



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.

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Urgent Advocacy Action Needed

By Paul Barker

Recently hopeful signs of restoring the historic nuclear nonproliferation agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) seem to have run into political roadblocks in Washington and Tehran. Two very concerning votes in the Senate on Wednesday ([Cruz motion](#)), and especially the [Lankford motion](#)) send very concerning signs on the weakness of congressional support for diplomacy. Neither the US nor Iran want to show weakness to their domestic political constituencies, and they have thus allowed elements of Donald Trump's 'maximum pressure' tactics to fester and poison the atmosphere where the words of compromise need to be found.

At this writing, the main obstacle preventing agreement is the Iranian demand that the US lift the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) that Trump had placed on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Lifting the designation would leave sanctions on many elements and persons associated with IRGC leadership, so the only real cost to the US is one of political optics.

In response to this situation, the PCIA Advocacy Committee drafted letters to President Biden and the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. These went out under the signature of Jeanette Gottlieb, PCIA president and the names of all thirteen PCIA board members. The two letters are below.

We urge our members to print out the two letters and send them with your cover note to the recipients, one to President Biden and the second one to your two Senators. Your cover note should stress your unique linkage to Iran and why the peaceful restoration of

the JCPOA is important to you. We encourage you to stress the cost of failure to restore the nuclear deal. If your senators voted for the Cruz and/or Lankford MTIs, request that they explain their votes and assure you that it does not necessarily reflect their position should a revitalized Iran nuclear deal come to the Senate for INARA review.

President Biden's address, of course, is *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20500*. Your Senators' contact information can be found by a simple google search of their name and the word 'contact', e.g. "Bob Menendez contact".

You can send emails directly to your senators and representatives through their official websites, but the email tools on these pages do not allow you to send attachments, like these letters. To get around this restriction you can write directly to their staff who deal with foreign affairs. You can find the names and email addresses of these Senate staff at the handy web tool developed by the Friends Committee on National Legislation:

<https://fcnl.quorum.us/staff/>.

Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee come from these states: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland (2), Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey (2), Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. If you live in one of these states, please send them a copy of the PCIA letter to the SFRC, with your own cover letter explaining your relationship to PCIA and why this is a priority to you.

Members from other states are also encouraged to write to their senators and urge that when a revived JCPOA (*en sha' Allah*) comes before the Senate for their review under INARA, you strongly want them to support the agreement. The costs of failure are just far too high.

Additionally, if one or both of your Senators voted in favor of the Cruz and [Lankford MTIs](#), you could send them a message along these lines:

I was deeply saddened that you decided to vote in support of both Senator Cruz and Senator Lankford's MTIs associated with [H.R. 4521](#) (United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021).

I would very much like to understand the reasoning behind your votes. While restoring the JCPOA will now be significantly more problematic, I hope that you will be able to offer assurances that you are still supportive of the Biden administration's diplomatic efforts to revive the historic nuclear nonproliferation agreement. The stronger and more public such a statement of support for diplomacy can be, the better I will feel about the situation.



3 May 2022

Joseph R. Biden

President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania, Ave.
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

Re: Urgency of Restoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

We urge you to overcome the last obstacles to rejoining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). As returned Peace Corps Volunteers from Iran, many of whom have had post-Peace Corps engagements with Iran, we follow closely US relations with Iran, whose people, culture, and language we got to know well through our Peace Corps experiences and friendships with Iranians.

Negotiating, signing, and implementing the JCPOA was the crowning foreign policy achievement of the Obama/Biden Administration. Under the most comprehensive arms control and non-proliferation agreement ever, Iran was implementing its provisions to the letter, as verified by the most intrusive inspection and verification regime ever by the International Atomic Energy Agency and by our own intelligence services.

Then President Trump withdrew the US from the agreement in 2018, reimposed US sanctions that had been lifted, and imposed additional sanctions. His “maximum pressure” campaign was a colossal failure. Not only did Iran not succumb to his administration’s many demands, but it also gradually started to violate the JCPOA by enriching uranium to higher and higher percentages, putting into operation thousands of additional centrifuges, and restricting IAEA access to its nuclear facilities. In short, Iran is closer to producing the nuclear material for a bomb than ever before, at the same time as its regional activities considered hostile by many of its neighbors have not stopped.

The JCPOA worked and can work again to cut off all avenues to an Iranian nuclear weapon. A revitalized JCPOA with both the US and Iran in full compliance can reverse Iranian actions. But only if you and your Administration have the courage to make the final effort to reach agreement with Iran.

