Iran – 30 years after the Islamic revolution

■ **1979, Jan:** U.S.-backed Shah of Iran forced into exile after mounting discontent with his authoritarian rule

Feb: Shiite Islamic religious leader *Ayatollah Khomeini* returns from 14 years in exile, taking effective power

Nov: Islamic militants demanding extradition of Shah from New York hold 52 Americans hostage for 444 days in U.S. Embassy in Tehran

■ **1980:** Start of eight-year war with Iraq which claims lives of over one million people

■ **1988:** 290 people killed when *Iran Air* Airbus mistakenly shot down by *USS Vincennes*

■ **1989:** Khomeini dies. *Ayatollah Ali Khamenei* appointed new Supreme Leader

■ **1997:** Reformist *Mohammad Khatami* wins presidential election

■ **1999:** Student unrest turns violent over closure of pro-reform newspaper

■ **2002:** U.S. President *George Bush* describes Iran as part of an "axis of evil"

■ **2003:** Iran says it is suspending its uranium enrichment programme

■ **2004, Feb:** Conservatives win parliamentary poll after hardliners bar some 2,500 reformist candidates

Jun: Iran is rebuked by UN for failing to fully cooperate with inquiry into its nuclear activities. Tehran repeatedly reneges on commitments in subsequent years

■ **2005:** Tehran's ultra-conservative mayor *Mahmoud Ahmadinejad* wins presidential polls, defeating former president *Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani*

■ **2007, Mar:** Diplomatic stand-off with Britain after Iran detains 15 British sailors and marines

May: UN says Iran could develop a nuclear weapon in three to eight years

Dec: New U.S. intelligence report plays down perceived nuclear threat posed by Iran

■ **2008, Jul:** Iran test-fires new version of *Shahab-3* long-range missile

■ **Aug:** Informal deadline set by West for Iran to respond to package of incentives in return for halt in nuclear activities passes without reply

■ **Nov:** In unprecedented move, President Ahmadinejad congratulates U.S. president-elect *Barack Obama* on his election victory

■ **Feb 1, 2009:** Iranians celebrate 30th anniversary of revolution

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