Iran's economy internationally, and attract foreign investors by canceling government contracts with IRGC subsidiaries. An unidentified IRGC source told Reuters in November 2016 that any U.S. attempt to restrict the Iranian economy from global markets would result in the IRGC regaining its economic control of Iran. In March 2016, Khamenei called for the IRGC to play a larger role in creating a “resistance economy” in Iran, independent of the international community.

In August 2015, Reuters reported that the IRGC stood to benefit from the lifting of economic sanctions against Iran as part of the P5+1 nuclear deal. One beneficiary Reuters highlighted is IRGC conglomerate KAA, which reportedly controls at least 812 affiliated companies worth billions of dollars. KAA subsidiary companies have been sanctioned by the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations as “proliferators of weapons of mass destruction,” according to the U.S. government. The IRGC reportedly controlled one-third of Iran’s economy as of 2010. As of November 2016, the group viewed the possibility of renewed sanctions against Iran and the threat posed by ISIS as pathways to limiting foreign investment in Iran and reestablishing IRGC control of the economy.

In October 2017, the U.S. government designated the IRGC as a terrorist organization and levied financial sanctions. In March 2018, members of the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee began discussing additional sanctions on entities in which the IRGC has a 50-percent-or-less ownership stake in order to punish IRGC front companies. The U.S. government designated the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization in April 2019, opening the possibility of levying additional sanctions on IRGC-related businesses.

**Basij**

The Basij received a budget of $310.85 million in the 2015 fiscal year. In the 2009-2010 budget, the Basij received $430 million from the government, but also reportedly earned large sums of cash through its control of non-profit foundations created by the Basij and IRGC in the 1980s and 1990s. The Basij is also reportedly a major investor in the Tehran stock exchange.

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12. Wehrey et al., _The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps_ (Santa Monica, Arlington, and
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13 Wehrey et al., The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Santa Monica, Arlington, and Pittsburgh: RAND Corporation, 2009), 11.


1 "Dr. Saeid Golkar, “The Ideological-Political Training of Iran’s Basij,” Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies, September 2010, http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB44.pdf [20].
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27 “Iran will retaliate in kind if U.S. designates Iran’s Revolutionary Guards as terrorists: MPs,” Reuters, April 7, 2019, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-politics-guards-idUSKBN13G1NB [35].


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Key Leaders

Ali Khamenei
Iranian Supreme Leader

Abdollah Haji Sadeghi
Representative of the Guardian Jurist to the IRGC

Hossein Salami
Commander-in-chief

Qasem Soleimani
Head of Al-Quds Force-Islamic Revolutionary Guards: Major General

Gholamhossein Gheybparvar
Commander of the IRGC’s Basij Resistance Force

Mohammad Reza Naqdi
Head of Basij Militia: Commander

Mohammad Ali Jafari
Head of Islamic Revolutionary Guards: Major General
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History:

- **June 2019:** On June 20, the IRGC shoots down a U.S. drone allegedly over Iranian airspace, which the IRGC calls a “clear message” to the United States about the “red line” of Iranian borders. U.S. officials insist the drone was in international airspace. U.S. President Donald Trump threatens a military response against Iran, which he calls off after increased sanctions. On June 24, Trump signs an executive order imposing sanctions on Khamenei, whom Trump calls “ultime to our inglorious establishment.”

- **April 2019:** The United States announces on April 8 that it will designate the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) effective April 15. It is the first time the United States has designated a segment of a foreign government as an FTO. The Iranian government threatens to take “reciprocal action” in response to “this inappropriate and idiotic action.” Iran’s National Security Council adds the U.S. Central Command to the country’s terror list and designates the United States as a supporter of terrorism. On April 21, Khamenei promotes General Hossein Salami to the rank of major-general and appoints him commander-in-chief of the IRGC, replacing Jafari. Salami previously served as the IRGC’s deputy commander. Jafari had served as the IRGC head since 2007. Jafari is assigned to the position of director of the Hazrat-e Baqiyatollah Social and Cultural Base, where he is responsible for “expanding and explaining education of Islamic Education.” The new role is largely seen as a demotion by international observers. Sources: “Iran’s National Security Council adds U.S. Central Command to Iran’s terror list,” Associated Press, April 8, 2019; “Designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps,” U.S. State Department, April 8, 2019; “Iran’s National Security Council adds U.S. Central Command to Iran’s terror list,” Associated Press, April 8, 2019; “Bob Woodward: Iran Shoots Down US Drone,” New York Times, April 21, 2019; “Iran Opens New Front in Global Battle Against Western Allies by Funding Rebel Group in North Africa,” CNN, May 1, 2019; “Iran-IRGC-New-commander-Salami-Khamenei-Trump,” Al-Monitor, April 22, 2019; “Iran-IRGC-New-commander-Salami-Khamenei-Trump,” Al-Monitor, April 22, 2019.

- **May 1, 2019:**: “Morocco Severs Diplomatic Ties With Iran After Accusing the Regime of Providing Funding, Weapons, and Training to Polisario Front Independence Fighters in Western Sahara.” The Moroccan government says it has proof that Iran-backed Hezbollah has provided resources to the rebels. Iran denies the charges. Later in the month, former Israeli ambassador to the U.N. Dore Gold cites intelligence that the IRGC is arming the Polisario through the Iranian embassy in Algeria. Sources: “Morocco cuts ties with Iran over Sahara weapons dispute,” Associated Press, May 1, 2019; “Morocco cuts ties with Iran over Sahara weapons dispute,” Associated Press, May 1, 2019; “Morocco cuts ties with Iran over Sahara weapons dispute,” Associated Press, May 1, 2019.

- **April 6, 2019:**: “The Baqir Brigade, a Syrian militia controlled by the IRGC, declares jihad against U.S. and allied forces in Syria. Based in the Aleppo region, the Baqir Brigade considers Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as one of its leaders and has acknowledged receiving weapons and training from the IRGC. Soleimani has also been photographed meeting with the group’s leaders. Sources: Amir Tounaj and Romany Shaker, “IRGC-controlled Syrian militia declares jihad against US forces in Syria,” Long War Journal, April 13, 2019, www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/04/irgc-controlled-syria-militia-declares-jihad-against-us-forces-in-syria.php [52].


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- December 2, 2017: Israel reportedly launches an airstrike on an Iranian position in Syria, killing 12 IRGC members.

- October 13, 2017: The United States labels the IRGC as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist and institutes financial sanctions against the group.

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- **November 2012**: IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari admits the IRGC has transferred long-range missile technology to Hamas so the terrorist group can build an unlimited number of missiles.

- **August 2012**: Ayatollah Khamenei reportedly orders the IRGC Quds Force to step up attacks against Western targets in retaliation for U.S.-backing of Syrian rebels in that country's civil war.

- **July 2012**: A New York Police Department intelligence report links the IRGC or its proxies to nine foiled international plots against Jewish or Israeli targets.

- **June 19, 2012**: Kenyan police arrest two Iranians, Ahmad Abolfathi Mohammad and Sayed Mansour Mousavi, for allegedly planning attacks against Israeli and American targets in the country.

- **March 14, 2012**: Azerbijan announces the arrest of 22 Azerbaijani citizens accused of plotting with the IRGC against the American and Israeli embassies.

