



The Cyrus Cylinder منشور کوروش or Cyrus Charter استوانه 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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Note from the Editor

Time for Some Good-Will

By Paul Barker

“Negotiating, talking, and engaging the enemy at some points do not mean surrendering to them.” [The statement](#) is true, be the author American, Russian or Iranian. In this instance it is noteworthy that it was made by Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei. It can be a sign of modest optimism for the success of the 8th round of talks to restore the JCPOA, now ongoing in Vienna.

The US team hints that its deadline has now slipped to mid-February, by which time it may feel compelled to declare that restoration of the 2015 JCPOA is no longer viable. If that decision is made, the remaining options to the the Biden team are not good. Sanctions have been ineffective in positively influencing Iranian behavior in the past, and they are increasingly circumvented by China and other countries. Military action at any scale risks setting off a major regional conflict. Restarting diplomacy from scratch would seem even more difficult than pursuing the ongoing talks. Accepting that the

world needs to live with a nuclear-threshold Iran and pursue a cold-war-like policy of deterrence is similarly unattractive.

PCIA members Jeff and Yvonne Gritzner have initiated, with PCIA support, a petition through Move-On.org which calls on the Biden administration to be brave enough to make a concrete good-will gesture which would demonstrate their commitment to a better relationship with Iran. We encourage you to sign and share it.

Increasing numbers of past and present Israeli security officials as well as neighboring Arab states acknowledge that it was a huge error for the US to abandon the JCPOA. Energy freed up by restoring the agreement could be better invested in addressing remaining regional conflicts, investing energy and expertise in addressing regional drought, climate change, and so many other things which demand urgent attention.

Move ON Petition: [“First Step with Iran: a U.S good faith gesture”](#) Initiated by Jeffrey Gritzner (Ahwaz 1962-64) and Yvonne Gritzner

The only thing that has ever contained and rolled-back Iran's nuclear program is diplomacy. This was formalized in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of action, AKA the Iran Nuclear Deal, the most comprehensive nuclear non-proliferation agreement ever negotiated. The agreement was foolishly undermined by the Trump administration and President Biden has inexplicably thus far kept all of Trump's 'maximum pressure' tactics in place. It would be useful for the Biden team to demonstrate that it is substantively different from Trump's failed foreign policy team. A good-faith gesture could do a lot to restore the JCPOA and roll back much of Iran's recent nuclear progress.

Use the [link](#) to sign a petition urging President Biden to restore U.S. credibility and keep a key campaign promise.

Diplomatic Options: Optimism? Containment?

[Signs of Progress in Iran Nuclear Negotiations?](#) NIAC, 2022/1/19

[Iran Talks Enter Critical Phase](#), Julia Masterson, Arms Control Association, 2022/1/19

[Signs of progress in Iran Nuclear Negotiations?](#) NIAC, 2022/1/19

[Russia proposed interim nuclear deal to Iran, with U.S. knowledge, sources say](#), Carol E. Lee, Courtney Kube and Dan De Luce, 2022/1/21
Iran says it is not interested in an interim deal. Experts say Iran is close to having enough fissile material for a bomb.

[Iran's Nuclear Challenge and the Military Option: Nonproliferation Precedents and the Case for Containment](#), Robert Litwak, 2022/1/19

[The Iran Nuclear Deal at Six: Now or Never](#), International Crisis Group, 2022/1/17

[Twitter summary of key findings](#), Ali Vaez, 2022/1/17

[America Has No Good Options on Iran](#), Mathew Bunn, 2022/1/17
But Reviving the Nuclear Deal Is the Least Bad

[Trading Threats, the U.S. and Iran Inch Closer to a Nuclear Pact](#), Farnaz Fassihi and Lara Jakes, 2022/1/12

Neither side wants to betray weakness by seeming too eager to reach a deal.

[There's talk of a military option against Iran. Here's why it's unlikely](#), Abbas Qaidari, 2022/1/4

[The Case for Optimism on Iran in 2022 and Beyond](#), Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, 2022/1/2

[Who's on Iran's current nuclear negotiating team? Some have controversial pasts](#), Mehrzad Boroujerdi, 2022/1/11

[Diplomacy, Not War, With Iran](#), Jeremy Ben-Ami, 2022/1/14

Opponents of the nuclear deal have some explaining to do.

[Iran's Priorities in Nuclear Talks](#), Nasser Hadian, 2022/1/3

Including suggestions to break the stalemate.

