



## **PCIA Advocacy Bulletin**

**News from Peace Corps Iran Association's Advocacy Committee  
Volume 1, Number 6  
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The Cyrus Cylinder استوانه کوروش or Cyrus Charter منشور کوروش was discovered under the foundation of a Babylonian palace in 1879, making it perhaps the oldest time capsule on record. It commemorates Cyrus' victory over Babylonia in 539 BC and sets out the rights of subjects in his expanding empire. It is often commemorated as the oldest charter of human rights in the world.



#### Note from the Editor:

This is the 6th edition of the PCIA Advocacy Bulletin. Earlier editions can be found on the [PCIA web site](#). The Advocacy Bulletin aspires to be monthly.

This edition is coming out on [Yalda](#), the ancient Persian commemoration of the longest night of the year. The ceremonies and traditions of gift-giving and generosity associated with Yalda give hope for new beginnings as the darkness shrinks and light fills ever longer days. Some argue that the [Three Wise Men were Zoroastrians](#) who were following in this tradition. An article in this issue lists four charities through which PCIA members can donate to the Kermanshah earthquake relief efforts. If you would like to work on this on behalf of PCIA with the licensed charities please contact [Advocacy@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:Advocacy@peacecorpsiran.org). May the spirit of Yalda be with us in the coming year.

The bulletin shares the advocacy views and activities of PCIA members, but its positions are those of the authors alone and not the PCIA Board or membership more broadly.

Members are encouraged to submit their views in the form of either articles or letters to the editor at: [AdvocacyBulletin@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:AdvocacyBulletin@peacecorpsiran.org). The Bulletin is opt-out. It will be sent to all PCIA members in our directory. If you wish to opt-out, please use the "unsubscribe" option at the end of the Bulletin. If you are not a member of PCIA, we encourage you to join. Membership is free. You can join by clicking [here](#).

Paul Barker, editor

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### **Urgency: Trump and Netanyahu Iran Policies Are Dangerous**

By Jeffrey Gritzner

Beyond normalization is the objective of preventing armed conflict – an eventuality that could rapidly extend beyond the borders of Iran and the Middle East. As you probably know, in the wake of 9/11, General Wesley Clark referred to a memorandum from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld stating that, “We’re going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.” Support for military engagement with Iran is widespread – as reflected in statements by Steve Bannon, Bill Bennett, John Bolton, Stephen Bryen, Dick Cheney, Hillary Clinton, Tom Cotton, Douglas Feith, Lindsey Graham, Rudy Giuliani, Jeane Kirkpatrick, William Kristol, Charles Krauthammer, Mathew Kroenig, Michael Ledeen, Joe Lieberman, John McCain, James Mattis, Benjamin Netanyahu, Richard Perle, Norman Podhoretz, Mitt Romney, Michael Rubin, the late Ariel Sharon, Paul Wolfowitz, and others. The list is bipartisan and is consistent with Pew Research Center data indicating that a majority of Americans support some form of military engagement with Iran - hence there is relatively little resistance to such action. The support variously reflects inadequate geographical, historical and cultural awareness; a lack of empathy; fear of terrorism and the unknown; a militaristic society; and indifference.

As noted in a June 2017 article by Dominic Tierney in *The Atlantic*, “The risks of Foreign Policy as Political Distraction,” “If you’re an embattled head of state, deflecting criticism through foreign adventure carries seductive appeal.” Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu are currently embattled, and it is feared that military engagement with Iran is high on their list of distracting foreign adventures. President Trump has been a target of criticism and ridicule at home and abroad, has surrounded himself with opponents of Iran, and attaches importance to the economic benefits of conflict. According to Judy Maltz in *Haaretz* (September 2017), Prime Minister Netanyahu is under investigation in the ThyssenKrup “Submarine Affair” (the purchase of German submarines unneeded by the Israeli navy); for bribery; for manipulating news – the “*Israel Hayom-Yedioth Ahronoth Affair*,” and for influence peddling in the “Bezeq Affair.” He has also been implicated in the receipt of \$111,850 in gifts and services by his wife Sara and son Yair, and thirteen of his chosen associates are under investigation.

