Introduction

There is no doubt that tension in the Persian Gulf is an ongoing concern for all parties involved. Throughout recent history, the Persian Gulf has been in a turbulent state both militarily and politically. More recently, events in the Persian Gulf Crisis have escalated tensions to a new level, as involvement from Western powers has led to a cold war of some sorts. Plagued by these tensions, many nations have been on the brink of war, and with nuclear weapons involved, this is an undesirable situation for all involved.

Definition of Key Terms

Gulf of Oman

The Gulf of Oman connects the Arabian Sea to the Strait of Hormuz. An international shipping route for oil-producing sites in the region, primarily those in the Persian Gulf (discussed below), it serves the important role of being the only point of access into the Persian Gulf from the open Ocean. Its for this reason that major oil exporters and consumers have a common interest in upholding its passage.
Strait of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz is a channel of water linking the Gulf of Oman to the Persian Gulf. It ranges from 55 to 95 km wide, and is extremely important both strategically and economically. Oil tankers from various ports in the Persian Gulf must cross through the Strait of Hormuz to reach the open ocean, and the strait accounts for approximately one third of all Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) trade. Additionally, 25% of global oil consumption passes through the strait.

Persian Gulf

The Persian Gulf is a mediterranean sea of approximately 241,000 square km that extends the Indian Ocean into Western Asia. It is bordered by Iran to the North and East, Iraq and Kuwait to the Northwest, Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia to the South and Southwest, and the United Arab Emirates and a part of Oman to the South and southwest. The term “Persian Gulf” is sometimes used to describe an area including the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, which both lead to the Indian Ocean. This sea is internationally, and has been historically, known as the Persian Gulf. Certain Arab countries in the region contest the name and choose to refer to it as the Arabian gulf, partially as a result of growing Arab nationalism. For the purposes of this report, this body of water will be referred to as the Persian Gulf.

Straits of Tiran

The Straits of Tiran are the narrow sea passages between the Sinai and Arabian Peninsulas (see map). The straits connect the Gulf of Aqaba from the Red Sea, and are surrounded by Egypt to the West and Saudi Arabia to the East.

Background Information

Modern History of the Persian Gulf

Suez Crisis (1956)
Opened in 1869, the Suez Canal became the shortest Ocean link between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, shortening trade routes between Asia and Europe. The Suez Crisis, also known as the Second Arab-Israeli War, the Sinai War, and Tripartite Aggression, took place in late 1956, lasting just nine days spanning October and November. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser had recently nationalized the canal; Egypt was invaded by Israel, followed shortly by the UK and France, with the aim of regaining Western control of the canal and removing Nassar. Faced with heavy political pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations, the UK, France, and Israel all withdrew troops from Egypt, humiliating especially the UK and France, and strengthening Nassar. The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was formed in response to the conflict, with the role of policing the border between Egypt and Israel.

Six-Day War (1967)

Also known as the June War, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and the Third Arab-Israeli War, the Six-Day War was fought from 5 to 10 June 1956 between Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Syria. Egypt had blocked Israeli access to the straits of Tiran since 1950; in 1956, Israel stated its position that closing the Straits of Tiran to its ships would be considered a cause for war. In the months leading up to June 1967, Israel restated its previous stance on the closure of the Straits of Tiran. Despite this, in May, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced that the straits would remain closed to the Israelis, leading to a dangerous heightening of tensions. To add to that, Egypt also mobilized its forces along its border with Israel. On 5 June 1967, Israel preemptively conducted airstrikes against Egyptian airfields. To this day, the question of which side started the war remains a controversy among historians.

Caught by surprise, almost the entire Egyptian Air Force was destroyed by the Israelis, who suffered just a few losses, and hence claimed air supremacy, in essence having control of the skies. The Israelis also launched a ground offensive into the Gaza Strip (see map) and the Sinai. This also caught Egypt by surprise, and, despite some initial resistance, the Egyptians evacuated the Sinai on the orders of Nasser, clearing the way for
Israel to conquer the Sinai. As a result, Egypt suffered heavy losses.

