

# The World's Biggest Islamic State Turns 38

by Kenneth R. Timmerman



On Friday, the Islamic State of Iran celebrates its 38<sup>th</sup> birthday by bussing hundreds of thousands of Iranians to mosques and public squares to chant “Death to America.”

Some of these celebrations are perfunctory. Without the buses, and without the vacation pay, working people would not show up. But the regime’s television cameras always focus on the front ranks, predictably filled with angry-looking bearded males, chanting and pounding the air with their fists.

So why should Americans care?

For starters, because the Iranian regime continues to kill U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

How many? “Several hundred,” according to the former Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey.

General Dempsey made that statement in [response to a question](#) from Senator Tom Cotton (R, AK), himself a veteran who deployed to both Afghanistan and Iraq.

But fellow veteran Rep. Ron DeSantis (R, FL-6), believes the death toll attributable to Iranian-sponsored attacks could be much higher. “You have a regime – people fail to mention – they were responsible for as many as 1500 American deaths in Iraq,” DeSantis [told a Congressional panel](#) last year.

Most of these deaths were caused by Iranian-made Explosively Formed Penetrators, which were designed to pierce armor with a slug of molten metal travelling at 6,000 feet per second.

Iran distributed thousands of EFPs to both Sunni and Shiite insurgents in Iraq starting in late 2004, with deadly effect.

I [spoke recently](#) to medically-retired U.S. Army Sergeant Robert Bartlett about his encounter with an Iranian EFP. The force of the projectile “cut me in half from the left corner of my temple down to my jaw, came across my vehicle and took my gunner’s legs off and then took the top of my truck commander’s head off,” he said.

“The Iranians were actively in Iraq killing Americans,” he said. “We never invaded Iran. Why were they killing Americans?”

In Afghanistan, Iran has been offering a cash bounty of \$1000 to any Taliban fighter who kills an American soldier. For larger attacks, the Iranians paid more money.

According to [the Sunday Times](#), a Taliban paymaster collected \$18,000 from an Iranian firm in Kabul, “a reward it said was for an attack in July [2010] which killed several Afghan government troops and destroyed an American armored vehicle.” The Taliban “treasurer” called the relationship to the

Iranians a “marriage of convenience.”

I would call it, an alliance of Terror.

The Iranian regime also continues its foreign expansion. In Iraq, they command a 100,000 man strong Shiite militia that is hovering on the outskirts of Mosul and dominate the government in Baghdad.

In Yemen, Iran has delivered C-802 anti-ship missiles to Houthi rebels that have fired on U.S. and Arab warships. In Syria, they have sent thousands of IRGC troops to serve the regime of Bashar al-Assad in his ongoing massacre of his own people. And in Lebanon, Iran’s Hezbollah proxies now control the much of the government and have formed an alliance with newly-elected President, Michel Aoun.

So is the Islamic State of Iran an all-powerful Hydra-headed monster that the United States would be foolish to oppose?

I think not. Just look at what happened this past week, following the stern warning from National Security Advisor Lt. General Michael Flynn that the Trump administration was “putting Iran on notice” over its latest long-range missile test.

Regime leaders in Tehran huffed and puffed. A top advisor to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei [called the warning](#) a “useless” threat from “an inexperienced person.”

The commander of the Iranian navy, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, scoffed at the U.S. Navy, which currently does not have an aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf. “They would not dare enter Iran’s territorial waters,” [he said](#).

Shortly after General Flynn’s warning, FoxNews reported that U.S. satellites spotted a long-range Safir missile at Iran’s main missile test site, being prepped for launch. But by Tuesday, February 7, “the missile was gone.”

Instead, Iran launched a short-range surface-to-air missile that [fell back to earth](#) 35 miles away. As the New York Post described it, "[they blinked.](#)"

The Trump administration has a tremendous opportunity when it comes to Iran. This regime has now entered middle age. Its revolutionary ideology is getting old, and its young people – by far, the most sophisticated of any nation in the immediate neighborhood – are looking to the West with expectation and hope.

It's time to step up pressure on Tehran in meaningful ways, aimed at delegitimizing the Islamic State, both at home and abroad. We can do that by using [the tools of power diplomacy](#), from stepped up U.S. broadcasting into Iran, to a credible threat of military force should the regime take aggressive moves on the high seas or elsewhere, and by [designating the IRGC](#) as a terrorist organization.

The United States can help to ensure that this anniversary will be the last for the world's largest Islamic state. Stay tuned.

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