



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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Note From the Editor

Hoped for Durability of an Informal, Unwritten Understanding

Paul Barker, Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran1971-76

Will indirect talks between the US and Iran lead to an unwritten, informal understanding that will freeze Iran's nuclear enrichment program, greatly strengthen the IAEA's monitoring of all components of Iran's nuclear program, secure the release of American prisoners long held in Iran, end proxy attacks on American troops in Syria and unfreeze a portion of Iran's assets in a manner that allows them to only be used for the purchase of humanitarian goods?

Delicate talks to achieve these objectives have been ongoing in multiple locations in Europe and the Middle East, but most noticeably Oman. Reporting from multiple sources indicates that a breakthrough is indeed at hand. Any such arrangement would almost certainly be condemned and opposed by hawkish right-wing interests in the US and Israel. The arrangement is crafted in this informal, unwritten way to avoid the need for congressional review under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (INARA). It is probably the only way that such an understanding can be achieved in today's politically polarized world with 2024 American presidential and congressional campaigns already taking shape.

The understanding will be significantly less comprehensive than an agreement to restore the JCPOA, which was nearly reached in August 2022. Given Iran's high levels of uranium enrichment since that date and its unwillingness to dismantle any of its nuclear infrastructure, restoration of the JCPOA is no longer an achievable goal. Freezing its nuclear program and strengthening nuclear monitoring would significantly reduce the risks of military conflict between Iran and Israel and/or the US.

In efforts to support this achievable arrangement, advocates should stress that the US would not be paying Iran for concessions, rather it would be enabling Iran to have limited access to some of its own money. This money could not be used by the Iranian government to directly fund its nefarious activities in the region as it would be held and administered by banking arrangements outside of Iran.

The emerging 'understanding' will be easy to criticize from multiple perspectives, yet at this point it is difficult to envision a more constructive way forward.

Diplomacy

[U.S. and Iran in indirect talks over nuclear program and prisoners](#), Karen DeYoung, Joby Warrick, and Steve Hendrix, WAPO, 2023/6/20

With no hope of reviving 2015 nuclear agreement, the goal is reducing rising tensions and bringing home American detainees

[A New Opening for Nuclear Talks?](#) Kelsey Davenport, Arms Control Association, 2023/6/14

[An Opening to Deescalate the Iran Nuclear Crisis?](#) Kelsey Davenport, Just Security, 2023/6/13

The Biden administration would be hard pressed to find support in Washington for reaching a nuclear agreement with Iran at this point, but it is also not in U.S. interests to allow Iran's nuclear program to expand unchecked. Between the growing proliferation threat posed by Iran's stockpiles of highly enriched uranium and the risk of spoilers driving the Washington and Tehran to the brink of war, it is critical for the United States and its European partners to seize the opportunity created by Iran's decision, albeit limited, to increase transparency and cooperation with the IAEA. The March 4 agreement between Iran and the IAEA to enhance transparency is voluntary—Tehran is not legally obligated to reinstall additional monitoring equipment or hand over the data recordings to the IAEA—but it might be more inclined to follow through if the United States and Europe took reciprocal steps to decrease tensions and provided additional incentives for Iranian compliance.

Putting reciprocal, de-escalatory action on the table could also help test Iranian intentions. Iran's past actions raise legitimate concerns that Tehran is doing the bare minimum to stave off further censure or punitive action by the IAEA's Board of Governors. But if Tehran is serious about preserving space for diplomacy, Iran may view a reciprocal gesture as an off-ramp and be willing to take further steps. Limited measures to enhance transparency will not solve the Iranian nuclear crisis in the long term, but de-escalation now decreases the risk of conflict and creates time and space for diplomacy to work.

Carolyn Yale comment: "Military diplomacy" is not a diplomacy of peace. With the exception of the JCPOA, the US hasn't exercised diplomacy with Iran in the sense of respecting Iran's interests in a light that is receptive to the reciprocity Kelsey Davenport refers to.

[Khameinei speech supporting new nuclear agreement](#), Sina Toosi, Twitter, 2023/6/11

[The time is ripe for a new nuclear deal with Iran](#), Joel Rubin, Washington Times, 2023/6/13

[Biden's Iran Gamble?](#) Eric Brewer and Henry Rome, Foreign Affairs, 2023/6/9
A Risky New Strategy to Keep Tehran from Going Nuclear

If the [Biden administration](#) has given up on Plan A—reviving the JCPOA—it has also shied away from pivoting to the Plan B proposed by many analysts as well as Israeli officials: heaping economic, political, and military pressure on Tehran. Instead, it has opted for Plan C, an attempt to prevent the worst outcomes of the nuclear standoff with Iran while retaining the possibility of resolving it in the future. Washington seeks to prevent an Iranian bomb, avoid the risky escalation that could come with heightened pressure, and kick the can on a diplomatic solution in the hopes that conditions for a new deal to replace the JCPOA become more favorable over time.

