

THE TRIVIUM REPORT

Clear-eyed, historically grounded analysis that challenges official narratives and connects complex geopolitical events to real-world consequences for ordinary people.



Insights

- General Thoughts
- US & Israel
- Iran

Quote regarding President Trumps Attack on Venezuela:

"This action will confirm to the world that the United States is no longer qualified to lead the international community and that there is no point in trying to pursue peaceful coexistence with Washington."

The virtuous republic our Founding Fathers sought to create no longer has any claim to respect for the opinion of mankind the rule of law. or ideological appeal. It is hard to imagine an action better calculated to make America an international outlaw."

Chas W. Freeman - US Diplomat

General Thoughts – US/Israel War Against Iran

Table 1. Ethnic Breakdown of Iran's Population

Ethnic Group	CIA-Style Breakdown (via World Factbook Reprints)	Study.com Summary Estimate	Library of Congress / Academic Syntheses
Persians	51%	51–60% (often "about 60%")	56–65% (Persians often 56–65% depending on whether Caspian groups included)
Azeris (Azeri Turks)	24%	24%	16–24% (varies by source)
Gilaki & Mazandarani	8%	8% (listed together)	Often merged into "Persian" majority in some counts; where separate, around 7–8% total
Kurds	7%	7%	7–10% (CIA 7%, other estimates 8–10%)
Arabs	3%	3%	2–3%
Lurs	2%	2%	2–6% (some sources group closely with Persians)
Baloch	2%	2%	About 2%
Turkmen	2%	2%	Around 1–2%, plus other small Turkic tribal groups ~1–2% combined
Other (Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, etc.)	1%	Not broken out (included in "other")	Roughly 1–2% total across many small groups

Note. Percentages are approximate and rounded; totals may not equal 100%.

I think the attacks by the US and Israel against Iran will trigger a much bigger crisis. I have been working on this missive for the past week, and it has become apparent to me that this war of US and Israeli aggression against Iran has morphed into a

regional war, that has the potential to become a much larger conflict. There is a long history of the West working to undermine Iran, and many other countries in the Middle East. In my opinion, **oil, containing China and the ‘Greater Israel Project’** are a few of the major goals that the US and Israel have. I will likely have to write multiple Trivium Reports to cover my thesis.

In a 2007 Democracy Now! interview, US General Wesley Clark recounted that shortly after 9/11 a senior Pentagon officer showed him a classified memo describing a plan for the U.S. to “takeout” seven countries in about five years, starting with Iraq and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and ending with Iran. Clark explained that this document outlined a sequence of regime-change wars rather than a narrowly focused counter-terrorism strategy. In the same account, he emphasized that he was alarmed by how casually military force was being treated as the primary tool of U.S. policy in the Middle East. Click to watch [interview](#). Sadly, all those countries have been overthrown, except for Iran.

I think a reasonable starting point for looking at the interactions of the West and Iran is the 1950’s. *“By 1953, British intelligence (MI6) and the CIA had agreed on a covert plan, codenamed Operation Ajax, to overthrow Mohammed Mossadegh and strengthen the young Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. They funneled money to Iranian agents, politicians, newspapers, street gangs, and some clerics to spread propaganda, organize protests, and create chaos, while pressuring the Shah to dismiss Mossadegh and appoint General Fazlollah Zahedi as prime minister. After an initial failed attempt and the Shah’s brief flight into exile, orchestrated pro-Shah crowds and military units turned the tide on 19 August 1953, toppling Mossadegh and restoring the Shah as an autocratic, pro-Western ruler who granted major oil concessions to U.S. and British companies.”* ([Source](#))

Mohammad Reza Shah combined rapid modernization with harsh authoritarian rule. He expanded education, infrastructure, women’s legal rights, and launched the White Revolution, aiming to turn Iran into a modern, pro-Western power. At the same time, political parties were hollowed out, elections were tightly controlled, and the secret police, SAVAK, used surveillance, censorship, imprisonment, and torture against real and suspected opponents. Many Iranians felt they lived in a pervasive police state where criticism could lead to prison or worse.

Attitudes toward the Shah were deeply split. Some urban elites and sections of the new middle class admired him for stability, nationalism, and economic growth, while many clerics, bazaar merchants, students, leftists, and rural poor resented corruption, inequality, forced Westernization, and attacks on religious influence. By the late 1970s, several factors converged: human-rights abuses by SAVAK, widening social injustice, inflation and economic shocks after the oil boom, visible royal extravagance, and growing Islamist opposition centered on Ayatollah Khomeini. Mass protests, strikes, and funerals that turned into demonstrations eroded army loyalty; in January 1979 the Shah left Iran, and the monarchy collapsed weeks later in the Iranian Revolution.

