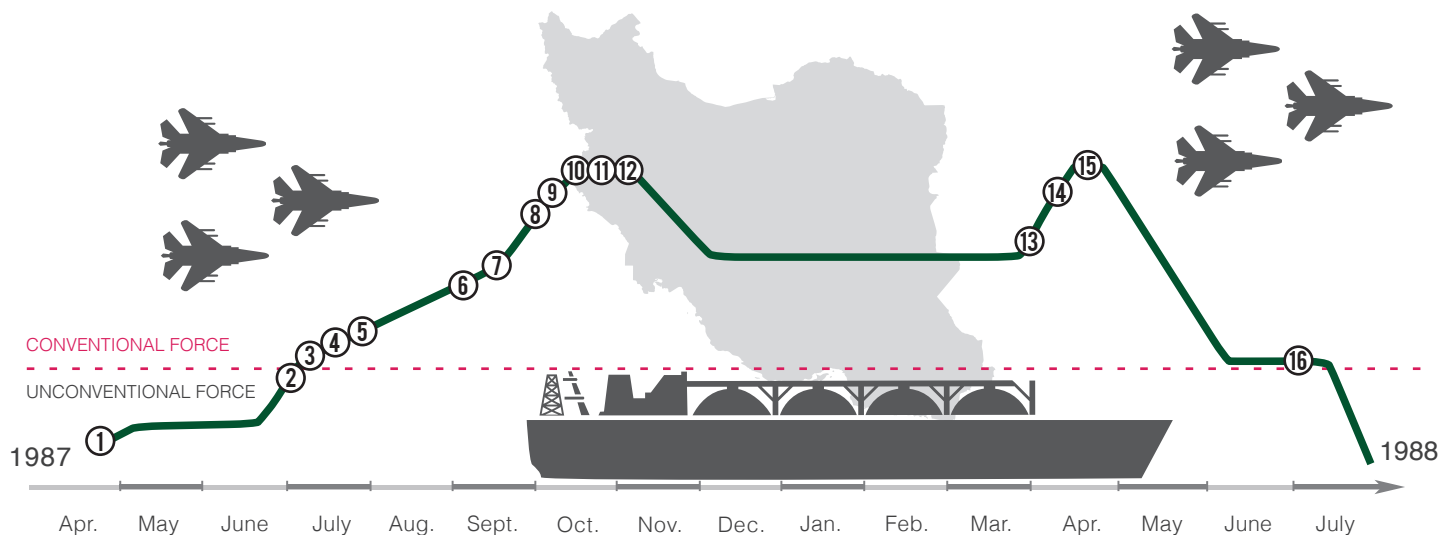


Conflict Escalation: US-Iran Tanker War, 1987-88



① APRIL 1987

First Iranian speedboat attack on tankers transiting the Persian Gulf.

② JULY 1987

The United States launches **Operation Earnest Will**; begins reflagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers.

③ JULY 1987

IRGC Commander Mohsen Rezaei argues for directly attacking US-flagged ships. Rafsanjani and Khomeini order a mining campaign instead.

④ JULY 1987

Acting independently, IRGC forces attack two Japanese tankers.

⑤ JULY 31, 1987

IRGC infiltrates the annual Hajj procession in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi response results in the deaths of 275 Iranian citizens.

⑥ SEPTEMBER 1987

First nighttime speedboat attacks on Kuwaiti tanker *Al-Funtas*.

⑦ SEPTEMBER 21, 1987

The United States spots the *Iran Ajr* laying mines in the Persian Gulf. US forces scuttle the minelayer.

⑧ OCTOBER 2, 1987

An Iranian naval force attempts an attack on Saudi and Kuwaiti oil platforms and Saudi desalinization facilities. US operations and inclement weather prevent the operation.

⑨ OCTOBER 8, 1987

Iran's second attempt at retaliation for the Hajj incident is intercepted by US operations and aborted.

⑩ OCTOBER 16, 1987

Kuwaiti oil tanker *Sea Isle City* is hit by a Silkworm missile fired by Iran from the Iranian-captured al-Faw peninsula in Iraq.

⑪ OCTOBER 19, 1987

The United States launches **Operation Nimble Archer**. US forces attack and destroy two Iranian oil platforms at Rostam in retaliation for the attack on the *Sea Isle City*.

⑫ OCTOBER 20, 1987

The United States launches a minesweeping campaign.

⑬ APRIL 1, 1988

Iran renews its mine-laying campaign.

⑭ APRIL 14, 1988

USS *Roberts* hits an Iranian mine in the Persian Gulf and is disabled. Ten US casualties.

⑮ APRIL 18, 1988

The United States launches **Operation Praying Mantis**. SEALs attack two Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf, Sirri and Sassan. Iran's counterattack results in a daylong firefight, which leaves half of Iran's fleet sunk or disabled.

⑯ JULY 3, 1988

USS *Vincennes* mistakes an Iranian commercial airliner for a military plane. US forces fire on Iran Air Flight 655, killing all 290 aboard.