Jordan, which had entered into a defence pact with Egypt a week before the start of the war, attacked Israel in hopes of slowing down their forces and preventing them from gaining more territory. Syria, too, had a mutual defence agreement with Egypt. A ceasefire was signed with Israel on 11 June 1967, putting an end to the war. Israel had decimated the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian militaries, killing over 20,000 troops while losing just 1,000 of their own, despite fending off enemies from three different directions. Israel seized the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria (see map), and the West Bank from Jordan. Egypt, Jordan, and Syria were humiliated; Nasser resigned in shame. With more than 400,000 civilians were displaced in the war, this would have far reaching consequences in years to come.

Approximately 300,000 Palestinians fled the West Bank and around 100,000 Syrians left the Golan Heights. Throughout the Arab world, Jewish minorities either left or were expelled.

**Yom Kippur War (1973)**

The Yom Kippur War, also known as the Ramadan War, the October War, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, was a war fought by a coalition of Arab states, led by Syria and Egypt, against Israel. The Arab coalition launched a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in Judaism. Egypt and Syria broke ceasefire lines to enter the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights (both of which were occupied by Israel since the Six-Day War in 1967), respectively. The United States and the Soviet Union both supplied their respective allies in the war (Israel and the Arab coalition, respectively), almost leading to a confrontation between the two nuclear powers.

Egypt initially advanced into the Sinai Peninsula, though after three days, Israel mobilized most of its forces, putting a stop to the Egyptian invasion and resulting in a military stalemate. The Syrians, who’d planned their invasion such that it coincided with the Egyptian invasion, were also.
pushed back within three days to pre-war ceasefire lines by the Israelis, and soon the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched a counter-offensive in Syria. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat then ordered his forces to go back on the offensive, but Egyptian forces were quickly stopped by Israel, who subsequently launched another counter-offensive, crossing the Suez Canal into Egypt, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides.

A ceasefire orchestrated by the United Nations (UN) was broken on 22 October 1973, but by 25 October, a ceasefire to end the war was reached. The Arab World once again faced a humiliating defeat by Israel, and Israel realized, through initial losses in the Yom Kippur war, that despite their operational and tactical advantage, there was no guarantee that they would always dominate the Arab states' militarily, as they had in earlier wars.

**1973 Oil Crisis**

In October 1973, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) (not to be confused with OPEC), which currently includes Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Tunisia, established an oil embargo targeted at nations who appeared to be supporting Israel during the Yom Kippur War. The main effect of the embargo was the sharp rise in the price of oil, up almost 400% by the end of the embargo in March 1974. The inundation of wealth in the region led to greater buying power in the arms market, further destabilizing the region.

**Camp David Accords (1978) & Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1979)**

Following 12 days of negotiations at Camp David, a country retreat in Maryland for the President of the United States, the Camp David Accords were signed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on 17 September 1978. The agreement consisted of two parts: *A Framework for Peace in the Middle East; A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel*. US President Jimmy Carter brought the two sides together and was a witness to the signing of the accord. The ultimate goal of these accords was to establish a framework for peace in the Middle East and stabilizing relations between Israel and Egypt. The second of the two frameworks above led directly to the signing of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty on 26 March 1979.

However, promoting the disbanding of a united Arab front in opposition to Israel found mixed responses in the Arab World, and was particularly controversial in Palestine. In fact, Anwar Sadat was subsequently assassinated in Cairo, Egypt, on 6 October 1981, partially as a result of the
inflamed tensions caused by the treaty. It is, however, important to note that the treaty was a significant step forward in normalizing relations between the two countries.

**Iranian Revolution (1977 - 1979)**

Beginning in October 1977, and finally ending in February 1979, the Iranian Revolution, also known as the Islamic Revolution and the 1979 Revolution, led to the overthrow of the Monarch of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. His government was subsequently replaced with an Islamic republic under Ruhollah Khomeini, a faction leader who took part in the revolt.