Human rights were widely violated under both the Shah and the Islamic Republic, but the scale, ideology, and targets have differed. Under the Shah, power was centralized in a pro-Western monarchy that suppressed political pluralism; under the Islamic Republic, a theocratic system combines elected institutions with unelected clerical control and broad religious law.

Under the Shah, SAVAK used pervasive surveillance, censorship, arbitrary detention, and torture against leftists, Islamists, nationalists, and other opponents; hundreds to possibly thousands of political

prisoners were jailed, and at least around 300 political executions are documented, alongside some social advances such as expanded rights for women. After 1979, the new regime executed thousands of former officials, leftists, and dissidents in the early years, then institutionalized broad restrictions on expression, association, religion, and gender equality, with ongoing reports of torture, unfair trials, and extensive use of the death penalty, including for political and “moral” offenses. Many rights groups judge the Islamic Republic’s overall record worse, arguing that core abuses of the Shah era—torture, executions, crushing of dissent—continued and in some respects intensified, though patterns have varied across different presidencies and periods of repression and limited opening.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution was a mass, largely urban uprising in 1977–79 in which millions joined strikes and demonstrations against the Shah’s monarchy, culminating in the army’s neutrality, the Shah’s flight, and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s return from exile to found an Islamic Republic. Khomeini became Supreme Leader in 1979 and ruled until his death in 1989, presiding over the consolidation of a theocratic state, harsh repression of opponents, Islamization of law and culture, and the prolonged Iran–Iraq War.

Within Shia Islam, Khomeini was a Marja (source of emulation) and architect of the doctrine of “guardianship of the jurist,” giving senior clerics direct political authority. Unlike the pope—who leads a transnational church and has no formal army or state—Khomeini combined top religious status with ultimate control over a modern state’s security forces and institutions. In the broader Muslim world, he was revered by many Shias and some Islamists, but distrusted or opposed by many Sunnis and secular Muslims, especially after the hostage crisis and regional interventions.

The United States politically and materially tilted toward Iraq after Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980, aiming to prevent an Iranian victory and protect Gulf oil and allied monarchies. Washington restored diplomatic channels, removed Iraq from the terrorism list, provided billions in commodity credits, shared satellite intelligence on Iranian troop positions, and facilitated dual-use exports that bolstered Iraq’s war capacity. Declassified CIA documents show U.S. officials knew Iraq was using mustard gas and nerve agents yet continued providing battlefield intelligence that helped plan offensives where those agents were used.

Iraq’s chemical weapons program relied heavily on European suppliers of precursors, equipment, and plant design. German firms were central in building the Al-Muthanna chemical weapons complex; a 1992 UN review identified products from at least 17 German companies in that facility. Dutch companies such as Melchemie and KBS Holland shipped large quantities of thionyl chloride, phosphorous oxychloride, hydrogen fluoride, and other precursors later linked to Iraq’s mustard gas and nerve-agent production. Other European and Western firms contributed dual-use chemicals, protective gear, and technology under the cover of civilian or pesticide projects.

A declassified 1991 CIA report estimated more than 50,000 Iranian casualties from Iraqi chemical attacks; later Iranian and specialist estimates speak of over 100,000 total chemical casualties, including long-term injuries. One report in 2002 suggested around 20,000 Iranian soldiers were killed outright by nerve gas, though these figures remain debated. Overall war losses were vastly higher: scholarly and reference estimates place total dead on both sides at roughly 500,000, with Iran suffering the larger share, and total casualties (killed and wounded) at between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000. Iranian government-linked figures commonly cite about 200,000–300,000 military dead, plus tens of thousands of civilians.

U.S. sanctions have severely constrained Iran's economic development, repeatedly knocking the country off any growth path for over four decades. They have cut oil exports, blocked investment and technology transfer, driven chronic inflation and currency collapse, and helped entrench corrupt, semi-state networks around the IRGC and other power centers. Each brief sanctions easing (for example after the 2015 JCPOA) produced a sharp but short-lived growth rebound, which then reversed when U.S. pressure resumed.