[Should Iran build a nuclear bomb?](#) Trita Parsi, Hamze Ghalebi, Fereshte Sadeghi, 2022/1/3

Perspectives have sharply hardened in Iran due to the bitter experience of the past 5 years.

[A Redline for Iran?](#) Eric Brewer and Nicholas L. Miller, 2021/12/23

America Must Decide Which Nuclear Steps Merit a Military Response

[Iran atomic chief claims country won't enrich uranium over 60% if nuclear talks fail](#), Times of Israel, 2021/12/25

Trita Parsi interpretation: If this is true, it is compatible with the [coma scenario I laid out in my piece for MSNBC](#): The JCPOA dies while all sides pretend it is resurrectable and a now, fragile status quo emerges where Iran slows down its nuclear advancements, the US keeps sanctions in place but is more bark than bite when it comes to implementation and the Israelis continue their sabotage but with less eye-catching attacks and take comfort in the fact that the US hasn't lifted sanctions and US-Iran relations remain tense. Neither side takes any particularly aggressive measures since that would unravel the status quo. This situation is then kept till one side believes talks are once again advantageous.

In this scenario, the Iranians may be calculating that it's not worth making a deal with Biden since it will be ripped up by the next GOP president anyways (and the Biden team insists there's nothing they can do about that) and as a result, it's better to keep their "leverage" to either negotiate with President Trump/Cruz/Cotton or to use it as a deterrence against a US attack by the GOP President.

[The Looming Threat of a Nuclear Crisis with Iran](#), Robin Wright, 2021/12/27

The Biden Administration faces a potential confrontation with a longtime rival that is better armed and more hardline than at any time in its modern history.

[Many Americans Want Talks With Iran, Even if a Deal Won't Stop the Bomb](#), Mathew Kendrick, 2022/1/10

[Iran Caved-in to the West in Nuclear Talks, or the Other Way Around?](#) Zvi Bar'el, 2022/1/10

[How Close Is Iran to Getting a Nuclear Weapon?](#) Colum Lynch, 2022/1/10

Tehran's nuclear breakout time and other technological hurdles, explained.

[Backgrounder: "Breakout Time", Arms Control Association, 2022/1/19](#)

The Wall Street Journal **[reported](#)** the U.S. is exploring ideas to satisfy Iran's demand that the U.S. guarantee it will stick to the deal. 2022/1/17

Sanctions Problems

[Dismantling the 'sanctions wall' myth, Shervin Ghaffari, 2021/2/12](#)

During the Trump era, Iran hawks employed a semantics game to prevent any future administration from reentering the nuclear deal.

[The Hidden Toll of Sanctions, Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj and Erica Moret, 2022/1/22](#)

Why Washington Must Reckon with the Devastating Inflation Its Policies Cause

[Humanitarian Exemptions to Crushing US Sanctions Do Little to Prevent Collapse of Afghanistan's Economy, Lee Fang, 2021/12/28](#)

More Afghan people may die from sanctions than from 20 years of war.

Contractors and businesses. . . can expect banks to "de-risk from Afghanistan," meaning that fund transfers to or from Afghanistan "will be intercepted by intermediary banks and blocked until the contractor or grantee can demonstrate that the specific transfer to and the use of funds in Afghanistan will comply with U.S. sanctions."

[One Year in, Biden's Nuclear Policies Look a Lot Like Trump's, Jon Letman, 2021/12/31](#)

[China-Iran Trade Report, Bourse & Bazaar, December 2021](#)

December was the best month for China-Iran trade in over two years. Total trade exceeded \$1.65 billion. Customs data includes Iran oil imports for the first time since December 2020.

[U.S. Grants Sanctions Bypass, Arms Control Association, 2022/1/19](#)

Israel-Iran

[Former Israeli General: We Can't Knock Out Iran's Nuclear Program, Richard Silverstein, 2021/12/20](#)

Former Foreign Minister: Israel Must Get Used to a Nuclear Iran.

Iron Dome has afforded protection. But after an Israeli attack on Iran, Iron Dome will not be able to handle the tens, or hundreds of thousands of rockets aimed at Israeli targets and fired by Hezbollah in the north, Hamas in the south, and Iran from the east.