Following the revolution, Iran’s hostility towards the United States increased, while Saudi Arabia remained closely aligned with US. With this came the decline of US power in the region.

**Soviet-Afghan War (1979 - 1989)**

The Saur Revolution in Afghanistan (also known as the April Revolution and the April Coup) from 27-28 April 1978, in which protestors supporting the Soviet-backed People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) revolted against Afghan President Mohammed Daoud Khan (who, along with his family, was killed in the protests), led to the aforementioned communist party taking power in Afghanistan. Consequently, Soviet Afghanistan became deeply repressive and suppressed opposition through means of killing thousands of political prisoners. All this led to the rise of armed anti-government protests, and vast regions of Afghanistan were in open rebellion by April 1979. In September 1979, Afghan President Nur Mohammed Taraki was assassinated under the orders of second-in-command Hafizullah Amin (who became president shortly thereafter) while the party experienced deep rivalries within itself.

On 24 December 1979, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev deployed the army in Afghanistan, staging a coup in Kabul, killing President Amin, and replacing him with Babrak Karmal, a Soviet loyalist from a rival faction. The United States subsequently began funding military operations to oppose the Soviet invasion. Although often reported by Western media as an “invasion”, the Soviets considered it to be an intervention. In fact, the Soviets planned only to secure towns and roads and stabilize the government, and then withdraw their troops within 6 months to a year. However, met by fierce opposition from guerillas in Afghanistan, they became stuck in a bloody war lasting 9 years. The troop withdrawal process began on 15 May 1988. The final troops were withdrawn on 15 February 1989.

The Soviet-Afghan war was a major destabilizing force in the region, especially as they placed between 80,000 to 100,000 troops close to Petroleum resources in the Arabian peninsula.
**Iran-Iraq War (1980 - 1988)**

On 22 September 1980, Iraq invaded Iran in hopes of replacing Iran as a dominant power in the Persian Gulf. Iraq also hoped to gain by taking advantage of the chaos in Iran caused by the revolution. However, Iraq was quickly opposed and lost almost all territory it had gained by June 1982. Iran was mostly by itself during the war, whereas Iraq was supported politically and logistically by the United States, France, Britain, the Soviets, and most Arab nations. The bloody war ended on 20 August 1988 as a result of a ceasefire brokered by the United Nations, but not before an estimated 500,000 soldiers (and a small number of civilians) were killed.

The war itself has been compared to WWI for its use of trench warfare, fortified defensive lines, extensive use of chemical weapons, human wave attacks, and deliberate attacks on civilians. Like the Soviet-Afghan War, the Iran-Iraq War was also a major destabilizing force in the Persian Gulf.

**Persian Gulf War (1990 - 1991)**

The Persian Gulf War, which goes by too many different names to be listed here, was a war waged by a coalition of 35 countries led by the United States against Iraq in response to Iraq’s invasion (and annexation) of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The invasion was met by international condemnation and Iraq faced economic sanctions from the UN Security Council almost immediately. The coalition formed was the largest military alliance since WWII; their primary goal was to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The war was a decisive victory for the coalition, who liberated Kuwait. It ended 28 February 1991.

**Recent Developments in the Persian Gulf**

**US Withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (a.k.a. Iran Nuclear Deal)**

Under the leadership of President Donald Trump, on 8 May 2018, the United States announced its withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal, a deal which limited Iran’s ability to produce nuclear weapons, in part by limiting its capacity to enrich uranium for use in nuclear weapon production, among various other measures. The withdrawal by the United States has been the subject of immense criticism around the world, with notable exceptions in places such as Saudi Arabia and Israel.

**Persian Gulf Crisis (Mid 2019)**
Following the US withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear deal, and the imposition of new sanctions on Iran by the United States and others, the United States designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization, to which Iran retaliated by labelling the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) as a terrorist organization. These events marked the beginning of a rise in tension in the region.