Today, the state still stages large commemorations and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's image remains omnipresent. With successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the following is noted over his 36 years of rule:

Human rights and political space: Worse or, at best, more structurally repressive under Khamenei. Khomeini's years were bloodier in single episodes; Khamenei's era normalized long-term, nationwide control with recurring massacres and pervasive fear.

Economy and living standards: After war-ravaged 1980s, some macro indicators improved in the 1990s–2000s, but sanctions plus entrenched corruption and IRGC/bonyad control produced chronic unemployment, inequality, and repeated crises; many Iranians see no net improvement.

State power and reach: The Islamic Republic became more capable and interventionist under Khamenei than under Khomeini, but that "strength" came with deeper internal alienation, culminating in the broad, angry uprisings of the 2010s–2020s.

Older generations, that lived through the Shah's monarchy and fought in the War that Iraq launched against Iran in 1980, have a bitter distrust in the West, yet many Iranians, especially younger and opposition-minded, see the Ayatollahs as the origin of an oppressive system rather than a father figure, and his legacy is contested. With that said, the United States and Israel have likely destroyed any ability to win over the younger generations in Iran given the massive bombardment that included killing 165 schoolgirls at their elementary school, assassinating Iranian leadership, destroying their access to water via bombing a desalination water treatment plant in Tehran, etc.

In 2025–26, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent openly described using financial warfare to push the rial over the edge. In a Congressional hearing he boasted that Treasury had engineered a dollar shortage in Iran; this fed a banking failure, a plunge of the rial to record lows above 1–1.2 million to the dollar, and then into nationwide protests over prices and savings wiped out. This is not conjecture: he explicitly framed the "grand culmination" as deliberately provoking economic pain to fuel unrest.

Mossad (Israeli Intelligence), U.S. policy, and Starlink all mattered in 2025–26, but in different ways and on different "layers" of the conflict. What follows separates documented facts from analytic inference.

Mossad's role in the 2025–26 protests

Open-source and Israeli reporting agree that Mossad is highly active inside Iran (assassinations, sabotage, cyber, HUMINT) and was operating there during and after the 12-Day War. In late December 2025, the Farsi-language X account widely understood as Mossad's own explicitly urged Iranians to go into the streets and said Mossad would be "with them in the field." Mike Pompeo's (former director of the CIA) New Year message wishing success to "every Mossad agent walking beside" protesters is

another overt signal that Western and Israeli services saw the protests as an opportunity and had assets on the ground.

Analysts across very different political camps converge on a rough division of labor:

- The trigger was domestic—currency collapse, price spikes, repression, corruption.
- Foreign services amplified and weaponized the moment: intelligence support, sabotage, information ops, and some field agents blending into unrest, especially around key dates (the January 8–10 bloodbath, attacks on regime infrastructure).
- No one has published a full operational order, but between explicit bragging, the agent interview, and regime claims backed by some visual “evidence,” it is hard to deny that Mossad operations increased regime confusion and fear, undercut its aura of control, and probably made parts of the security apparatus more hesitant and fractured.

U.S. strategy behind Starlink

The Starlink piece is better documented than Mossad’s tactics. U.S. officials anonymously confirmed that State bought nearly 7,000 Starlink terminals and smuggled about 6,000 into Iran after the January 2026 crackdown to keep protesters online during and after regime internet shutdowns. They explicitly framed this as “internet freedom” and repurposed existing democracy-promotion budgets to pay for it. Strategically, this fits a known U.S. playbook:

- Deny an authoritarian state its monopoly over information and communications in crisis moments.
- Let protests self-organize and broadcast repression in real time, raising domestic morale and international pressure.
- Keep exiled activists and sympathetic foreign media wired into events that the regime is trying to blackout.

Starlink by itself does not “create” protests; it changes their resilience and visibility. In 2025–26, it meant that even with a near-total blackout, tens of thousands of Iranians retained some connectivity, and U.S. officials clearly saw that as a lever to prolong and harden the uprising.

The White House recently stated that “more Americans have been killed by Iran than any other terrorist regime”. A U.S. government-cited Pentagon assessment found that Iran-backed groups were responsible for at least 603 U.S. service members killed in Iraq between 2003 and 2011, roughly one in six American combat deaths there. The same White House fact sheet notes that Iran-backed Hamas’ October 7, 2023, attack killed 46 Americans and kidnapped at least 12 more, and that Iranian-backed militias carried out more than 180 attacks on U.S. forces from late 2023 to late 2024, wounding over 180 U.S. service members and killing three. Earlier major attacks attributed to Iran or its proxies include the 1983 Beirut Marine barracks bombing that killed 241 U.S. military personnel and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing that killed 19 U.S. Airmen, along with multiple bus bombings and shootings in Israel and the West Bank that killed and injured American citizens.