- **March 2012**: The U.S. Department of the Treasury designates IRGC Qods Force General Gholamreza Baghbani as a specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). This is the first use of the Kingpin Act against an Iranian official.

- **February 21, 2012**: The Azerbijanian National Security Ministry announces the arrest of an unspecified number of people working for the IRGC and Hezbollah.
  The suspects are accused of planning attacks against the Israeli embassy and a Jewish cultural center.

- **February 13, 2012**: An Israeli diplomat's wife is wounded in a car bomb attack in New Delhi, which is credited to the IRGC.

- **January 2012**: Quds Force Commander Qasem Soleimani pledges additional military aid to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Syria during a meeting in Syria.

- **2012**: The Quds Force provides training to Taliban forces in Afghanistan on small unit tactics, small arms, explosives and indirect fire weapons such as mortars, artillery and rockets.

- **November 2011**: After the United Kingdom breaks diplomatic ties with Iran, hundreds of protesters allegedly led by the Basij overrun the British embassy in Tehran.

- **October 11, 2011**: The U.S. Department of Treasury names five people, including four members of the IRGC Quds Force, for suspected involvement in a plot earlier that month to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States.

- **April 29, 2011**: President Obama issues Executive Order 13572, placing sanctions on perpetrators of human rights abuses in Syria, including the IRGC Quds Force, for its use of violence and torture against peaceful protesters.

- **April 2011**: The U.S. and EU accuse the IRGC Quds Force of providing equipment and support to the Syrian regime to suppress revolts.

- **February 2011**: Using teargas, batons and live fire, the Basij assists riot police to quell protesters chanting anti-
government slogans in Tehran.

- **April 2010:** The IRGC Quds Force increases its number of operatives in Venezuela in order to build terrorist networks throughout the region so they may be called upon in case of a military conflict with the U.S. over Iran’s nuclear program.

- **January 2010:** IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari reportedly slaps President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad across the face for suggesting that the government relax restrictions on the media during a Supreme National Security Council meeting.

- **January 2010:** The IRGC Quds Force and Hezbollah agree to cooperate in carrying out global attacks against Israeli, U.S., and Western targets.

- **December 30, 2009:** British computer expert Peter Moore is released after being taken hostage by Iraqi Shiite militants in 2007. Moore’s four security guards who were captured with him are reported dead.

- **December 27, 2009:** On the Shiite holy day of Ashura, during which violence of any kind is forbidden, Basij forces open fire on the largest protest rally since the contested June presidential election, resulting in the death of 15 and arrest of hundreds.

- **November 2009:** The Iranian regime announces plans to create 6,000 Basij centers in elementary schools across the country to promote the ideals of the Islamic Revolution.

- **July 2009:** IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari tells Iranian media that anyone speaking against the government would be labeled an enemy of the state.

- **June 2009:** The Quds Force is implicated in custodial deaths, killing election protesters, and other acts of politically motivated violence, including torture, beatings, and rape.

- **June 12, 2009:** Following Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s reelection as president of Iran, protests break out in Tehran alleging electoral fraud.

- **November 2007:** IRGC forces take control of Iranian naval operations in the Persian Gulf.

- **October 25, 2007:** The U.S. designates the Quds Force as a terror supporting organization for supporting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

- **September 29, 2007:** Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei gives the IRGC’s commander total authority over the Basij as part of a broader reorganization of the IRGC to face possible foreign attack or invasion.

- **May 2007:** Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair accuses “elements of the Iranian regime” of arming the Taliban in Afghanistan.

- **May 29, 2007:** Shiite militants in Baghdad kidnap British computer expert Peter Moore and four private security guards.
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- **February 14, 2005:** A bombing in Beirut kills 23 people, including former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Hezbollah is suspected of carrying out the attack at the instigation of Iran. Source: Dexter Filkins, “The Shadow Commander,” New Yorker, September 23, 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/09/05/the-shadow-commander [12].

- **2005:** The U.S. Congress agrees to a request by President George W. Bush to fund covert operations from Iraq into Iran to combat the IRGC’s Quds Force, gather intelligence on Iranian nuclear strategy, and destabilize the religious leadership. Source: Seymour M. Hersh, “Preparing the Battlefield,” New Yorker, July 7, 2008, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/07/07/080707fa_fact_hersh?currentPage=all [106].


- **1997:** Following the election of purported reformist Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, the IRGC begins to reassert itself as a traditionalist intelligence agency loyal to the supreme leader. The IRGC’s move is in reaction to what the IRGC feels was the Ministry of Intelligence and Security’s (MOIS) increasingly sympathetic position towards Khatami. Source: Frederic Wehrey et al., The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Santa Monica, Arlington, and Pittsburgh: RAND Corporation, 2009), 30, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG821.pdf [5].
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)


- **July 13, 1989**: Iranian Kurdish dissident Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou is shot to death in Vienna, Austria, along with Fadil Rasoul and Abdullah Chaderi, after being lured to a supposed negotiation with Iranian regime officials. The three Iranians who committed the murders were arrested by Austrian authorities but later released. Austrian police confirmed that at least one of the suspected killers carried an Iranian diplomatic passport. However, the suspected killers were allowed to return to Iran after pressure from the Iranian regime. Sources: “Iranian Wounded in Vienna Killings,” Los Angeles Times, July 17, 1989, http://articles.latimes.com/1989-07-17/news/mn-2921_1_iranian-kurdish [114]; “Iranian President Allegedly Involved in Vienna Murders,” Austrian Times, June 18, 2005, http://www.austriantimes.at/index.php?id=14092 [115].


- **July 1980**: A Basij informant prevents a royalist coup (called the "Nojeh coup") by infiltrating the group and reporting back to the Ayatollah’s regime. Source: Frederic Wehrey et al., The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Santa Monica, Arlington, and Pittsburgh: RAND Corporation, 2009), 27, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG821.pdf [5].

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

November 25, 1979: Khomeini calls for the creation of a “twenty million man army.”

May 5, 1979: Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini creates the IRGC to be the “ideological custodian charged with defending the Islamic Republic against internal and external threats.”
Violent history:

IRGC and IRGC-Quds Force

The Council on Foreign Relations describe the IRGC and Quds Force as Iran’s “primary mechanism for cultivating and supporting terrorists abroad.” According to a 2010 Pentagon report, the Quds Force “maintains operational capabilities around the world,” and “it is well established in the Middle East and North Africa and recent years have witnessed an increased presence in Latin America, particularly Venezuela.”

Further, the report concluded that if “U.S. involvement in conflict in these regions deepens, contact with the IRGC-QF, directly or through extremist groups it supports, will be more frequent and consequential.” Illustrating this point, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in 2012 reportedly ordered the Quds Force to step up attacks against Western targets in retaliation for U.S.-backing of Syrian rebels in that country’s civil war.

According to a 2013 bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to label the Quds Force a terrorist organization, the Quds Force “stations operatives in foreign embassies, charities, and religious and cultural institutions to foster relationships, often building on existing socio-economic ties with the well-established Shia Diaspora, and recent years have witnessed an increased presence in Latin America.”