“The New Middle East Project,” advanced chiefly by the United States and Israel, is unfamiliar to most Americans. Nevertheless, it is well known in policy circles in Canada, Europe, Russia, throughout the Middle East and China. Both Russia and China have already taken steps to prevent “Western creep” towards their territories – steps that have integrated Iran into their political calculus. Russia, for example, has attempted to offset the

superior air power of Israel and NATO by selling Iran air-defense missile systems, such as the S-300, Antey-2500, and perhaps the S-400 systems, as well as 100 I178 MK1 in-flight refueling planes. China has gone further. Iran has ordered 150 Chengdu J-10 multirole jet fighters (ironically, based on a design sold to China by Israel), and Iran and China have signed a twenty-five year strategic cooperation agreement that calls for much closer defense and use of Iranian air bases and naval facilities in the Persian Gulf; Chinese contributions to Iran's unmanned aerial vehicle industry and tactics such as "drone swarming" to add a needed dimension to asymmetrical warfare; and improvements in Iran's satellite navigation systems. The Chinese have also been asked to help overhaul and modernize Iran's submarine and surface fleets –with proposed Iranian purchases of frigates, submarines and missiles. The lines are drawn, with superpowers in both camps. Significantly perhaps, Meir Dagan, who led Mossad from 2002 to 2011, warned that an attack on Iran "would mean regional war, and in that case you would have given Iran the best possible reason to continue the nuclear program. The regional challenge that Israel would face would be impossible."

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### Javad Zarif OPED

Javad Zarif, the American Educated Foreign Minister of Iran, in a recent [New York Times OPED](#), discussed options for breakthroughs in various Middle Eastern hot spots if the good will and diplomatic channels opened by the JCPOA can be built upon rather than sabotaged.

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### JCPOA Advocacy with Congressman Don Beyer

by Brad Hanson

I met Dec 7 for half an hour with Congressman Don Beyer (D), representing the 8th CD in northern Virginia, to thank him for his strong support in 2015 for the JCPOA and to suggest five reasons meriting his continued strong support for the agreement and activism to persuade other representatives in the House not to pass new legislation which might violate or be perceived to be violating the JCPOA, leading to its unraveling. 1) The JCPOA is working and no reputable authority has suggested that Iran is not abiding by its side of the agreement. 2) If the US were to pull out of the agreement or violate the agreement with new legislation, the US would lose credibility throughout the world as a negotiator and implementer of agreements. 3) Withdrawing from or violating the nuclear agreement with Iran would greatly complicate if not completely torpedo diplomatic efforts to find a resolution of the North Korea nuclear crisis, pushing us closer to a catastrophic war. 4) Withdrawing or violating the agreement would drive yet another wedge between the US and our closest and strongest allies in Europe, who have made clear they will remain in the agreement, further isolating the US on the world stage and making even more difficult any possible multilateral effort with the Europeans to resolve diplomatically other issues with Iran. 5) Unilateral actions by the US violating the agreement would strengthen hardliners, opponents of the agreement inside Iran, who during the internal Iranian debate campaigned partly on the assertion that the US could not be trusted to implement the agreement. I also gave the Congressman a copy of the PCIA resolution which he read on the spot and praised.

Congressman Beyer, who served as US Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein, during part of the Obama Administration, agreed with these arguments, stating at one point once the US loses its credibility and the trust of other nations, it is very difficult to regain, diminishing the potential of diplomatic solutions. He shared that recently the Ambassadors of the UK, France, and Germany met with Democratic congressmen (and he assumed they

also had met with Republican congressmen also) and told them that their countries would remain in the agreement even if the US did not and they expected Iran would do so also, further isolating the US on the world scene. He also mentioned that retired Amb Tom Pickering has been active on the Hill advocating against actions which might lead to unraveling of the agreement. Congressman Beyer thought there was little sentiment for snapping back sanctions in Congress.

I brought to his attention two House bills making their way to a possible floor vote, HR 1638, "Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act," and HR 4324, "Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act." ([See NIAC's summary of the two bills](https://www.niacaction.org/memo-h-r-1638-and-h-r-4324/) <https://www.niacaction.org/memo-h-r-1638-and-h-r-4324/>). The former is almost identical to HR 5461, which President Obama threatened to veto, in the 114th Congress, and might threaten the JCPOA. The second seems aimed at scuttling the Boeing/Iran Air negotiation to sell the latter Boeing aircraft for commercial aviation use, one of the specific benefits spelled out in the JCPOA for Iranian compliance and which therefore seems a direct violation of the agreement. The Congressman asked his legislative assistant to track these bills.