On 12 May 2019, four commercial ships, including two Saudi Aramco (a Saudi Arabian national petroleum and natural gas company) tankers, were damaged in the Gulf of Oman. Western nations blamed Iran, while Iran denied involvement. US President Donald Trump proclaimed that in the event of a conflict, it would be the “official end of Iran”. The same day, a rocket exploded less than a mile from the US Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq; the US responded by sending an additional 1,500 troops to the Persian Gulf as a protective measure.

On 6 June 2019, an American MQ-9 Reaper (Predator B) drone was shot down over Yemen. The United States claimed that the attack took place with the assistance of Iran, as they were conducted with “sophisticated and coordinated operation.”

On 13 June 2019, two oil tankers caught fire after being attacked in the Gulf of Oman. The US blamed Iran for coordinating the attack, and deployed a further 1,000 troops to the Middle East in response to the incident.

On 20 June 2019, the IRGC shot down a US RQ-4A Global Hawk surveillance drone, claiming that it violated Iranian airspace. The US maintains that the attack was unprovoked, and that the drone was over international airspace in the Strait of Hormuz, though the two countries provided conflicting GPS coordinates for the drone’s location at the time it was shot down, making it difficult to determine whether or not the drone was actually in Iranian airspace when it was shot down.

On 22 June 2019, US President Donald Trump approved cyber attacks disabling IRGC systems used to control missile and rocket launches.

On 24 June 2019, US President Donald Trump announced new sanctions against Iranian leadership, as well as leaders of the IRGC.

By 28 June 2019, more than a dozen US fighter jets were deployed to Qatar to “defend American forces and interests”.

On 3 July 2019, British authorities seized an Iranian tanker in Gibraltar on suspicion that the tanker was carrying oil to Syria, a breach of EU sanctions. Iranian leader Ali Khamenei described the incident as an act of “piracy”.

On 11 July 2019, the Royal Navy prevented three boats believed to be from the IRGC from capturing an oil tanker owned by British Petroleum (BP) as it was transiting through the Strait of Hormuz.

On 18 July 2019, a US amphibious assault ship in the Persian Gulf was used to jam and crash an Iranian drone that came too close to the ship. Iran denies that any of its drones were brought down.

On 20 July 2019, a British tanker was seized by the IRGC, and their crew of 23 was detained. This sparked a diplomatic crisis between the UK and Iran, with the UK condemning the seizure of its ship. Iran indicated that its motive for seizing the ship was in retaliation over the British seizure of its ship, and indicated that it would be willing to release the British tanker if the Iranian tanker was also released.

On 4 August 2019, the IRGC seized an Iraqi tanker in the Persian Gulf on suspicion that it was smuggling oil to other nations.

Some days later, Britain and Israel joined the US led Sentinel Program, whose aim was to protect oil tankers in the Persian Gulf.

On 15 August 2019, Gibraltar released the Iranian tanker after receiving assurances that the oil would not be sold to an EU-sanctioned entity. Iran denied that it ever issued these assurances, and maintained that it would continue supplying Syria with oil.

On 3 September 2019, Iran announced that its tanker had delivered its cargo, and satellite imagery showed the tanker near Syria. Britain accused Iran of selling oil to Assad’s regime in Syria, but Iran stated that the oil was sold to a private company which was not sanctioned by the EU, so its assurances to Gibraltar (which it previously claimed had never been made) were not breached.

On 14 September 2019, Saudi Aramco oil processing facilities in Eastern Saudi Arabia were bombed, for which the Houthi Movement in Yemen claimed responsibility. The US claimed that the attacks originated in Iran, which Iran denies.
On 27 September 2019, the British oil tanker previously seized by Iran was released along with its 23 crew members.

**Signs of thawing tensions (Late 2019)**

On 20 October 2019, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) released $700 million in frozen funds to Iran, a sign that relations were improving between the UAE and Iran.