The IRGC and IRGC-QF have been accused of the following acts in individual countries:

Afghanistan:

- The Pentagon has accused the Iranian regime of providing “ongoing” support to insurgents – and insurgent leaders Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Ismail Khan in particular – through Quds forces, which are working with non-governmental organizations and political opposition. "Arms caches have been recently uncovered [in Afghanistan] with large amounts of Iranian-manufactured weapons, to include 107 millimeter rockets, which we assess IRGC-QF delivered to Afghan militants,” according to a 2010 Pentagon report.

- The U.S. State Department suspects Iran, through the IRGC-QF, of providing training and weapons—including “small arms and associated ammunition, rocket propelled grenades, mortar rounds, 107mm rockets, and plastic explosives—to Taliban fighters in Afghanistan.

Argentina:

- On July 18, 1994, a suicide bomber exploded at the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) community center in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people and wounding 300. Hezbollah and Iran are suspected.

- In 2007, Argentine prosecutors named several Iranian suspects in the AMIA bombing, including then Defense Minister Gen Ahmed Vahidi, who was the commander of a special unit of the IRGC at the time of the attack.

- In May 2013, an Argentine prosecutor releases a 500-page indictment in the AMIA bombing case, in which he accuses Iran of creating terrorist networks in Argentine and other Latin American countries to conduct terrorist attacks. He names Mohsen Rabbani, a former Iranian cultural attaché in Argentine, as a key leader directing the attack.

Austria:

- On July 13, 1989, Iranian Kurdish dissident Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou was shot to death along with Fadil Rasoul and Abdullah Ghaderi after being lured to a supposed negotiation with Iranian government officials. The three Iranians who committed the murders were arrested by Austrian authorities, but later released. Austrian police confirmed that at least one of the suspected killers was bearing an Iranian diplomatic passport. However, the suspected killers were allowed to leave Austria and return to Iran “after the Austrian government came under massive pressure from the Iranian government.” Iran’s Minister of Information and Security, Ali Fallahian, later boasted of the assassinations in a televised interview, saying: “we were able to deal vital blows to the cadres” of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Ghassemlou’s group.
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

Azerbaijan:
- In January 2012, Azerbaijani authorities arrested at least two local men, linked to Iranian intelligence agencies, for plotting to attack the Israeli ambassador to Azerbaijan and a local rabbi.\(^79\)

Bahrain:
- The government of Bahrain has accused the Quds Force of providing explosives training to Bahraini militants opposed to the government. On December 29, 2013, the Bahraini Coast Guard intercepted a speedboat carrying weaponry and explosives meant for Shiite militants in Bahrain, particularly the 14 February Youth Coalition.\(^80\) Following the incident, authorities discovered weapons caches in Bahrain, dismantled a car bomb, and arrested 15 Bahraini nationals.\(^81\)

Germany:
- Four Iranian Kurdish dissidents are assassinated at Mykonos, a Greek restaurant in Berlin. In 1997, a German court issued an international arrest warrant for Iranian Intelligence Minister Hojjat al-Islam Ali Fallahian, after determining that he had ordered the assassination with the knowledge of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.\(^82\) A report by Amnesty International noted that the Mykonos killings constituted part of a broader pattern of murder of Iranian political dissidents, with reports of state-directed assassinations both inside Iran and in neighboring Turkey.\(^83\)

India:
- Delhi Police accused the IRGC of involvement in a February 13, 2012, bomb attack against an Israeli diplomat in New Delhi. According to the *Times of India*, members of the IRGC had discussed the plan with an Indian journalist in 2011, and the journalist, Syed Mohammad Ahmad Kazmi, had been in touch with the IRGC for almost 10 years.\(^84\)

Iran:
- The IRGC has been accused of numerous violent acts against the Iranian population, particularly during the 2009 protests against Ahmadinejad’s reelection. The Basij paramilitary organization is accused of brutally suppressing protests after the June 2009 election.\(^85\)
- According to Human Rights Watch, hundreds of protesters were arrested after the June 12, 2009, elections and the Basij militia attacked student dormitories, beating the students and ransacking their rooms. Human Rights Watch also reported members of the Basij militia appearing in large groups at mass demonstrations and attacking protesters. There were reports of Basij members armed with clubs and chains beating up anyone suspected of participating in the protests against the government.\(^86\)

Iraq:
- Former U.S. President George W. Bush accused Iran, and the IRGC in particular, of providing roadside bombs to militants within Iraq in 2007.\(^87\)
- In 2007, Shiite militants, under the direction of the IRGC, kidnapped British computer expert Peter Moore and four security guards, who are held in Quds Force-run prisons.\(^88\) Moore was released in December 2009, but the four guards were killed.
- The U.S. Treasury Department added the Quds Force to its list of terrorist supporters after coalition forces captured a number of Iraqi militants with alleged ties to Hezbollah and the Quds Force.\(^89\)
- According to the Pentagon, Quds forces are supporting terrorists through Iranian embassies in Iraq. In 2010, the outgoing Iranian ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Kazemi-Qomi, and the new ambassador, Hassan Danafar, were identified as Quds Force members.\(^90\)
- The United States has also accused the Quds Force of providing Iraqi militants with armor-piercing explosives,
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

homemade bombs, anti-aircraft weaponry, rockets, RPGs, and explosives.91

- Eliminating the possibility that Quds Force operations in Iraq are undertaken by a handful of individuals acting under their own volition, the Pentagon has linked the Quds Force’s actions in Iraq directly to the Iranian regime. “Although its operations sometimes appear at odds with the public voice of the Iranian regime, it is not a rogue outfit. It receives direction from the highest levels of the government and its leaders report directly, albeit informally, to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.”92

- In 2008, General Hossein Hamedani, deputy commander of a volunteer militia in the IRGC, told an Iranian news agency that the IRGC is providing weapons to “liberation armies” in the Middle East, including in Lebanon and Iraq.93

- On December 2, 2017, CIA Director Mike Pompeo said he had recently sent a letter to Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani that the United States would hold Iran accountable for any attacks by Iran-backed forces on U.S. interests in Iraq. Khamenei’s chief of staff, Mohammad Mohammadi Golpaygani, told the Associated Press that Soleimani had ignored the letter.94

Israel:

- After Hamas fired Iranian-made Fajr-5 missiles at Israel in 2012, IRGC head Mohammad Ali Jafari admitted that Iran had shared the missile technology, along with other military assistance, with Hamas.95

- On December 11, 2017, Quds Force leader Qasem Soleimani declared in a phone call with Palestinian leaders in the Gaza Strip that Iran was prepared to support Palestinian groups in the coastal enclave against Israel. The IRGC’s website reported the call but did not identify to which groups Soleimani was speaking.96

Lebanon:

- The IRGC provided Hezbollah with its initial financial support and training when the group emerged in the early 1980s.97

- The Quds Force is Iran’s primary instrument for passing on support to Hezbollah, some of which is in the form of cash, while the rest is in weaponry.98 The U.S. Department of Defense estimated in 2010 that Iran provides Hezbollah with $100 million to $200 million annually.99

Mexico:

- Iran’s Quds Force is suspected of paying the Mexican drug cartel Los Zetas to carry out a failed 2011 attempt to blow up the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Saudi and Israeli embassies in Argentina.100