Press reports suggest that the one remaining obstacle is removing the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), an action cynically taken by the Trump administration specifically to make more difficult, if not impossible, return of the US to the agreement. No one should defend the IRGC. Removing the FTO designation would have little practical effect as many of its leaders and parts of its organization would still be sanctioned under other US sanctions. As tortuous and frustrating the many months of indirect negotiations with Iran must have been, surely you and your negotiators can find a way to overcome this last obstacle to final agreement.

If the JCPOA is not revitalized, we fear the only alternative will be military conflict with Iran, tremendously costly in lives and treasure to all sides, or Iran achieving a nuclear bomb and triggering a dangerous nuclear arms race in the Middle East. The costs of failure to restore safeguards on Iran's nuclear program through a revitalized JCPOA greatly outweigh any feared domestic political costs which might arise by finding the words to get past the IRGC FTO hurdle.

Please, Mr. President, do the right thing and get the deal done again. Opinion polls show most Americans want it. There is substantial support in Congress for it. Our allies and foreign leaders will applaud it. A revitalized JCPOA might in due time lead to more diplomatic efforts with Iran to address other contentious issues. The region and the world will be a much safer place. A revitalized JCPOA can also become one of your crowning foreign policy achievements.

Respectfully,

Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA) Board,



Jeanette Gottlieb

Albany, New York

PCV in Noshahr and Hamadan, Iran 1965-67

President, Peace Corps Iran Association

Marie Mitchell

Tempe, Arizona

PCV in Mahalat, Iran 1974-75

Paul Barker

Junction City, Oregon

PCV in Bidokht, Shiraz and Tehran, Iran 1971-76

John Salamack

Albuquerque, New Mexico

PCV in Bojnurd, Iran 1965-67

Joe Mangi

Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin

PCV in Malayer Iran 1966-68

Fraser Lang

Providence, Rhode Island

PCV in Isfahan and Tehran, Iran 1968-70

Brad Hanson

Falls Church Virginia

PCV in Khaf and Shiraz, Iran 1973-76

Ed Seiders

Tulsa, Oklahoma

PCV in Noshahr and Chalus, Iran 1967-69

John Krauskopf

San Francisco, California

PCV in Ahwaz, Kermanshah, Arak, and Babolsar, Iran 1965-69

William Brandon

Charlotte, North Carolina

PCV in Shiraz, Iran 1964-66

Kerry Segel

Saginaw, Michigan

PCV in PCV in Khonsar and Isfahan, Iran 1969-73

Doug Schermer

Scottsdale, Arizona

PCV in Semnan and Shahrud, Iran 1966-67

Jackie Spurlock

Portland, Oregon

PCV in Abadeh and Riz/Zarinshahr, Iran 1974-76

CC: Vice President Kamala Harris
Secretary of State Antony Blinken
National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan
White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain
Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations
Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield



3 May 2022

Members of the Foreign Relations Committee

United States Senate

Washington, DC

RE: Why the US needs to rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as soon as possible

We are writing as former Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Iran between 1962 and 1976. Some of us worked in Iran for additional years following our Peace Corps service; many of us have maintained friendships and have traveled back to Iran over the ensuing decades, even as recently as 2019. This experience has given us a perspective on Iran that is at odds with a one-dimensional image of Iran as the uniquely bad actor in the Middle East. We believe that even-handed diplomacy, focused first on restoring the JCPOA, will benefit the US, as well as Iran and the Middle East region. We are writing to urge that domestic politics in the United States not be allowed to become the stumbling block for restoring the JCPOA to health and containing Iran's nuclear program.

National Security and avoidance of war is of supreme importance to all of us - particularly now when the war in Ukraine is raging, human rights are being trampled, and thousands of innocent civilians are being killed. Your committee must use its authority to support the diplomatic process to restore all JCPOA constraints on Iran. The dire alternative is an unmonitored and unlimited Iranian nuclear program, an emboldened IRGC, and a far more volatile and dangerous regional situation.

Please step back from the domestic partisan and short-sighted views that have blocked US reentry into the JCPOA and prioritize the long-term view of how the US can succeed in today's complex world.

US Foreign Policy must serve the interest of the American people in building a world in which we support freedom, equity and justice for all.