On 21 October 2019, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif indicated his willingness to travel to Riyadh and hold a meeting with Saudi officials to settle their differences, a sign of easing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Qatar announced its decision to name Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani, as the head of its delegation to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), held on 10 December 2019, a gathering of US-allied Persian Gulf Arab leaders. This is its highest level of representation at the annual meeting over the past two years, a concrete signal of thawing regional tensions.

On 17 December 2019, hundreds of Saudi football fans travelled to Qatar for a semi-final match of the FIFA Club World Cup between Brazilian team Flamengo and Saudi Arabian team Al-Hilal. This was despite a Saudi embargo on Qatar, which has placed restrictions on Qatari aircraft in the Gulf region and closed its only land border (with Saudi Arabia). Officials from both Saudi Arabia and Qatar have begun talks to end the embargo.


On 31 December 2019, in response to US airstrikes that killed 24 members of an Iranian-backed militia a few days earlier, protestors broke into the US embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. Despite not entering the main embassy building, the protestors later withdrew from the compound, chanting “Death to America”.

On 3 January 2019, US President Donald Trump ordered an airstrike to kill Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, justifying the airstrike as a measure “to stop a war”. Iran vowed to take revenge for this action; Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a statement, “His departure to God does not end his path or his mission, but a forceful revenge awaits the criminals who have his blood and the blood of the other martyrs last night on their hands." Analysts have said that this action may perhaps be the riskiest move the US has made in the Middle East since the 2003 Invasion of Iraq. This event is sure to dramatically increase tensions both between Iran and the United States, as well as regional tensions, since the airstrike was carried out over
Baghdad International Airport in Baghdad, Iraq. The United States has deployed hundreds of troops to the region, and is expected to deploy more over the coming days.

Note: this is a recent and ongoing event. Delegates are advised to consult more recent news articles for updated information and developments in the situation prior to the conference.

**Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

**Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC)**

OAPEC is a multi-governmental organization headquartered in Kuwait whose aims include coordinating energy policies among oil-producing Arab nations, maintaining tight relationships between themselves, and unifying ongoing efforts to procure oil. Its current members are Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Tunisia.

**Iran**

Iran is a country in the Middle East which borders the Persian Gulf. It is of great importance to understanding the situation in the Persian Gulf. In modern history, the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq War were major destabilizing elements. More recently, Iran has been a center of attention in the middle east after the US withdrew from the Iran Nuclear Deal, and even more so as a result of the diplomatic crisis with the UK stemming from the capture of oil tankers on both sides.

**Iraq**

Iraq is a country in the Middle East that borders the Persian Gulf. It too is of great importance to understanding the situation in the Persian Gulf. Both the Persian Gulf War and the Iran-Iraq War were caused as a result of Iraq invading Kuwait and Iran, respectively. Iraq is a member of OAPEC.

**United States of America (USA or US)**

From supporting various groups politically, logistically, and militarily in the Suez Crisis, the Yom Kippur War, the Soviet-Afghan War, the Iran-Iraq War, the Persian Gulf, and the Persian Gulf Crisis, to having a major role in the Camp David Accords and the Iran Nuclear Deal, its evident that US has played an extremely large part in shaping the politics and ultimately the tensions in the Persian Gulf.

**Egypt**
Egypt is a country in North Africa, part of which occupies the Sinai Peninsula, a region crucial to understanding the Suez Crisis, the Six-Day War, and the Yom Kippur War, all of which Egypt was involved in. Egypt was also involved in the 1973 Oil Crisis, as it was (and still is) a member of OAPEC. Additionally, Egypt was the subject of the Camp David Accords and the subsequent Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.

Israel

Israel is a country in the Middle East, north of the Arabian and Sinai Peninsulas. Like Egypt, understanding Israel's role in history is crucial to understanding the tension in the Persian Gulf. Israel was heavily involved in the Suez Crisis, the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the 1973 Oil Crisis, and was a subject of both the Camp David Accords and the subsequent Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.