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### **Trump Refuses to Certify Iranian Compliance with JCPOA; Congress (Thankfully) Does Nothing**

Notes from Conference Call with Kate Gould from FCNL

12 December 2017 was 60 days after President Trump refused to certify that Iran was in compliance with its responsibilities under the JCPOA, and the last day under which Congress could have re-imposed sanctions on Iran using a 51 vote threshold in the Senate. Congress decided not to reimpose these sanctions or to otherwise take action on the Iran deal, and so the ball is back in Trump's court and the JCPOA continues intact, but still in danger of sabotage from the Trump administration.

The next deadlines for JCPOA, and related advocacy efforts, are in mid-January 2018. By 15 January President Trump needs to waive Iran sanctions again. He will also need to make a decision on whether or not to certify Iranian Compliance with the nuclear agreement.

Kate suggests that the following suggestions and arguments could be posed to our Senators and Representatives:

- Congress needs to ensure that President can not unilaterally launch missiles as he did with Syria earlier this year.
- The State Department urgently needs to be strengthened, not gutted.
- We can not demand Iranian (or North Korean) capitulation before negotiations start. Negotiations are not a reward.
- With Iran we need a channel for de-escalation. This existed in the later years of the Obama administration when John Kerry and Javad Zarif were able to resolve a crisis over captured US Sailors in a matter of hours. No such channel now exists in the Trump administration.
- It has apparently been accepted by too many in Washington that there is no down side to demonizing Iran. But following the creation of the JCPOA there is a significant downside to recklessly vilifying Iran: The reputation and credibility of the USA is now at stake, credibility that will be needed to find a diplomatic resolution to the North Korea crisis.

- One could tell one's representatives, "If you are not trying to stop Trump from starting war, you might as well be voting for it."
- (As for North Korea, we have to confront and accept the reality that NK is a nuclear power. We don't have to like it, but we can not wish it away. Pakistan, India, Israel are examples of nuclear powers which are not signatories of the Non Proliferation Treaty. We have accepted the reality that they have become nuclear powers and will not be forced to give up that achievement. Deterrence did work with Soviet Union for decades.)
- Confidence building steps that should be pursued include:
  - Share information on military exercises
  - Hot lines between military and political leaders of countries in potential conflict.

You can go to [fcnl.org/iran](http://fcnl.org/iran) & [fcnl.org/northkorea](http://fcnl.org/northkorea) for more details on FCNL's advocacy positions.

A recording of the call can be found at: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/diplomacy-with-iran-and-north-korea-resources-1132>, and more information on North Korea is at: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/stop-a-nuclear-war-with-north-korea-1178>.

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### Kermanshah Earthquake Relief

On November 12 a magnitude 7.3 earthquake devastated cities and villages near Kermanshah. An estimated 630 people were killed, making this the most deadly earthquake in the world during 2017.

In the wake of the earthquake, a number of PCIA members have expressed interest in contributing to the relief and reconstruction effort. This is complicated by US government regulations which require the approval of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) for financial transfers to Iran. There are four OFAC-licensed Non-Profit Organizations working in Iran, through which it is legal for Americans to make donations.\*

The National Iranian-American Council offers [this guidance](#) for individuals wishing to contribute to the relief effort for the recent earthquake in Kurdistan.

<b>Charity</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Charity Navigator</b>	<b>Ways to Assist</b>
<b>Child Foundation (CF)**</b> <a href="http://www.childfoundation.org/">www.childfoundation.org/</a> Portland, OR	Earthquake Relief Refugee Services School Scholarships	Score 90.89 **** Form 990 Revenue: \$3,246,045	Sponsor a Child in Iran School Scholarships \$5k for a temporary classroom (conex)
<b>Children of Persia</b> <a href="http://www.childrenofpersia.org/">www.childrenofpersia.org/</a> Montgomery Village, MD	School construction Street and Working Children Education College scholarships	Not Rated (budget is under \$1M) \$159,361	Various gift categories \$25 for 2018 calendar Funds to partner with Iranian and British NGOs for long-term relief projects

	<b>Internships for US univ. students in Iran</b>		
<b>Moms Against Poverty</b> <a href="http://www.momsagainstpoverty.org/">www.momsagainstpoverty.org/</a> , Burlingame, CA	<b>Inter. Hunger Relief, Orphan Care and School construction</b>	<b>Not Rated Form 990 Revenue: \$782,267</b>	<b>Go to Benefit Concerts, United for Kermanshah</b>
<b>Relief International</b> <a href="http://www.ri.org">www.ri.org</a> Los Angeles, CA, Washington, DC, London	<b>Natural disasters Humanitarian emergencies Chronic poverty</b>	<b>Not Rated Form 990 Revenue: \$25,972,628</b>	<b>Donate to Iran Earthquake Relief</b>

\* Listed in National Iranian-American Council (NIAC)'s Newsletter of 11/13/17

\*\* Jackie Spurlock notes that Child Foundation supports PCIA's Sister-City work.