We need to be clear about what the JCPOA is and is not:

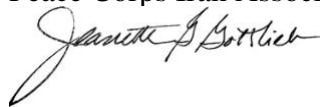
- The JCPOA was always understood to be a starting point for diplomatic and economic engagement, not the solution to all problems involving Iran.
- The JCPOA could not have achieved consensus among the P5+1 members if it had expanded beyond a narrow focus on nuclear issues to also address Iran's regional behavior, human rights abuses or other issues.
- International inspectors confirm that the JCPOA is an airtight agreement with extremely rigorous inspections and unprecedented verification tools.

- Hoping that the US would return to JCPOA membership and compliance, Iran complied with all of its obligations under the JCPOA for a full year after the US unilaterally withdrew.
- It is now four long years since the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, and President Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign has utterly failed to change Iran's policies; rather Iran has gained valuable nuclear scientific knowledge and greatly increased its stockpile of enriched uranium.
- Opponents of the JCPOA have offered no viable policy to better achieve our nonproliferation goals.
- US credibility was greatly damaged by our unilateral withdrawal. Rejoining the JCPOA is vitally important to restoring US trustworthiness in international diplomacy.

We urge you to support our country's return to membership in and full compliance with its obligations under the JCPOA. This should be immediately followed by renewed diplomacy on other outstanding issues and promotion of people-to-people exchanges that will strengthen and reaffirm longstanding positive ties between the Iranian and American people. Our members who have traveled to and throughout Iran in recent years confirm that in spite of everything, the American people are viewed favorably and welcomed warmly throughout Iran. There remains a solid foundation upon which we can build new bridges.

Respectfully,

Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA) Board,



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John Krauskopf

San Francisco, California

PCV in Ahwaz, Kermanshah, Arak, and Babolsar, Iran 1965-69

JCPOA Deliberations

[Congress fires its first warning shot on Biden's Iran deal](#), Andrew Desiderio, 2022/5/5

A bipartisan majority delivered the White House a symbolic message that any new nuclear deal better be stronger than the 2015 agreement.

[NIAC Statement on Lankord Anti Diplomacy Motion](#), NIAC, 2022/5/5

"This was a non-binding vote, but it should be a wake-up call for the Biden administration that the deal won't save itself. If President Biden wants to save the agreement, roll back Iran's nuclear program and prevent a war, then he has to fight for it. Regrettably, we have not seen that fight from the President. Instead, he has let the agreement twist in the wind for opponents in Washington and Tehran to mobilize against. That is a recipe for failure. Unless and until he steps up, he is on the same disastrous course that Trump set, and he is likely to pay the disastrous consequences if he allows the diplomatic window to close on his watch."

[To Check Iran's Missiles, JCPOA Re-Entry is a Must](#), John Krzyzaniak and Akshai Vikram, 2022/5/2

[The Iran Nuclear Deal Is In Limbo](#), Barbara Slavin and Reza Jahangir, 2022/4/28

Why is diplomacy losing momentum?

So the argument in Iran goes: Is it worth reducing our nuclear leverage for economic gains that will be ephemeral? Especially when we have gotten used to "[maximum pressure](#)" and managed to get around sanctions by [increasing its oil imports to China](#) and [all manner of goods to our neighbors](#)? Of course, inaction is not without risks. As Kelsey Davenport of the Arms Control Association [pointed out recently](#) in a Twitter thread, "Limbo is not sustainable — I would flag two risks that are increasing the longer Biden waits: 1) Iran crosses nuclear threshold that poses an intolerable risk to the US & 2) Iran's research activities significantly reduce the nonproliferation value of the accord."

[Europe to Make Fresh Push to Revive Iran Nuclear Deal by Offering to Send Top Negotiator Back to Tehran](#), Laurence Norman, 2022/5/1

Talks have hit a deadlock over Iran's demand that Washington lift terror designation on Iran's Revolutionary Guards

[Iran nuclear talks freeze amid terrorist label spat — even with deal on the table](#), Stephanie Liechtenstein, Nahal Toosi, 2022/4/28

[European officials: Stop dawdling and pass the JCPOA already](#), Jim Lobe, 2022/4/27

Absent renewal, the two parties risk 'entering into a state of corrosive stalemate' and a potential crisis in the Middle East.

More than 40 former top European officials, including former foreign and defense ministers from more than half a dozen countries, have called for the United States and Iran to quickly conclude their year-long negotiations to return to full compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

In an [open letter](#) released by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, the former officials warned that, absent a renewed accord, the two parties risk "enter[ing] a state of corrosive stalemate, serving neither side's interests, that risks devolving into a cycle of increased nuclear tension, inevitably countered by the further application of coercive tools."