On the flip side, Approximate Iranian deaths linked to U.S. involvement:

Category	Low estimate (≈)	Medium estimate (≈)	High estimate (≈)	Notes
War backing (Iran–Iraq War)	180,000	250,000	300,000+	Based on Iranian epidemiologic data and “martyr” records (≈183k killed) with scholarly ranges up toward 300k+ war deaths.
Direct U.S. military conflict	300	400	500	Dominated by 290 killed on Iran Air 655, plus small numbers of IRGC/naval personnel in 1980s clashes and later targeted strikes.
Sanctions & economic pressure	1,000+	10,000+	50,000+	Public-health work shows sanctions worsened mortality and access to care, but no solid national death count; these bands reflect “at least thousands, plausibly more,” not measured totals.

On the 28th of February 2026, the U.S. and Israel waged the opening phase of a large air and missile war against Iran that rapidly escalated across the region. The campaign began in the early hours with nearly 900 strikes in about 12 hours, hitting Iranian ballistic-missile launchers, air defenses, command centers, IRGC bases, naval assets, and selected leadership targets in and around Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, western provinces, and the Gulf coast. U.S. B-2, B-1, and B-52 bombers, cruise-missile–armed ships and submarines, and Israeli aircraft and missiles participated; Washington dubbed the operation “Epic Fury” and framed it as pre-emptive self-defence to halt Iran’s nuclear and missile programs and “eliminate imminent threats.”

One of the first waves killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior officials but also struck a girls’ school next to a naval facility near Bandar Abbas, killing more than 160 civilians—an incident both Israel and the U.S. have deflected or promised to “investigate.” Iran answered within hours and days with large missile and drone barrages at Israel and U.S. assets and partners across the Gulf, launching hundreds of projectiles; some were intercepted, but dozens of Israelis and others were killed, and oil and shipping were disrupted.

U.S.–Israeli forces have kept up a high tempo of strikes, expanding target sets to more missile infrastructure, IRGC logistics, suspected nuclear-related facilities, and naval forces, while Iran’s daily missile fire count has tapered; I suspect that Iran is expecting and preparing for a long war. The US and Israel are not showing the destruction that Iran has done to US bases in the region and the targeting of Israel infrastructure.

MIT emeritus professor and physicist, Ted Postol, specializes in nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and missile defence. He previously worked at Argonne National Laboratory, the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment, and as a scientific adviser to the U.S. Navy’s Chief of Naval Operations. Postol’s assessment is that Iran is far more capable, and U.S.–Israeli missile defence far weaker, than

official claims admit. He argues the war's outcome will hinge on the missile duel, not on-air superiority soundbites. [\(Interview\)](#)

Ted states:

- **Missile defence performance:** By frame-by-frame analysis of strike videos, Postol finds very few genuine intercept fireballs, versus large numbers of incoming warheads passing through swarms of Patriot and Iron Dome interceptors. He estimates the real intercept rate is “well below 5%,” not the 80–90% success claimed by officials and some academics. Multiple cases show 3–8 interceptors fired at a single Iranian missile or drone with zero effect.
- **Iranian offensive capability:** He highlights Iran's use of underground tunnel launch sites with camouflaged, sand-covered exits, making it impossible to know how many launchers exist or to claim “half” have been destroyed. He stresses that decoy-dispensing ballistic missiles are now appearing in the footage, which will further overwhelm and confuse defences: instead of one hard-to-hit target, defences must choose among 20+ decoys with almost no chance of picking the real warhead.
- **Drone threat and cost-exchange:** Iran's slow, cheap attack drones (with warheads around 200 pounds) are, in his view, a major strategic problem. Defenders are forced to fire multimillion-dollar interceptors at \$10–30k drones, rapidly burning through stockpiles, as seen in Ukraine. He underlines that these drones can be equipped with off-the-shelf infrared sensors and Iridium satellite links, allowing real-time video guidance onto high-value targets like radars or ships.
- **Strategic implications:** Taken together, Postol concludes U.S.–Israeli air defences cannot sustain a long war at current expenditure and effectiveness levels, and that Iran already has the capability keep the Strait of Hormuz closed and impose serious costs on U.S. and allied forces, despite Western narratives that “we own the skies.”