[This Is What Would Happen if Israel Strikes Iran, Chuck Freilich, 2021/12/28](#)

Since the fading of an imminent nuclear deal, there's been plenty of ink spilt opining, wrongly, that Israel has no military option. If Israel finds itself facing Iran alone, it will strike – and this is how Tehran's retaliation will play out.

[IRGC Tests Ballistic Missiles, Drones in War Game, USIP, 2022/12/28](#)

Iran tested a wide variety of weapons, including ballistic missiles, drones and tanks, during a war game between December 20 and 24. The Great Prophet 17 exercise was held along the Persian Gulf coast in the southern provinces of Bushehr, Hormozgan and Khuzestan. During

the exercise, the Revolutionary Guards simultaneously launched 16 ballistic missiles at a model of Israel's Dimona nuclear facility.

[Attacks on U.S. Bases Amid Anniversary of Soleimani Assassination](#), NIAC

[He led IDF intel gathering on Iran, was ignored and fears Israel is now paying the price](#), Jacob Magid. 2021/11/30

[I once headed the Iran branch of Israel's military intelligence research. Here's why Israel can't take out Iran's nuclear program](#), Danny Citrinowicz, 2021/12/20

Regional Realignments

[The Middle East Seeks Alternatives as the U.S. Leaves and Iran Returns](#), Zvi Bar'el, 2021/12/31

In the new year, local alliances will replace international coalitions. The process dividing the region into American- and Russian-led blocs is falling apart

[Iran Navy Port Emerges as Key to Alleged Weapons Smuggling to Yemen, U.N. Report Says](#), Benoit Faucon, Dion Nissenbaum, 2022/1/9

Thousands of weapons seized by the U.S. along supply routes for Yemen's Houthis likely originated from Jask in Iran's southeast, according to a draft report

[What is Iran's Revolutionary Guard doing in Myanmar?](#) David Hutt, 2022/1/20

Diplomats suspect sanctioned Iranian airline's recent landings in Myanmar may have delivered weapons including guided missiles

[Biden's Yemen About-Face](#), Robbie Gramer, 2022/1/20

[Aid agencies sound alarm as US considers relisting Houthis as terror group](#), Elizabeth Hagedorn, 2021/1/20

The US State Department says it would have to "fully consider the humanitarian implications" of the Houthis' redesignation as a terrorist group.

Iran's Water Crisis **By Carolyn Yale, Shiraz 1974-76**

As Iran's deep and prolonged water shortages continue, public protests are calling attention to the country's water crisis. Farmers are especially hard-hit due to lack of rainfall and cuts in their water supply allocations. Although "drought" may suggest a "dry spell" deviating from the normal conditions of higher rainfall, the fact is that Iran is facing a long-term imbalance between available water and the needs of cities, industries, agriculture, and the environment. This crisis has been building for years—resulting from poor management, and poor planning and foresight in dealing with capricious precipitation. The effects can be severe: Some, such as desertification, land subsidence, environmental losses are virtually irreversible.

A glimpse into causes and effects

In principle, water is a public resource in Iran, managed through the Ministry of Energy, which is responsible for infrastructure such as dams and canals, and through the Deputyship of Water Affairs overseeing the planning, development, management, and conservation of

water resources. These functions have often been guided by politics rather than technical and scientific expertise. Over the past two decades the push for economic growth and jobs prompted a proliferation of new dams and canals without sufficient consideration of impacts and sustainability.

Farmers' protests over shortages in late 2021 stretched across the Zagros from Esfahan province to Khuzestan, a region laced with rivers and productive agriculture. Through Khuzestan flows the Karun, Iran's largest river. The two regions are linked by an interbasin transfer from the Karun River to the Zayandeh Rud basin. Interbasin transfers are not uncommon (think of the movie Chinatown, or any number of federal projects in the western US) but they are rightly criticized as a non-solution to water shortages; if anything, the additional water on the Esfahan side contributed to unsustainable growth in the Esfahan region.

The wisdom of promoting agriculture and intensifying water use in the arid central plateau has also been amply criticized. Although the plateau has a long history of human occupation, the environmental conditions are challenging: Not only is the region hot and dry, but its streams and rivers are 'influent', forming the huge salt laden pans such as the Dasht-e-Lut. Maintaining agriculture (and dairy) in this region is not only a matter of water supply but irrigation techniques, management of drainage, and education and assistance to farmers.

