

What Americans Need to Know About Iran

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Stunning Facts About Iran You've Never Heard Before

Preface: I was born in the U.S., and have lived here my whole life. I am a patriotic American, and put America first. I come from a Judeo-Christian background, and I am not a Muslim. I've never been to Iran, or anywhere in the Middle East or Northern Africa, or to any Muslim country.

However, I believe that learning about other people and other countries builds bridges that prevent costly and unnecessary war.

If Americans knew the following facts about Iran, it would change their opinion:

Does Iran Have Much History Or Culture?

- The first human civilization arose in [Lower Mesopotamia](#), which included parts of what are now [Iran ... as well as Iraq and Kuwait](#)
- The Persian (i.e. early Iranian) leader Cyrus the Great [freed the Jews from captivity](#) by the Babylonians. Iranian diplomats in Europe [saved thousands of Jews from the Holocaust](#) and Iran served as an escape route for Iraqi Jews fleeing to Israel after the 1948 war for Israeli independence. Iran was one of the first Muslim countries to establish diplomatic and trade relations with the state of Israel. Iran has [one of the largest Jewish populations in the world](#), and the second-largest in the Middle East behind Israel. Jews are [protected by the Iranian constitution, and are guaranteed seats](#) in the Iranian parliament
- [Wine, cookies, biscuits, ice cream, irrigation systems](#), the [windmill](#), the [postal service, waterbeds, teaching hospitals](#) (and perhaps the entire hospital system), [polo, batteries](#) and many other things were invented by the Persians. The word "[guitar](#)" probably comes from an old Persian word meaning "two strings", as the Persians invented a 2-stringed precursor to the guitar
- Iran has some [mind-blowingly beautiful scenery](#)
- ... And [beautiful people](#)
- There are admittedly some extremists, fundamentalists and crazies in Iran. But polls and interviews show that [most Iranian people are moderates](#), and they have a [moderate president](#)

What Did the Founding Fathers Think of Muslims?

The [Founding Fathers were not anti-Islam](#). Ted Widmer [reported](#) in the Boston Globe:

The Founders were way ahead of us. They thought hard about how to build a country of many different faiths. And to advance that vision to the fullest, **they read the Koran, and studied Islam with a calm intelligence that today's over-hyped Americans can only begin to imagine.** They knew something that we do not. To a remarkable degree, the Koran is not alien to American history — but inside it.

No book states the case more plainly than a single volume, tucked away deep within the citadel of Copley Square — the Boston Public Library. The book known as Adams 281.1 is **a copy of the Koran, from the personal collection of John Adams.**

They, like we, lived in a complicated and often hostile global environment, dominated by religious strife, terror, and the bloodsport of competing empires. Yet better than we, **they saw the world as it is, and refused the temptation to enlarge our enemies into Satanic monsters,** or simply pretend they didn't exist.

Why would John Adams and a cluster of farmers in the Connecticut valley have bought copies of the Koran in 1806? Surprisingly, there was a long tradition of New Englanders reading in the Islamic scripture.

This theory was eloquently expressed around the time the Constitution was written. One of its models was **the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution, which John Adams had helped to create,** and which, in the words of one of its drafters, Theophilus Parsons, **was designed to ensure “the most ample of liberty of conscience” for “Deists, Mahometans [i.e. Muslims] Jews and Christians.”**

As **the Founders** deliberated over what types of people would ultimately populate the strange new country they were creating, they **cited Muslims as an extreme of foreign-ness whom it would be important to protect in the future.** Perhaps, they daydreamed, a Muslim or a Catholic might even be president someday? Like everything, they debated it. Some disapproved, but **Richard Henry Lee insisted that “true freedom embraces the Mahometan and Gentoo [Hindu] as well as the Christian religion.” George Washington went out of his way to praise Muslims on several occasions, and suggested that he would welcome them at Mount Vernon if they were willing to work. Benjamin Franklin argued that Muslims should be able to preach to Christians if we insisted on the right to preach to them.** Near the end of his life, he impersonated a Muslim essayist, to mock American hypocrisy over slavery.

Thomas Jefferson, especially, had a familiarity with Islam that borders on the astonishing. Like Adams, he owned a Koran **Jefferson** even tried to learn Arabic, and **wrote his Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom to protect “the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and the Mahometan, the Hindoo and infidel of every denomination.”**

Lynn Parramore – founding editor of the economic blog New Deal 2.0 – [points out](#) that this American tolerance of Islam continued for hundreds of years:

Muslims have been in America for so long they could almost have formed a welcoming committee to the Daughters of the Revolution.

Consider this: Anthony “The Turk” Janszoon van Salee, son of the president of the Republic of Salé in Morocco, was **among the earliest and richest settlers of Manhattan island, a devout Muslim, and the ancestor of Cornelius Vanderbilt, the Whitneys, Humphrey Bogart, and, according to family lore, Jacqueline Bouvier** [i.e. Kenney]. **That’s right: the Lady of Camelot apparently had a mixed-race Muslim as an ancestor!** One of van Salee’s first properties was a farm in lower Manhattan acquired in 1638 located on the north side of the stockade along present-day Wall Street, just blocks from the Park Place Islamic center characterized by Geller as a foreign presence on sacred American soil. A defender of minorities, van Salee became **the first settler of Brooklyn. Coney Island, which abutted his property, was known as “Turk’s Island” until the 19th century.**

Followers of Muhammed were living here before the arrival of English in Spanish-controlled Florida and French Louisiana, where slaves were imported from the Senegambia region of Africa, home to a large Muslim population.