US Retired Col. Douglas MacGregor argues that the new Iran–Israel–US war is transforming the global order in ways disastrous for Washington and potentially existential for Israel. He says Israel initiated strikes on Iran, the US “joined late,” and Iran rapidly regionalized the war by hitting around 27 bases, ports, and airports across the Gulf, shutting or degrading the Straits of Hormuz, the Red Sea/Suez route, and key UAE and Saudi infrastructure. MacGregor claims cheap Iranian drones and missiles are overwhelming expensive Western air defences, crippling Gulf commerce, driving oil above 100 dollars, and stranding millions of foreign workers and businesspeople.

He argues US and Israeli missile stocks are being depleted after years of supplying Ukraine and are no match for Iran's large, dispersed arsenal and advancing technologies like decoys and higher-speed missiles. In his view, Iran only needs to survive, while prolonged conflict exposes US vulnerability, erodes the dollar, and destroys US credibility as a security guarantor. He predicts pressure to expel US forces from Iraq, the Gulf, and possibly beyond, with Russia, China, India and regional states repositioning around a stronger, “civilizational” Iran, while Israel risks military exhaustion, internal flight, and even non-survival if the war and its escalation, including any nuclear use, continue. [\(Interview with Col. MacGregor\)](#)

Donald Trump went into the Iran war with a short, shifting timeline and no coherent endgame, and the gap between his rhetoric and reality has exposed deep chaos inside his administration. Early on, he and

the Pentagon talked about a 10–15-day window to “force a deal” or “eliminate the leadership,” framing the war almost as a sharp shock. Within days of the 28 February strikes he publicly described the conflict as projected to last “four to five weeks,” while also saying the U.S. could extend operations “far longer” if needed. By the first week of March, officials and leaks were already talking about operations stretching into late summer or beyond, with Trump saying there would be “no time limits” and hinting at participating in choosing Iran’s next leader—classic mission creep.

Inside the administration, reporting and senators’ briefings describe a war launched without a clear legal or strategic framework, shifting justifications (from “imminent threat” to long-term danger to regime-change hints), and a decision-making circle essentially narrowed to Trump and a few loyalists. Senior military and intelligence officials warned that escalation and regional blowback would be hard to control, but Trump pushed ahead, while Congress and allies complained they did not understand his objectives or exit plan.

On “boots on the ground,” Trump and Defense Secretary Hegseth have repeatedly insisted there will be no large-scale U.S. ground invasion, presenting the war as air- and missile-led with proxies doing any land fighting. In practice, the U.S. is already relying on special operations, Kurdish and other armed groups, and expanded force presence across the region, creating de facto ground entanglements even while Washington formally denies any plan for a big occupation force.

Daily interactions between groups (Persian, Azeri, Kurdish, Arab, Lur, etc.) is generally peaceful, especially in big cities where people mix at work, universities, and through intermarriage. A strong sense of “being Iranian” and the widespread use of Persian (Farsi) as a common language help people relate across ethnic lines in public life. Many non-Persian Shi’a groups (especially Azeris and many Lurs) are deeply integrated into state structures, commerce, and the military, which reinforces a shared national identity for a large part of the population.

What holds people together: Shared Shi’a Islam is probably the single strongest unifying factor: roughly 90% of Iranians are Shi’a, across Persian, Azeri, many Kurdish, Arab, Luri and other communities. Centuries of common imperial history (Safavid, Qajar, Pahlavi, Islamic Republic) and national myths around “Iranian civilization” create an overarching identity that many minorities participate in, even if they also emphasize their own local culture. Azeris are often cited as a case of very high integration: they are visible at the top of politics and clerical leadership, which both reflects and reinforces a sense of shared stake in the state. Many people carry layered identities: for example, “Azeri, Shi’a, Iranian” or “Kurd, Sunni, from Sanandaj, Iranian,” and which layer matters most shifts with context (home, mosque, workplace, politics). Younger urban generations in some groups (e.g., many Lurs, Shia Kurds, Shia Arabs, Baluch in mixed cities) may self-identify as “Persian” or simply “Iranian” in some settings, especially where upward mobility is tied to integration into Persian-language institutions.

In closing, I really believe that this war is not winnable for the US and Israel. Iran’s ethnic groups are woven into a single national society, but how they relate to one another is shaped by a mix of shared identities (language, religion, over 10,000 years of history), and no matter how much the West thinks they can overlord the population, the Iranians will perceive. Stay tuned for more updates.

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