[Statement in Support of Restoring Compliance with the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal](#), 40 Nonproliferation Specialists, April 2022

[Why I Signed the Statement in Support of Restoring Compliance with the JCPOA](#), Kelsey Davenport, 2022/4/27

[Pentagon opposed de-listing Iran Guards if no reciprocal Iranian concession](#), Laura Rozen, 2022/4/15

In U.S. inter-agency debate, 'those against the delisting were DoD and, ultimately, the White House,' senior U.S. official said. 'Israel was not a key factor.'

Statements by Elected Officials

[Marshall Bill Would Give Congress a Say in President Biden Removing Terrorist Designation for Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps](#), Doc Marshall, 2022/3/17

[Merkley and Markey Support Biden JCPOA Diplomacy](#), Senators Merkley and Markey

FTO Designation

[Open Letter to the U.S. and Iranian Leadership about the Iran Nuclear Deal](#), 2022/4/26

This open letter has been signed by members of the European Leadership Network, Board members of the International Crisis Group and Council members from the European Council on Foreign Relations.

[Blinken Statement on FTO Designation Issues](#), 2022/4/26

[With disclosure of Mossad interrogation in Iran, Israel kills two birds with one stone](#), Jonathan Lis, 2022/5/1

Israel could have kept the details of the operation under wraps and discreetly informed the American government of the Revolutionary Guards' involvement in the assassination attempt

NIAC Advocacy Event

[Deal or Deadlock: Why Are the Iran Nuclear Talks Stuck?](#) NIAC, 2022/5/10

Negotiations toward a restoration of the Iran nuclear deal are deadlocked. The text of a deal is nearly finalized but the U.S. and Iran are stuck on a Trump-era poison pill designed to frustrate the Biden administration.

Is a compromise possible on what may be the final hurdle to the nuclear talks? Are the midterm elections impacting the Biden administration's calculations on the negotiations? What risks are there to being stuck with Trump's sanctions policies?

Tuesday, May 10th at 10:00 AM Eastern, featuring:

Jamal Abdi, President, National Iranian American Council (moderator)

Kelsey Davenport, Director of Nonproliferation Policy, Arms Control Association

Ellie Geranmayeh, Deputy Director, Middle East and North Africa programme and Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations

George Lopez, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C, Professor Emeritus of Peace Studies at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame.

Region

[As Iran-Taliban tensions rise, Afghan migrants in tinderbox](#), Mehdi Fattahi, Isabel Debre, 2022/5/2

[Oman revs up regional mediation with Houthi prisoner release](#), Iran-Saudi talks, Amwaj Media, 2022/4/26

Sanctions

[Should Sanctioning Countries Be Blamed for Causing Human Suffering?](#) Assal Rad, 2022/4/28

If states are responsible for the consequences of war, then we are also responsible for the consequences of economic warfare.

[As Screws Tighten On Russia, A Warning About Civilian Harm Of Sanctions](#), Murtaza Hussain, 2022/4/28

From Yemen to Cuba, sanctions have destroyed the lives of ordinary people as punishment for decisions made by their authoritarian rulers.

Iran Military Spending

[SIPRI Has Overstated Iran's Military Spending For Years](#), Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, 2022/5/5

Human Rights

[Iran says Swedish citizen to be executed as Stockholm court tries Iranian ex-official](#), Amwaj, 2022/5/3

History

[Why the US and Iran hate each other](#), Daniel Larison, 2022/5/2

A new book, "[Republics of Myth: National Narratives and the U.S.-Iran Conflict](#)" dives into the origins of animosity between Washington and Tehran and offers ideas on how to work toward normalizing relations.

ADVOCACY 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. PCIA members are invited to share articles for publication. The editor decides which articles are selected for publication. Some pieces, particularly when not aligned with PCIA's Mission, Values, and Guiding Principles, or which do not relate to the current state of Iran advocacy issues, may be posted in PCIA's Facebook group.
3. Articles should be addressed to 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.
4. Writers are encouraged to include action recommendations and reference information to help readers understand issues.
5. The Advocacy Bulletin is not an academic journal, but it does aspire to be fact-based. Whenever possible citations and links to web-based articles should be included in the articles.
6. 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.

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 Advocate@peacecorpsiran.org

Donations to PCIA Welcome

In order to support the advocacy and other work of the Peace Corps Iran Association, please consider [making a donation](#).