Influenced by the tolerance of the Enlightenment, America’s founders considered Islam’s place in the new republic despite widespread fear of Barbary pirates and a sense of European rivalry with the Ottoman Empire. As befitting a student of law in a religiously diverse land, Thomas Jefferson purchased a Quran to learn about the Islamic legal code – the same Quran that was used in the swearing in of Muslim Keith Ellison to the U.S. Congress. **In 1776, John Adams published “Thoughts on Government,” which praised the prophet Muhammad as a “sober inquirer after truth.” Ben Franklin set up a non-sectarian meeting house in Philadelphia, declaring in his autobiography that “even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mohammedanism to us, he would find a pulpit at his service.”**

Islam is inextricably woven into the fabric of American history, from the **distinctive service of Muslims in all American wars, including the Revolution....**

The real foreign presence is Islamophobia, which is **completely at odds with America’s founding principles.**

Is Iran a Warmonger?

- Iran has not started a war for at least [188 years](#) (in the Iran-Iraq war, *Iraq was the initial aggressor*)
- The [most violent Muslims are Sunnis](#). America [backs the Sunnis](#) in their fight against the *Shias*. Iran is a *Shia* country, and [89%](#) of Iranian people are Shia
- Iran is [fighting the worst terrorists](#) on the planet: ISIS, the brutal murderers who

have taken over large swaths of Iraq and Syria (admittedly, Iran backs Hamas and Hezbollah, which are Shia terrorist groups)

- The CIA [admits](#) that the U.S. overthrew the moderate, suit-and-tie-wearing, Democratically-elected prime minister of Iran in 1953. He was overthrown because he had [nationalized Iran's oil](#), which had previously been controlled by BP and other Western oil companies. As part of that action, the CIA [admits](#) that it hired Iranians to pose as Communists and stage bombings in Iran in order to turn the country against its prime minister
- If the U.S. *hadn't* overthrown the moderate Iranian government, the fundamentalist Mullahs would have never taken over. (Moreover, the U.S. has had a large hand in strengthening radical Islam in the Middle East by supporting radicals to [fight the Soviets](#) and [others](#))
- While Iran has some crazies, claims by those who want to attack Iran have [largely been debunked](#) (and the words of Iran's leaders have sometimes been [seriously twisted](#) in translation)

Isn't Iran On the Verge of Having the Bomb?

- The U.S. has been claiming [for more than 30 years](#) that Iran was on the verge of nuclear capability
- Contrary to widespread claims, there is [NO EVIDENCE](#) that Iran is building a nuclear weapon. Even Israel [Israel admits](#) that Iran has not decided to build a nuclear bomb. And the former [Israeli Nuke chief says](#) that Iran is 10 years away from having a nuclear bomb
- The top American defense officials say that - [despite its heated rhetoric - Iran is a "rational actor"](#)
- [Experts say](#) that Iran poses very little threat to the West or Israel . Top American and Israeli military and intelligence officials say that - even if Iran *did* build a nuclear bomb - [it would not be that dangerous](#), because Israel and America have so many more nukes. And [see this](#)
- Conversely, American military and intelligence chiefs say that attacking Iran would only [speed up its development of nuclear weapons](#), empower its hardliners, and undermine the chance for democratic reform

Who Started the Recent Confrontation with Iran?

- The U.S. [armed and supported Iraq after it invaded Iran](#) and engaged in a long, bloody war which included the use of chemical weapons. Here is former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld meeting with Saddam Hussein in the 1980's, several months after Saddam had used chemical weapons in a massacre:

- Pulitzer-prize winning investigative reporter Seymour Hersh says that the Bush administration (and especially Dick Cheney) helped to [fund terrorist groups within Iran](#) (see confirming articles [here](#) and [here](#))
- The [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#) and others are reporting, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, former national security adviser Fran Townsend and former Attorney General Michael Mukasey - who all said that the terrorists were going to get us if we didn't jettison the liberties granted under the Bill of Rights - are now supporting terrorists in Iran

Who's Pushing War?

- Americans are [overwhelmingly opposed to war against Iran](#)
- Yet war against Iran was planned by the powers-that-be [at least 20 years ago](#)
- The people pushing for war against Iran are the *same* neocons who pushed for war against Iraq based on false statements that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. See [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#)
- Some say that the war against Iran has already begun. See [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#)

What Would the Consequences Be If We Attack Iran?

- Well-known economist Nouriel Roubini says that [attacking Iran would lead to global recession](#). The IMF says that Iran cutting off oil supplies could [raise crude prices 30%](#). War with Iran would [kill the American economy](#). And see [this](#) and [this](#)
- China and Russia have warned that attacking Iran [could lead to World War III](#)

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