Timeline of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 October - 7 November 1956</td>
<td>Suez Crisis</td>
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<td>7 November 1956</td>
<td>United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) formed in response to the Suez Crisis</td>
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<td>5 - 10 June 1967</td>
<td>Six-Day War</td>
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<td>11 June 1967</td>
<td>Ceasefire signed with Israel, putting an end to the Six-Day War</td>
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<td>11 June 1967 onwards</td>
<td>300,000 Palestinians flee West Bank; 100,000 Syrians leave Golan Heights; Jewish Minorities leave or are expelled throughout the Arab World</td>
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<td>6 - 25 October 1973</td>
<td>Yom Kippur War</td>
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<td>16-19 October 1973</td>
<td>OAPEC proclaims oil embargo</td>
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<td>22 October 1973</td>
<td>UN-brokered ceasefire is breached</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 - 26 October 1973</td>
<td>New ceasefire agreement is reached; Yom Kippur War ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1974</td>
<td>Oil embargo ends; price of oil up 400% from its price before the oil embargo</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1977</td>
<td>Iranian Revolution begins</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>27 - 28 April 1978</td>
<td>Saur Revolution</td>
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<td>17 September 1978</td>
<td>Camp David Accords signed by Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin in</td>
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<td>Washington DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 February 1979</td>
<td>Iranian Revolution ends</td>
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<td>26 March 1979</td>
<td>Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty signed by Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin in</td>
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<td>Washington DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1979</td>
<td>Afghan President Nur Mohammed Taraki assassinated</td>
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<td>24 December 1979</td>
<td>Soviets deploy army in Afghanistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 December 1979</td>
<td>Afghan President Hafizullah Amin assassinated</td>
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<td>December 1979 -</td>
<td>Soviet-Afghan War</td>
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<td>February 1989</td>
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<td>22 September 1980</td>
<td>Iraq invades Iran; Iran-Iraq War begins</td>
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<td>September 1980 -</td>
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<td>August 1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 October 1981</td>
<td>Egyptian President Anwar Sadat assassinated in Cairo</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 May 1988</td>
<td>Soviet troop withdrawal begins</td>
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<td>20 August 1988</td>
<td>Iran-Iraq War ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 February 1989</td>
<td>Last Soviet troops leave Afghanistan; Soviet-Afghan War ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 August 1990</td>
<td>Iraq invades Kuwait; Persian Gulf War begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 February 1991</td>
<td>Coalition forces defeat Iraq, liberate Kuwait; Persian Gulf War ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 May 2018</td>
<td>US withdraws from the Iran Nuclear Deal</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 May 2019</td>
<td>Four commercial ships damaged in Gulf of Oman; rocket explodes near US</td>
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<td>Embassy in Baghdad</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
12 May 2019 onwards  US deploys additional 1,500 troops to Persian Gulf
6 June 2019  American drone shot down over Yemen
13 June 2019  Two oil tankers attacked in Gulf of Oman
13 June 2019 onwards  US deploys additional 1,000 troops to Middle East
20 June 2019  IRGC shoots down American drone allegedly infringing upon Iranian airspace
22 June 2019  US approves cyber attacks targeted at IRGC systems
24 June 2019  US President Donald Trump announces sanctions against leaders of Iran and leaders of IRGC
28 June 2019  US deploys more than a dozen fighter jets to Qatar
3 July 2019  British authorities seize Iranian tanker in Gibraltar
11 July 2019  Royal Navy protects BP-owned oil tanker from being seized by alleged IRGC boats in the Strait of Hormuz
18 July 2019  US Navy downs Iranian drone in Persian Gulf
20 July 2019  British tanker seized by IRGC; 23 crew members detained
20 July 2019 onwards  Diplomatic crisis between the UK and Iran ensues
4 August 2019  IRGC seizes Iraqi tanker in Persian Gulf
Early August 2019  Britain and Israel join US led Sentinel Program
15 August 2019  Gibraltar releases Iranian tanker
3 September 2019  Iran announces its tanker has delivered its cargo
14 September 2019  Saudi Aramco oil processing facilities bombed
27 September 2019  Iran releases previously seized British oil tanker, along with 23 crew members
20 October 2019  UAE releases $700 million in frozen funds to Iran
21 October 2019  
Iranian foreign minister announces willingness to hold meeting with Saudi officials