- As part of the 2011 plot, the Quds Force also attempted to negotiate a deal with Los Zetas to smuggle opium from the Middle East to Mexico.101

Saudi Arabia:

- A truck bomb exploded on June 25, 1996, at a dormitory complex at Saudi Arabia’s Khobar Towers, housing U.S. Air Force pilots and staff, killing 19 Americans and wounding 372 other people.102 A U.S. federal grand jury in 2001 indicted the leader of Saudi Arabia Hezbollah and 13 other members for the 1996 Khobar Towers attack, and charged “elements of the Iranian government inspired, supported, and supervised members of the Saudi Hizballah. In particular, the indictment alleged that the charged defendants reported their surveillance activities to Iranian officials and were supported and directed in those activities by Iranian officials. This indictment did not name as defendants individual members of the Iranian government.”103

- Six Hezbollah members captured after the attacks implicated Iranian officials. After “overwhelming” evidence presented by experts on Hezbollah, U.S. Federal Judge Royce C. Lamberth ruled in December 2006 that Iran was responsible for the Khobar Towers bombing, and ordered the Iranian government to pay $254 million to the families of 17 Americans victims.104 Lamberth pointed to evidence that the Iranian military worked with Saudi Hezbollah members
to carry out the attack, and the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security provided money, plans, and maps to help carry out the bombing.\textsuperscript{106}

Syria:

Syria is Iran’s main supply route to Hezbollah in Lebanon\textsuperscript{106} and thus a strategic asset. As such, the Iranian government has an interest in keeping besieged Syrian President Bashar Assad in power.

- Before the Syrian civil war, between 2,000 and 3,000 IRGC officers were stationed in Syria, helping to train local troops and managing supply routes of arms and money to neighboring Lebanon.\textsuperscript{107}
- By Iran’s own admission, members of the Quds Force are acting in an advisory capacity to Syrian government forces in that country’s civil war, and Iran has committed itself to providing arms, financing, and training to Iraqi Shiite fighters in the war. A retired senior IRGC commander claims there are at least 60 to 70 Quds Force commanders in Syria at any given time.\textsuperscript{108}
- In April 2011, the United States and the European Union accused the Quds Force of providing equipment and support to help the Syrian regime suppress revolts.\textsuperscript{109}
- In 2013, two senior Quds Force commanders were killed in fighting in Syria. According to Iranian media, Commander Mohammad Jamalizadeh Paghaieh, killed in November 2013 in Aleppo, was volunteering to defend Sayyida Zainab mosque in Damascus, more than 200 miles away from Aleppo.\textsuperscript{110}

Turkey:

- In February 1996, two Iranians thought to be members of the opposition National Council of Resistance of Iran were assassinated in Turkey. An Iranian citizen, Reza Massoumi, was convicted of the killings. At his trial, he stated that he had acted on orders from the Iranian government.\textsuperscript{111}
- In the aftermath of the 2009 election crisis in Iran, Iranian refugees in Turkey began to report facing monitoring and harassment from Iranian government agents inside Turkey.\textsuperscript{112}

United States:

- According to the U.S. Treasury Department, Mansour Arbabsiar, a naturalized U.S. citizen holding both Iranian and U.S. passports, acted on behalf of the Quds Force to plan a failed assassination attempt on the Saudi ambassador to the United States in Washington, D.C., in 2011.\textsuperscript{113} The Treasury named Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani; senior Quds Force officer Hamed Abdollahi, who coordinated aspects of the plot and oversaw the other Quds Force officials directly responsible for coordinating and planning this operation; Abdul Reza Shahlai, a Quds Force official who coordinated the operation; and Ali Gholam Shakuri, a Quds Force official who met with Arbabsiar to discuss the assassination and other planned attacks.\textsuperscript{114}
- Abdul Reza Shahlai, a Quds Force official who coordinated the failed assassination attempt on the Saudi ambassador, had previously been linked to the killing of U.S. forces in Iraq, according to Col. Timothy J. Geraghty, USMC (retired).\textsuperscript{115}
- A 2012 New York Police Department intelligence report linked the IRGC or its proxies to nine foiled international plots against Jewish or Israeli targets.\textsuperscript{116}

Yemen

- The IRGC has provided financial aid and material support to Houthi rebels in Yemen. The Iranian ship Jihan I was seized allegedly en route to Yemen in 2013 with arms meant for the Houthis, including “Katyusha rockets M-122, heat-seeking surface-to-air missiles, RPG-7s, Iranian-made night vision goggles and ‘artillery systems that track land and navy targets 40km away.’”\textsuperscript{117}
- In September 2014, IRGC-aided Houthi rebels took over Yemen’s capital city of Sanaa.\textsuperscript{118} That December, an Iranian
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

official confirmed that the IRGC Quds Force has “a few hundred” military personnel in Yemen training Houthi rebels. In early 2015, U.S. officials reported that the IRGC had trained Houthi rebels in the use of advanced weapons. In 2016, the IRGC has been suspected of providing Houthi rebels with long-range missiles they have used against Saudi Arabia. Iranian media have praised the Houthis’ use of the Iranian Zelzal-3 rocket. Iran reportedly increased its supply of weapons to the Houthis in late 2016.

The Basij:

While it was involved in the Iran-Iraq War, the Basij was primarily a domestic organization within Iran, where it acted as an extra-judicial police force.

- During the early years of the revolution, before the new regime could establish an effective police force, the Basij was responsible for maintaining security, removing anti-revolutionary components and Shah loyalists from the system. To do this, it created an information network nicknamed “the 36 million information network.”
- In July 1980, loyalists to the Shah attempted a coup, called the Nojeh coup attempt, but a Basij spy had infiltrated the group and reported it to the ayatollah’s regime.
- The Basij was kept out of the Iran-Iraq War during its first year, but its later participation is credited with transforming Iran’s position from defensive to offensive.
- The Basij paramilitary organization is accused of brutally suppressing protests after the contested June 2009 election. According to Human Rights Watch, hundreds of protesters were arrested after the June 12 elections and the Basij militia attacked student dormitories, beating students and ransacking their rooms. Human Rights Watch also reported members of the Basij militia appearing in large groups at mass demonstrations and attacking protesters. There were reports of Basij members armed with clubs and chains beating up anyone suspected of participating in the protests against the government. Hezbollah and Hamas were also suspected of working with the Basij to quash the protests.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)


Designations:

Designations by the U.S. Government:

October 25, 2007: The Department of the Treasury designates Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)-Qods Force as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under Executive Order 13224.131

October 25, 2007: The Department of the Treasury designates Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferators and their Supporters under Executive Order 13382.132

October 25, 2007: The Department of the Treasury designates Hosein Salimi, commander of IRGC air force; Brigadier General Morteza Rezaie, deputy commander of the IRGC; Vice Admiral Ali Akbar Ahmadian, in 2007 the most recent former chief of the IRGC Joint Staff; Brigadier General Mohammad Hejazi, in 2007 the most recent former commander of Basij militia; Brigadier General Qasem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force, as Individual associated with IRGC, designated under Executive Order 13382.133