Groundwater makes up roughly 60% of Iran's water supply, although nationalized and regulated by law, in practice regulating groundwater withdrawals has proved difficult. Year by year the extent of groundwater overdraft is expanding, largely the result of agricultural pumping. The advent of powered pumps changed the manner and degree of groundwater withdrawals, both in terms of technology and management. Unlike *qanats*, which require collaborative effort, pumps make it possible for a single water user to extract water at increasing depth. One of the effects of overdraft can be compression of an aquifer when it is dewatered. The result is ground subsidence, which is taking place in both cities and agricultural areas. In 2021 Iran's natural disaster task force stated that 20 million urban residents, many of them in Tehran, face ground subsidence. Subsidence damages roads, undermines buildings, distorts canals that rely on gravity flow. Often the damage to an aquifer's storage capacity is irreversible.

Water quality is also a factor in calculating supply. Salts and trace elements in soil that is mobilized by irrigation, industrial contaminants, fertilizers, and urban wastewater have contributed to loss of usable water supply. Salinity in groundwater due to saline soils, saltwater intrusion or proximity to concentrated salt deposits (notably on the central plateau) can render water unusable for drinking and agriculture use—or at least limit the choice of crops. Preserving water quality can be a way of expanding supply by facilitating reuse. It is essential in supporting a healthy natural ecosystem.

The challenges: today and future

It is impossible to avoid the evidence of a water crisis that has been called "Iran's bankruptcy". The bankruptcy comes to large extent from the choices that Iran's leaders

have made: Infrastructure and development at unsustainable scales, an expansion of farm acreage rather than equipping farmers with the skills to farm efficiently, and with few exceptions a willingness to sacrifice the natural environment. Some of the pressures, such as groundwater overdraft, will be particularly hard to correct. It is not clear how Iran will manage to avoid further crisis in the future, especially in the face of climate change. For Iran climate change means rising temperatures, higher evaporation, greater swings in hydrology (drought and flood), loss of snowpack storage, and reduction in areas that are suitable for farming and habitation.

There has always been variability in the timing and amount water, both seasonally and annually. Iran has tried to use groundwater and reservoirs to mediate between variable hydrology and uses but this is inadequate for the future. Water demands from growing cities and industry have eaten into the supplies for an inefficient, subsidized agricultural sector. There clearly needs to be much greater emphasis on efficient water use—not simply on-farm practices and low flush toilets, but new technologies and public willingness to implement them. Iran does not lack technical and scientific expertise in water management. It needs to make use of this expertise, even (or especially) in the face of political pressures.

I have no doubt that US sanctions impede imports of equipment that could improve efficiency of water use and sustainability of supplies. But that's not the real issue. The issues are Iran's and solutions are matters of individual and collective concern. What we in the US, in PCIA, could support is a free discourse of experts between our countries. In the past many Iranian agricultural engineers were trained and worked in the United States. There is still much to share.

Environment

[Iran's "Water Bankruptcy"](#), Kaveh Madani, 2021/21/5

[Drought in Iran Could Force It to Reach a Nuclear Deal](#), David Rosenberg, 2021/12/28

Climate change is slamming Iran especially hard, but to do anything about it, Tehran needs the sanctions to cease

[Poverty, displacement and 300 storms: How 'climate violence' threatens Iraq](#), Safaa Khalaf, 2021/12/29

Connect with RPCVs for Environmental Action

Join. RPCV4EA is an NPCA affiliate group. We create a community of concern and action for the climate and sustainable practices locally and globally. [Join RPCV4EA](#), like us on [Facebook](#), and our new [LinkedIn page](#)!

Collaborate. RPCV4EA collaborates with organizations and individuals to reach new audiences and promote our mutual message of environmental justice. We believe we are stronger together. [Connect with us](#) to increase your impact!

Volunteer. Help with our website, newsletter, outreach, events, or other skills you'd like to share. [Get in touch with us!](#)

Iran's Non-JCPOA Problems

[Time to look inward: Not all of Iran's problems are caused by the West](#), Shireen Hunter, 2021/12/28

Iran-US Relations

[Hawks restart campaign for war with Iran](#), Joe Cirincione and Geoff Wilson, 2022/1/14
With negotiations to rejoin the nuclear deal showing promise, JCPOA opponents are going all in.