10 December 2019  
Qatari Prime Minister heads delegation to Gulf Cooperation Council

17 December 2019  
Saudi fans travel to Qatar for football game

17 December 2019 onwards  
Talks begin between Saudi Arabia and Qatar to end embargo on Qatar

31 December 2019  
Protesters invade US embassy in Baghdad, Iraq

3 January 2019  
US President Donald Trump orders assassination of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani

3 January 2019  
Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei promises “forceful revenge”

** Relevant UN Treaties and Events **

- Security Council Resolution 598, 20 July 1987 ([S/RES/598](#))

** Previous Attempts to solve the Issue **

Various peace treaties, especially the Camp David Accords and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty have been attempts at defusing tensions in the Persian Gulf. However, as seen by the various conflicts that succeeded these peace treaties, it becomes clear that their goals have not been fully realized, despite their best intentions.

More recently, the Iran Nuclear Deal sought to achieve the same goal. However, as evidenced by the US withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal and the subsequent expansion of Iran’s nuclear program, it is difficult to say at this point what consequences this will have, and only time can tell whether the Iran Nuclear Deal will be successful in reducing tensions in the Middle East.

Foreign involvement, especially by Western powers, is often justified as a measure necessary to bring peace to a region or country. Foreign involvement can therefore be classified as a previous attempt
to solve the issue, as some nations do believe that this is a viable approach to reducing tensions in the Persian Gulf. However, what is often the case is that these foreign powers have alternate goals and are simply using this justification as a means of reducing the diplomatic backlash they would face otherwise. Given the numerous times that this strategy has been attempted, and the varying results, it is hard to reach a definitive conclusion as to what effect foreign involvement has had, either positive, negative, or neutral. What can be definitively said, however, is that tensions still remain high in the Persian Gulf, and foreign involvement has been ever-present in the region. Whether one is a cause of the other or if they remain unrelated to some extent is a matter for debate.

**Possible Solutions**

Despite several previous attempts, tension in the Persian Gulf continues to plague the region and neighboring countries. Previous attempts to solve the issue may have made some progress, but clearly they have yet to defuse tensions entirely. Below are some suggestions to reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf.

- Closely monitoring the current situation between the US and Iran
- Brokering additional peace treaties and/or mutual arms reduction treaties between nations
- Limiting the militarization of the region surrounding the Persian Gulf
- Encouraging the denuclearization of countries possessing nuclear weapons, especially those in close proximity to the Persian Gulf, or those who maintain military bases capable of deploying nuclear weapons in close proximity to the Persian Gulf
- Urging nations who have not done so to endorse the Iran Nuclear Deal
- Establishing measures to reduce the number of foreign fighters traveling to the Middle East
- Limiting the extent to which foreign powers, especially Western nations, are able to intervene in the matters of the Persian Gulf
- (Re-)establishing diplomatic ties between countries between whose diplomatic ties have soured or are nonexistent
- Bringing incidents that occur in the Persian Gulf to a higher authority, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) or the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)
- Providing economic disincentives to countries who instigate aggression in the Persian Gulf
- Putting in place new sanctions on individuals, organizations and/or countries where necessary
- Understanding the culture, history, and Politics of the Persian Gulf and that of the surrounding nations to ensure that mistakes made in the past are not repeated
- Evaluating the effectiveness of previous sanctions in reducing tensions in the Persian Gulf
Further encouraging diplomacy as a means of resolution as opposed to aggression

Providing humanitarian aid to those affected by war in the region

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