September 29, 2010: The Department of the Treasury designates Mohammad Ali Jafari, then commander of the IRGC forces; Sadeq Mahsouli, then Minister of Welfare and Social Security; Qolam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejel, then Prosecutor General of Iran; Saeed Mortazavi, former Tehran Prosecutor-General; Heydar Moslehi, then Minister of Intelligence; Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, then Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces; Ahmad-Reza Radan, then Deputy Chief of Iran’s National Police; Hossein Taeb, then Deputy IRGC Commander of Intelligence, as Human rights abusers under executive order 13553.134

February 2011: The Department of the Treasury designates Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi, Tehran Prosecutor General; Mohammed Reza Naqdi, commander of IRGC’s Basij Forces, as Human rights abusers under executive order 13553.135

April 15, 2019: The U.S. Department of State designates the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.137

Designations by Foreign Governments and Organizations:

Bahrain designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a group suspected of terrorism on October 23, 2018.138

Canada listed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ Qods Force as a terrorist entity in December 2012.139
The European Union levied financial sanctions on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in March 2012.\textsuperscript{140} The European Union has also levied financial sanctions on individuals affiliated with the IRGC, including: Qasem Soleimani,\textsuperscript{141} Chief of IRGC Joint Staff Ali Akbar Ahmadian,\textsuperscript{142} Basij commander Mohamed-Reza Naqdi,\textsuperscript{143} IRGC General Commander Muhamed Ali Jafari,\textsuperscript{144} and IRGC Intelligence Commander Hussayn Taeb.\textsuperscript{145}

Saudi Arabia designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a group suspected of terrorism on October 23, 2018. Saudi Arabia also designated Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani and Quds Force member Hamed Abdollahi and Abdul Reza Shahlai.\textsuperscript{146}

The United Nations designated several individuals affiliated with the IRGC, including Qasem Soleimani on March 24, 2007;\textsuperscript{147} Mohammad Reza Naqdi on March 3, 2008;\textsuperscript{148} and IRGC Air Force Commander Salimi Hosein on December 23, 2006.\textsuperscript{149}
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)


Associations:

Ties to other extremist groups:

The IRGC-Quds Force provides training, logistical assistance and material and financial support to many extremist groups. For example:

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**Taliban**

The U.S. government has accused the IRGC’s Quds Force of providing logistical, financial, and material support to the Taliban. General Hossein Musavi and Colonel Hasan Mortezavi, senior IRGC members, were designated on August 3, 2011 as terrorists under Executive Order 13224 for providing financial and material support to the Taliban. On October 23, 2018, the Treasury Department and the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC) designated IRGC officers Mohammad Ebrahim Owhadi and Esma’il Razavi for providing support to the Taliban. The TFTC is an international organization that includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

In 2010, ISAF General Stanley McChrystal stated that Iran was training Taliban insurgents and providing them with weapons. This was corroborated by a Taliban commander who stated that Iran was training Taliban fighters in “small unit tactics” because they “both want to kill Americans.” The U.S. government has accused the IRGC of providing the Taliban with 107mm rockets.

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**Hamas**

The U.S. government has accused the IRGC’s Quds Force of providing logistical, financial, and material support to Hamas. IRGC head General Mohammad Ali Jafari admitted in November 2012 to transferring missile technology and other military assistance to Hamas. Khaled Meshaal, the former head of Hamas’s political bureau, has traveled to Iran to improve ties and receive increased material support. “We [Hamas] stretch our hand of cooperation for materializing the Palestinian cause, because Palestine is an essential issue that needs more efforts,” Mahmoud al-Zahar, a senior Hamas official, told Al-Manar television, a network affiliated with Hezbollah.

On October 13, 2017, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned the IRGC for its support of Hamas and other groups.
The Iranian government uses the IRGC Quds Force to transfer cash and weaponry to Hezbollah in Lebanon. On October 13, 2017, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned the IRGC for its support of Hezbollah and other groups. Israeli authorities have accused the IRGC of directly arming Hezbollah. On November 4, 2009, Israel intercepted merchant vessel FRANCOP carrying 36 containers (60 tons) of weapons to Hezbollah. The cache includes 122mm Katyushas, 107mm rockets, 106mm antitank shells, hand grenades and light-weapon ammunition. The weapons transfer was reportedly coordinated by the IRGC, given its bases in Lebanon and financial support for Hezbollah, which is estimated at $100-200 million annually. An Iranian IRGC commander and six Hezbollah fighters were killed on January 18, 2015, by an Israeli strike, indicating increased cooperation between Iran and Hezbollah. Israel has subsequently targeted multiple Iranian targets in Syria that it says were aiding Hezbollah.

IRGC officials have openly stated their military and financial support for Hezbollah. "The Islamic Republic of Iran has helped Iraq, Syria, Palestine and the Lebanese Hezbollah by exporting the technology that it has for the production of missiles and other equipment, and they can now stand against the Zionist regime, the ISIL [Islamic State group] and other Takfiri [apostate] groups and cripple them," IRGC aerospace force commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said in February 2015. In October 2018, IRGC commander Mohammad Ali Jafari pledged that Iran would "stand side by side the Lebanese Hezbollah until Israel is totally annihilated."
South American terrorist networks

According to a 2010 Pentagon report, Quds Force members are actively developing terrorist networks in Venezuela and other parts of Latin America to attack the United States in the event of a breakdown in the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the West.149 The report further claims the Quds Force engages in "paramilitary operations to support extremists and destabilize unfriendly regimes."150

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command149

The Iranian regime has been a long-time benefactor of the PFLP-GC, providing logistical, financial, and material support, according to the U.S. government.153 Iran and the PFLP-GC were the prime suspects in the aftermath of the 1988 bombing of Pan-Am Flight 103.153 U.S. officials have said there is "no question" about ties between Iran and the PFLP-GC.156

According to a 2010 Pentagon report, Quds Force members are actively developing terrorist networks in Venezuela and other parts of Latin America to attack the United States in the event of a breakdown in the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the West. The report further claims the Quds Force engages in "paramilitary operations to support extremists and destabilize unfriendly regimes."150

Los Zetas150

The IRGC reportedly plotted with Mexican drug cartel Los Zetas in 2011 to blow up the Israeli embassy in Washington and the Saudi and Israeli Embassies in Argentina.151

According to a 2010 Pentagon report, Quds Force members are actively developing terrorist networks in Venezuela and other parts of Latin America to attack the United States in the event of a breakdown in the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the West. The report further claims the Quds Force engages in "paramilitary operations to support extremists and destabilize unfriendly regimes."150

Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba

Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba ("the Virtuous") is an Iraqi Shiite militia that has fought against ISIS as part of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in both Iraq and Syria.188 The 10,000-man-strong group is loyal to Iran and reportedly answers directly to Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani, whom al-Nujaba has praised in online media for fighting the United States and ISIS. Al-Nujaba has declared that it and Hezbollah are "the twins of the resistance."193 In March 2017, the Quds Force reportedly developed a new branch of al-Nujaba called the Golan Liberation Brigade, named for the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Six Day War. That November, the leader of al-Nujaba, Sheikh Akram al-Ka’abi, told media that his group and the Golan Liberation Brigade stood ready to “participate in any war with the Syrian Arab Army to liberate the Golan if the Syrian state agrees or requests so.”188 Al-Nujaba claims that multiple special forces comprise the Golan Liberation Brigade. A March 2017 al-Nujaba video featured columns of its soldiers marching with a banner declaring that "Israel will be destroyed."188

Ties to foreign governments/leaders:

Syrian government166

Iran has threatened to use the IRGC to repel foreign attacks on Syria.187 The IRGC has “several hundred” operatives in Syria advising the Syrian army and fighting on behalf of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his country’s civil war.187 In October 2018, IRGC spokesman Ramezan Sharif pledged that IRGC forces would remain in Syria as long as Tehran finds it “effective and useful” and as long as the Syrian government demands it.191


157 “Treasury Sanctions Five Individual Tied to Iranian Ploy to Assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States,” U.S. Department of the


Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)


Media Coverage:

Media coverage/analysis of group

The international media, for the most part, agrees on the brutal nature of IRGC’s domestic action, condemning the Basij’s practice of silencing dissidents and acting as a morality police. But there is disagreement – largely in non-Western media and media from countries with stronger relations with Iran – over whether the IRGC’s role in international terrorism has been exaggerated in order to tarnish Iran’s reputation and bolster the U.S. argument that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons.