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### Diplomacy Works Weekly JCPOA Updates

Every Friday Diplomacy Works, a partner of PCIA on JCPOA work, sends a [weekly digest](#) (usually out on Fridays) summarizing key original articles in other reputable news media relating to the status of the JCPOA, particularly U.S. executive and legislative actions which might imperil the agreement. The DW digest also fact checks statements by Trump Administration officials and others related to the JCPOA.

This latest [DW Digest](#) leads with two key articles. The first appears in al-Monitor and its title says it all, "Europeans help sway Congress to punt on legislation that could kill Iran Deal.

The second is from The Financial Times and is entitled "Fate of Iran deal to land back in Trump's hands." It discusses the nexus between actions which might imperil the Iran agreement to diplomatic efforts to rein in North Korea's nuclear program. It also updates current news about the effort by Senators Cotton (R - AK) and Corker (R - TN) to amend the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act working with the Trump Administration, noting they had recently met with National Security Advisor General McMaster. Congress, having punted Dec 12 on imposing "snap-back sanctions" which only needed a simple majority vote after Trump decertified the Iran nuclear deal two months previous would need 60 votes in the Senate if the bill were filibustered to pass the legislation contemplated by Senators Cotton and Corker. Stay tuned.

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Nora Barker's [letter to the Editor of the Eugene Register Guard](#) was published on 19 December 2017. She questions the 'proof' behind the Trump administration's claim that Iran was behind a missile fired from Yemen targeting the Riyadh airport; points out that the US is also complicit in Yemen's suffering; and argues that this 'proof' must not be used as an excuse to sabotage the JCPOA.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*Peace Corps Iran Association advances peace and understanding between Americans and Iranians through education, outreach and advocacy, and upholds the legacy of the Peace Corps in Iran.*

### **ADVOCACY COMMITTEE PURPOSE STATEMENT**

*Peace Corps Iran Association advocates for peace and understanding through education, outreach, and cultural diplomacy.*

**PRINCIPLES:** The Board of Peace Corps Iran Association has adopted the following Guiding Principles for our advocacy efforts toward improving relationships between Iran and the United States, and their peoples.

1. Understanding and acceptance of other people and cultures are the building blocks of friendship, inclusiveness and world peace. As citizens of a world power, Americans bear a special responsibility.
2. Tolerance and mutual respect form the foundation for peaceful interactions between countries and their citizens.
3. Bringing countries and their citizens into the global community through cultural and economic ties reinforces international cooperation and reduces the likelihood of armed conflict.
4. Negotiation and diplomacy are essential to resolving international issues.
5. Force is rarely justified in dealing with conflicts. Peace is built and sustained through voluntary agreement and consent.

### **GROUND RULES:**

1. The Advocacy Bulletin is an opt-out email publication for PCIA members interested in this subject. It is a way to share ideas, information, and opportunities for action. The Bulletin is archived on the website.
2. Members are invited to share opinions and ideas. Opinions should be addressed to [AdvocacyBulletin@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:AdvocacyBulletin@peacecorpsiran.org) and the release question answered, "I consent/do not consent to the release of my writing beyond the Advocacy Bulletin distribution and PCIA archives." If consent is given, statements issued to the public will be identified as coming from the author, and not PCIA, the Advocacy Committee, or Board.
3. Opinions and ideas from members expressed in the Bulletin do not represent Board positions. However, members of the Advocacy Committee may present a position to the Board and request endorsement. Positions adopted by the Board to be posted in the Advocacy Bulletin will be identified as such.
4. The Advocacy Committee is encouraged to use the Principles to guide its activities.



5. Writers are encouraged to include action recommendations and reference information to help readers understand issues.

The opinions of the in this issue are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the board of PCIA. Contributions to the Advocacy Bulletin are most welcome and may be submitted to the editor at [AdvocacyBulletin@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:AdvocacyBulletin@peacecorpsiran.org)



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