[Is Iran readying itself for a deal with the US?](#) Sina Toosi, 2022/1/18

[Khamenei Voices Support for Negotiations Amid Tepid Progress in Vienna](#), NIAC, 2022/1/13

[Iran's Raisi says Trump must face justice for Soleimani killing](#), Maziar Motamadi, 2022/1/3

President Ebrahim Raisi urges formation of a 'fair court' in which former President Trump and other US officials are tried.

[US military links prolific hacking group to Iranian intelligence](#), Sean Lyngaas, 2022/1/12

[Iranian 3-D video](#) depicting assassination of Donald Trump at Mara Lago

US Policy Choices

[Biden's 4 Biggest Mideast Challenges in 2022](#), Juan Cole, 2022/1/2

[The Inverse Midas Touch: Why America's Interventions So Often Go Wrong](#), Christopher Kolenda, 2021/12/17

[Iran's 2020 attack on US base underscored maximum pressure folly](#), Sina Toosi, 2022/1/8
Tehran's response to the Soleimani assassination two years ago provided more evidence of why the nuke deal withdrawal was a total failure.

Media

[Iranians on #SocialMedia](#), Holly Dagres, 2022/1/13

73.6% of adult Iranians use social media by using VPNs, of whom 64.1% use WhatsApp; 45.3% use Instagram; 36.3% use Telegram; 3.3% use Facebook; 2% use Twitter; 0.3% use LinkedIn; and 0.3% use TikTok.

[A Ploughshares discussion of this report](#) will be held on January 27

[Pentagon says Iran is behind MuddyWater hacking group](#), AI-Monitor, 2022/1/13

Iranian intelligence is behind a group of cyber-attackers that have targeted private and government organizations across the Middle East.

COVID

[Iran Prohibits COVID Vaccine Imports](#), NIAC, 2022/1/6

Iran's Economy

[Iran Guns For Top Position In Middle East Petrochemicals Market](#), Simon Watkins, 2021/12/22

- Petrochemical sector becomes key economic pillar in Iran
- Increasing output and revenues from its petrochemicals sector has always been key to Iran's 'resistance economy' model
- Petrochemicals have higher profitability margins than crude oil production in Iran

[Iran sanctions: Sri Lanka to pay off \\$251m Iranian oil debt with tea](#), MEE, 2021/12/23

Minister says payment method will circumvent UN and US sanctions because tea is deemed to be a foodstuff

[Smuggled Iranian fuel and secret nighttime transfers: Seafarers recount how it's done](#), Katie McQue, 2022/1/3

[Biden Can No Longer Ignore Growing Iran-China Ties](#), Bradley Bowman, 2022/1/13
Washington may be tired of the Middle East, but Beijing is just getting started.

Human Rights

[Othering Iran: How Dehumanization of Iranians Undermines Rights at Home](#), Assal Rad, NIAC, 2022/1/20

The report examines the history of US-Iran relations, the demonization of Iran in US politics and popular culture, and how the dehumanization of Iranians, and by extension Iranian Americans, adversely impacts US policy, ordinary Iranians, and the Iranian-American community.

[Iran Bars Prominent Sociologist Saeed Madani from Leaving Country](#), NIAC, 2022/1/5

[Poet & Filmmaker Baktash Abtin Dies of COVID While Imprisoned](#), NIAC, 2022/1/13

[No one's buying the Iranian regime's latest fairy tale](#), Jason Rezaian, 2022/1/12
The message they are trying to send to Iranians abroad is that there's no place like home.

Afghanistan

- **Afghanistan:** On January 11, the United Nations will host a meeting announcing the launch of the 2022 Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP). Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths will present the humanitarian response plan and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi will present the refugee response plan ([United Nations](#)).
- **Save the Children International** is running an \$80 million humanitarian relief program across the dozen provinces where it works
- **CARE International** is scaling up humanitarian programs in the 9 provinces where it has an operational presence.

[Tehran mediates between Taliban and National Resistance Front](#), ISNA, 2022/1/12

History

["Peace Movements in Islam"](#) (Simon Mabon's Podcast), Juan Cole, 2021/12/28

["The Americans of Urumia: Iran's First Americans and their Mission to the Assyrian Christians"](#), webinar by Hooman Estelami, 2022/1/24

[The Marine Who Turned Against U.S. Empire](#), Patrick Iber, 2022/1/11

[In 1953, the Republican Party overthrew the Iranian Government; on 1/6/21 it used the Same Techniques against the elected President](#), Juan Cole, 2022/1/6

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.

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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.
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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.

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