Given the adversarial relationship between Iran and the West over the Iranian nuclear issue, Western media has prominently covered the activities of the IRGC and its branches in recent years. Global Western media outlets such as the Associated Press and Reuters have widely reported on the presence of IRGC forces in Syria and the role of the IRGC in fighting on behalf of the Syrian regime. The 2009 protests in the aftermath of Iran’s disputed presidential elections were also widely covered, and many outlets reported violent crackdowns by IRGC forces, particularly the Basij militia.

Western media typically acknowledges the IRGC’s involvement in anti-U.S. activities, extremism in Iran, and support of terrorism. A 2007 NPR report on the Guards describes the organization’s evolution from a “people’s army” meant to mobilize the Iranian population against foreign threats to actively creating Hezbollah and other terror networks abroad.

Globally, however, the media – just like members of the international community – do not always agree with Western claims that the IRGC supports terrorism and will ignore or justify IRGC actions. Just as the international community has been unable to agree on a singular definition of terrorism, the global community appears split between the hemispheres on the IRGC, with media in non-Western countries portraying Iran in a positive light, as standing up to the American hegemon.

A 2007 piece in the Asia Times, for example, argues against the U.S. designation of the IRGC, claiming that the “case for the designation of the IRGC as terrorists has been built on thin empirical grounds and even thinner legal grounds.” Ahead of Iran’s 2013 elections, Zimbabwe’s Herald reported on the IRGC encouraging high voter turnout and interviewed a senior IRGC commander, but did not mention any of the IRGC’s terrorist ties or even its involvement in the Syrian civil war.

Columnists in Canadian media, on the other hand, appeared largely to support the country’s 2012 designation of the Quds Force as a terrorist entity. Former Canadian justice minister and international commentator Irwin Cotler praised the Canadian government for adding the Quds Force to the terror list, but accused the government of a “piecemeal” strategy and said it needed to add the entire IRGC organization. Cotler goes on in a Jerusalem Post column to declare that the IRGC “has been at the forefront of a long-standing global campaign of terror against perceived opponents of Iran.”

In European media, particularly in countries that have better relations with Iran than the United States, the role the IRGC plays is considered more open to interpretation. The Guardian’s Henry Newman questioned in a 2009 column how much power the IRGC actually has, noting that despite Khomeini’s directive that the IRGC remains apolitical, the IRGC has “an increasingly significant role in Iranian politics.” Newman points out the IRGC’s economic power, citing its forced closure of the Imam Khomeini Airport in 2004 because it lost its bid to control the airport to a Turkish firm – and that the IRGC has been in “temporary” control of the airport since 2008. He further points out that the Iranian regime has to increasingly rely on “repression and a culture of fear” and as such the role of the IRGC is growing.

The Guardian’s Ian Black and Saeed Kamali Dehghan wrote in a 2014 article about the IRGC’s increased role in battling ISIS in Iraq. The article obliquely acknowledged the IRGC’s ties to terrorism by placing the group in an offensive role, describing the Quds Force’s mission as carrying out “a range of highly sensitive functions: intelligence, special operations, arms smuggling and political action – anything that constitutes protecting the revolution or attacking its enemies, Israel foremost among them.”
Even in the United States, some pundits take a more sympathetic position on the IRGC, making supportive and apologist arguments. In September 2009, for example, author and analyst Juan Cole cited an IRGC commander in charge of Iran’s missile program who said Iran would act militarily only in response to external military threats.201 Pointing to Western media reports that Iran’s missile tests coincided with Iranian threats to wipe out Israel, Cole contended that the IRGC had made a “no first strike” pledge and “no current high official in the Iranian executive has threatened war against Israel.”202 In 2012, after the IRGC’s Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said Iran would destroy Israel if “the Jewish state” attacked, Cole argued that “this is not a threat to commit an act of aggression” as “Iran has a ‘no first strike’ policy” reaffirmed by Khamenei, and Iran is only “threatening to retaliate with everything he has if Iran is itself the victim of a naked act of aggression.”203

Even in the Arab media, the role of the IRGC is not so clearly presented. Iranian dissident Akbar Ganji describes the IRGC’s economic power in Al Jazeera, but ignores the organization’s terrorist ties, even whitewashing them by laying the blame for a “securitised” Iranian society and political process on “nearly 35 years of military threats, by Iraq, the US, Israel, and others.”204

Iran’s English media, of course, shed a sympathetic light on the IRGC, often taking IRGC statements at face value. An April 2014 article by the Fars News Agency (FNA) cited Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari defending the group’s role in Syria, claiming that the IRGC provided only Iran’s intelligence support and not physical support.205 FNA provided no balance in the article, providing only a quote from another IRGC commander who agreed with Jafari.

Sympathetic journalists who view the United States as unfairly targeting the Islamic Republic are more skeptical of reports on the IRGC’s involvement in global terrorism, viewing these reports as propaganda to further cast the Iranian regime as an enemy of freedom. Just as some pundits denounce Hamas’s and Hezbollah’s deadly attacks against Israel while upholding the “legitimacy” of their causes, the IRGC’s involvement with these and other terrorist organizations is viewed as noble Iranian aid. In a 2012 article on the IRGC’s transfer of missile technology to Hamas, the Tehran Times did not comment on the IRGC chief’s statement that, “Iran provides technological assistance to help the world’s Muslims and the oppressed so that they can stand up to tyrants and the hegemonistic system.”206 While Iranian media is subject to extreme censorship by the government, sympathetic coverage of the IRGC is not limited just to Iranian sources. On the whole, global media acknowledges the IRGC’s role as a harsh enforcer of the Iranian revolution’s ideals domestically and abroad, but there remains dissension on whether the IRGC is a politically powerful domestic militia or a global terrorist organization.

214 Juan Cole, “Hajizadeh: If Israel Attacks Iran, It Will Be Destroyed,” Informed Comment, July 2, 2012,
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)


Rhetoric:

**Hossein Salami, deputy commander of the IRGC, September 24, 2018 [184]**

In response to an attack on a military parade in Ahvaz, Iran, two days earlier, which Salami blamed on the “triangle” of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Israel:

“We warn all of those behind the story, we will take revenge. You have seen our revenge before... you will see that our response will be crushing and devastating and you will regret what you have done.”

**Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, October 11, 2018 [185]**

“Iran is going to stand side by side the Lebanese Hezbollah until Israel is totally annihilated. If Iran is threatened outside its borders, Tehran would not hesitate to retaliate extraterritorially.”

**Ramezan Sharif, IRGC spokesman, October 13, 2018 [186]**

Addressing Iranian media on the IRGC’s presence in Syria:

“This fabricated crisis has been led from abroad with the purpose of instigating insecurity in Syria and creating a safety margin for the Israeli regime.”

**Hossein Salami, deputy commander of the IRGC, April 20, 2018 [187]**

“Israel: Don’t trust in your airbases; they’re within reach.” (Tweet)

**Ali Fadavi, commander of the IRGC navy, April 22, 2018 [188]**

“The Americans have little information about Iran’s Naval power and they understand our real power when either their vessels are sunken or entangled in a terrible situation.”

**Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, September 16, 2015 [189]**

“The US officials believe that any reconstruction of their hegemony should be started from where had been their debacle, and this is Middle East, where the Islamic Revolution has extended its scope of influence. The US policies today have significantly changed compared to those in the past; in an attempt to revive its power, the US has been working on four major policies; the first is reinvigorating the US status through UN-mediated devices and other purportedly legitimate means such as human rights in the region; the second issue is to bring stability to Zionist regime; now any country with relations to Zionists is champion of trust for the US.”

**Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, September 16, 2015 [190]**

“Eastern Europe and east Asia are rivals to the US; Latin and South America are since long a backyard of the US; however, these geographies do not provide the US with a source of power; an important geography where the US hegemony suffered is the Middle
East; what has happened during recent 20 years between Iran and the US, is that the Revolution irrevocably tarnished the components of the US superpower status in the region, with many examples to illustrate the case. With making alliances, the US had been working to remove Hezbollah from Lebanese political scene; however, neither had it the power necessary to contain Hezbollah, nor did its alliances succeed even an inch in scoring concrete results; rather, these efforts strengthen Hezbollah in scales that now its leader Seyed Hassan Nasrallah clearly displays its power before the eyes of the west.”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, September 16, 2015

“Containing and weakening the Islamic Republic of Iran is an important policy of the US under present state of the region; the campaign is carried out through direct confrontation and through its proxies in the region near Iran’s borders; a second approach consists of attempts to make countries in the region more dependent on the US.”

IRGC commander Brigadier General Mohsen Kazemeini, September 2, 2015

“And we will continue defending not just our own country, but also all the oppressed people of the world, especially those countries that are standing on the forefront of confrontation with the Zionists.”

IRGC Brigadier General Mohsen Kazemeini, September 2, 2015

“[Military preparedness will be increased until] it overthrows Israel and liberates Palestine.”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, September 1, 2015

“America plans to preserve [IS] so that Muslims will continue to need the Americans, and in reality they have turned this into leverage.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, April 27, 2015

“The traitor Saudi Arabia is following the path of Israel.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, April 27, 2015

“The final cause and goal of the Islamic Revolution is creating an Islamic civilization. And we do our best to develop in the path of creating Islamic civilization.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, April 27, 2015

“The House of Saud is on the edge of disintegration and collapse. Regional and
international analysts have talked about it a lot, and we hope that it will come true.“\(^{220}\)

**Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, February 13, 2015**\(^{198}\)

“Today we see signs of the Islamic Revolution being exported throughout the region, from Bahrain to Iraq and from Syria to Yemen and North Africa.”\(^{221}\)

**Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, November 17, 2014**\(^{199}\)

“...the US army and its economy are weak and their people do not accept to go to (another) war. The US does not have a strong logic and reasoning and it is, thus, forced to always resort to the language of force.”\(^{222}\)

**Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, October 21, 2014**\(^{200}\)

“Exporting the Islamic Revolution to the world, the country’s full and sustainable security and its pride and honor are the achievements gained as a result of the blood of our martyrs.”\(^{223}\)

**Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, October 21, 2014**\(^{201}\)

“Now the Islamic Iran doesn’t allow the Zionist regime’s expansion in the region and it is considered as the opposite point of the Zionist regime.”\(^{224}\)

**Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, October 21, 2014**\(^{202}\)

“Now the Islamic Iran doesn’t allow the Zionist regime’s expansion in the region and it is considered as the opposite point of the Zionist regime.”\(^{225}\)

**Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, October 21, 2014**\(^{203}\)

“Exporting the Islamic Revolution to the world, the country’s full and sustainable security and its pride and honor are the achievements gained as a result of the blood of our martyrs.”\(^{226}\)

**Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, October 20, 2014**\(^{204}\)

“We thank God for the security that has been established in the Southeastern parts of the country despite all the investments of our trans-regional enemies, including the Americans and the Zionists, as well as certain regional enemies and despite their too much planning.”\(^{227}\)
Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, September 14, 2014 [205]
“The command center of the ISIL is in the White House; the US itself has created this cancerous tumor and deflected stream in the region, and its plan to fight the ISIL is also the continuation of the same evil plot that it has pursued so far.”  

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, August 30, 2014 [206]
“We have no doubt that one day we will be in war with the sworn enemies of the Islamic Revolution in the region, of course, we will not be the initiator of that war. This battle will take place and hence we should be fully prepared for that day.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 27, 2014 [207]
“Arming the West Bank has started and weapons will be supplied to the people of this region.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 27, 2014 [208]
“(W)e will do our best with full force to arm and equip the resistance, especially in the West Bank.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 27, 2014 [209]
“On behalf of the Zealous Basijis (volunteer forces) of the Islamic Iran, I take the honor to congratulate you as well as all the Palestinians and the entire Muslims on the great victory of the Muslim Ummah in their 51-day resistance (against Israel).”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 27, 2014 [210]
“The Zionists should know that the next war won’t be confined to the present borders and the Mujahedeen will push them back.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 20, 2014 [211]
“The West’s cultural invasion is not merely against the Iranian nation and it also includes their own nations (in Europe) as they intend to separate not just our, but also their own nations from ethics and morality because if the European and US nations live an ethics-based life, they won’t accept the Zionists’ cruelties so easily.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 20, 2014 [212]
“The result of institutionalization of corruption in the West is that their race is becoming extinct in such a way that history books should write 100 years later that a race named the European race existed on the Earth some time ago.”
Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 13, 2014 [213]

“The filthy monarchical British regime still feels pity for the black era of colonialism and it wishes to find new Khans to follow the footsteps of its former servants like Reza Khan (the father of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last king of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran who was toppled in the 1979 Islamic Revolution in the country) and rule the Iranian people and it wishes to return to the black era of colonialism by sowing discord and creating distance between the Iranian people and the pivot of Islam and unity, but it will take this wish to the grave.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, August 2014 [214]

“We are prepared to back the resistance movement until Palestine is liberated.”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, August 2014 [215]

“Just like in the past we have put into action our religious duty to support the resistance, we will continue this duty and will push on with our support and aid until the moment of victory, until the resistance on the ground, in the air and sea will be transformed into a hell for the Zionists.”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, July 30, 2014 [216]

“Martyrdom for Palestine is dream of every noble Muslim and freedom-seeker.”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, July 30, 2014 [217]

“Disarmament of resistance is daydream that will only come true in the graveyard for the Zionists.”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, July 2014 [218]

“May God damn any oppressor who has in the past and still defends and supports this criminal (Zionist) regime, especially the United States who is the chief propagator of injustice and oppression in the world....”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, July 2014 [219]

“Just like in the past we have put into action our religious duty to support the resistance, we will continue this duty and will push on with our support and aid until the moment of victory, until the resistance on the ground, in the air and sea will be transformed into a hell for the Zionists.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, June 18, 2014 [220]

“The scene they have created in Iraq is the result of the United States’ behind-the-scene
the main mastermind of these events.

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, June 10, 2014

“They (the US and Israel) had come to destroy Syria, but they have failed now.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, June 9, 2014

“The continued chain of US failures at the international level, on one hand shows the US and Europe’s turbulent internal situation and on the other hand indicates that liberal democracy has reached the end of the road and is no more able to analyze the conditions.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, June 2014

“The US and Israel were the main losers of the presidential election in Syria.”

Mojtaba Zonnour, IRGC adviser, June 2014

“In the event of an irrational attack by the U.S., America’s military bases will not be safe from our missiles, whether in Bahrain or at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.”

Hossein Salami, deputy commander of the IRGC, May 31, 2014

The IRGC "stands atop the world, given its hundreds of martyrdom-seeking battalions and hundreds of highly trained combat battalions.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, April 2014

“The (Islamic) Revolution is opposed to the hegemonic system and the new world order and all of the foreign policy slogans and positions are based on this pivot, including defending the Palestinian and Syrian people who are today targeted by the enemy.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, April 2014

“The IRGC should be the guardian of the Revolution within and outside the borders.”
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, April 2014 [228]
“The (Islamic) Revolution is opposed to the hegemonic system and the new world order and all of the foreign policy slogans and positions are based on this pivot, including defending the Palestinian and Syrian people who are today targeted by the enemy.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, April 2014 [229]
“The IRGC should be the guardian of the Revolution within and outside the borders.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, March 27, 2014 [230]
“Whenever there is a slaughter, the footprint of the European governments, including Britain, can be readily seen.”

Hossein Salami, deputy commander of the IRGC, March 11, 2014 [231]
“Islam has given us this wish, capacity and power to destroy the Zionist regime so that our hands will remain on the trigger from 1,400km away.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, February 2014 [232]
“I really do not know what will happen in these negotiations. One cannot be optimistic about America.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, January 27, 2014 [233]
“The crimes you are witnessing in all countries ruled by dictators and human-rights-violating rulers are hacked by the US.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, January 25, 2014 [234]
“Mr. Kerry must know that direct battle with the US is the biggest dream of pious and revolutionary people across the world. Your threats offer our revolutionary people the best opportunity.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, December 3, 2013 [235]
“Lots of options are on the table for Iran, and they (enemies) will receive crushing responses, one of which would be elimination of the Zionist regime.”
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, December 2013 [236]

“That the Americans say we have brought Iran to its knees by pressures and sanctions is nothing more than a lie, rather it is the US which has collapsed in political, economic and military arenas which are considered as the main elements of power [sic].”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, December 2013 [237]

“The Americans and (US President Barack) Obama are lying when they assert that all options are on the table against Iran. That the Americans say we have brought Iran to its knees by pressures and sanctions is nothing more than a lie, rather it is the US which has collapsed in political, economic and military arenas which are considered as the main elements of power.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, September 25, 2013 [238]

“(T)he Islamic Revolution is in good conditions and today the Islamic Revolution’s security is at its peak, while the enemies of the Islamic Iran hatched devilish plots to undermine security and create security problems, but, thanks God, they could not achieve success in any field.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, September 16, 2013 [239]

“... We are witnessing that the Islamic Revolution’s resistance front is moving on its path crushingly in the occupied Palestinian territories, Iraq and Lebanon.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, September 10, 2013 [240]

“Egypt should return to the line of struggle against the US and Zionism and take control of the situation, but if it remains in the present situation it will receive further blows and its people will sustain serious harms.”

Qasem Soleimani, September 2013 [241]

“The aim of the United States is not to protect human rights ... but to destroy the front of resistance [against Israel].”

Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC-QF, September 2013 [242]

“The aim of the United States is not to protect human rights... but to destroy the front of resistance [against Israel].”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, August 31, 2013 [243]

“The American people should awaken and realize that their assets and their country’s name is being sacrificed for the sake of the security of the criminal Zionist regime.”
**Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, August 3, 2013 [244]

“The Zionist are trying to stage a sectarian war among Muslims with the help and support of the US and Britain in a bid to delay their destruction.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, July 6, 2013 [245]

“Had [former Egyptian president Mohammed] Mursi not been deceived by the US and had he started campaign against Israel, he would have attained a higher and better status than Jamal Abdel Nasser among Egyptians and today people would have defeated those who planned the coup against him and not only in Egypt, but in all Muslim countries large crowds would have come out to defend him.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, June 2013 [246]

“Today the US has no power and courage to show presence among other countries because people in most countries have become awakened and rise constantly.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, June 2013 [247]

“The Islamic Awakening caused the regional states to rise, the US to collapse and the leaders of the Islamic states to gain victory.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, September 16, 2012 [248]

“Given Israel’s small land area and its vulnerability to a massive volume of Iran’s missiles, I don’t think any spot in Israel will remain safe.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, September 2012 [249]

“The US has many vulnerabilities around Iran, and its bases are within the range of the guards’ missiles. We have other capabilities as well, particularly when it comes to the support of Muslims for the Islamic republic.”

Gholam Reza Jalali, head of Iran’s Passive Defense Organization and former IRGC commander, August 15, 2012 [250]

“[Quds Day] is a reflection of the fact that no other way exists apart from resolve and strength to completely eliminate the aggressive nature and to destroy Israel.”

Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, February 2011 [251]

“Western intelligence agencies are searching for a mentally challenged person who can set himself on fire in Tehran to trigger developments like those in Egypt and Tunisia.”
Mohammad Reza Naqdi, commander of the Basij, February 2011

“They [the West] are very retarded and think by imitating such actions they can emerge victorious.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, October 2009

After a suicide bomber kills 11 IRGC commanders:

“Behind this scene are the American and British intelligence apparatus, and there will have to be retaliatory measures to punish them.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, July 2009

“Our rockets have the precision capabilities to target all the Israeli nuclear sites.”

Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, August 2008

“The Guards have recently tested a naval weapon which I can say with certainty that the enemy’s [U.S.] ships would not be safe within the range of 300 kilometers. Without any doubt we will send them to the depths of the sea.”


283 Ariel Ben Solomon, “Khamenei calls to increase air defense,” Jerusalem Post, September 2, 2015, http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Iran/IRGC-commander-Iran-will-boister-military-untill-Israel-defeated-Palestinians-free-414883

284 Ariel Ben Solomon, “Khamenei calls to increase air defense,” Jerusalem Post, September 2, 2015, http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Iran/IRGC-commander-Iran-will-boister-military-untill-Israel-defeated-Palestinians-free-414883


“IRGC Top Commander: Transfer of Experience Iran’s Only Military Aid to Syria,” Fars News Agency, April 21, 2014.

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Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