But even if it is successful, Plan C would come with costs. It would allow Iran to steadily develop its nuclear program while shaking off its economic and political isolation. And instead of laying the groundwork for a deal that reverses Tehran's nuclear program, this strategy risks cementing Iran's status as a nuclear threshold state. As a result, the [United States](#) and other interested countries should redouble their efforts to prevent Iran from taking key steps on its path toward a nuclear weapon and complicate Tehran's efforts to forge new economic lifelines and normalize its nuclear status. This approach offers the best chance of averting the worst-case scenarios of a nuclear-armed Iran or a war in the Middle East while also preserving the potential for some kind of diplomatic agreement down the road.

[What Role for Omani Diplomacy](#), Jane Kinnimont, European Leadership Network, 2023/6/12

[U.S. Launches Quiet Diplomatic Push with Iran to Cool Tensions](#), Laurence Norman and David S. Cloud, WSJ, 2023/6/14

[Biden admin. won't acknowledge Iran deal explicitly to skirt Congress](#), Lahav Harkov, Jerusalem Post, 2023/6/18

[Israeli leaks seen as trying to derail U.S. effort to avoid Iran nuclear escalation](#), Laura Rozen, Diplomatic Subtrack, 2023/6/8

[Senior U.S. official on Iran channel: 'We want to see whether they are prepared' to take steps to lower tensions](#), Laura Rozen, Diplomatic Subtrack, 2023/6/13

[US expresses renewed interest in Iran nuclear diplomacy: 'Our goal is to reach a diplomatic outcome with Iran'](#), Laura Rozen, Diplomatic Substack, 2023/5/30

[Rare intervention by Zarif sparks Iranian debate on 'compromising'](#), Amwaj, 2023/6/5

[U.S. policy after five years of "Maximum Pressure" towards Iran](#), NIAC Webinar, 2023/5/18

[The West Must Prepare for a Long Overdue Reckoning](#), Chandran Nair, The National Interest, 2023/6/8

Five major trends illustrate how the world is changing, and that the West must grapple with the reality that it can no longer impose its "leadership" on the world as it once did.

[Risks and opportunities in an increasingly multipolar Middle East](#), Barbara Slavin, Stimson Center, 2023/6/13

The Biden administration should recognize growing agency in the Arab world as an opportunity not a threat to U.S. interests

Iran – The Women’s Revolt

Steve Gottlieb, Shiraz 1965-67

[Broadcast on WAMC 2023/6/20](#)

We just spent an evening with several Persian friends discussing Iran’s brutal response to the demonstrations there for the lives and freedom of Iranian women. We were brought together by [Mahmood Karimi Hakak](#) at his [Café Dialogue](#). Mahmood is a long-time Persian-American member of the Siena faculty, who worked as a producer and director in Iran until forced to leave.

Artist Cheryl De Ciantis came in from Arizona. She’d gathered photographs of the women in the demonstrations who were murdered or had been disfigured by destruction of an eye. The women wanted their disfigured faces to be seen. Those who could, took selfies and proudly showed their destroyed eye sockets or added a patch to call attention to what had been taken. Others sent pictures of the murdered women. Almost all of the women were smiling. [Cheryl built paintings around the photographs](#), so we could see how lovely these women were, or are, and added roses to the pictures of the dead.

The word for an eye in Farsi, the language of Iran, is *chashm*. Socially, *chashm* sort of means “I will,” but I avoided using the term in that context because the fuller meaning is “I promise to do that *on my eyes*,” or, more completely, “If I don’t fulfill my promise you may take my eyes out.” The expression turns my stomach. It’s a way that the cruelty of Nader Shah, famous for [removing people’s eyes](#) centuries ago, is preserved in everyday speech. Every Persian knows that history.

When Persian soldiers and Revolutionary Guards kill or shoot the eyes out of women who demonstrate for the life and freedom of women in Iran, even beyond the horror that Americans feel, every Persian understands the symbolism.

At dinner I pushed back – how, I asked, will the bravery and sacrifice of these women make any difference? Mahmood responded that society will condemn the cruelty. I pushed back. When Martin Luther King brought the nonviolent philosophy and strategy of the great Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, to the Civil Rights Movement, he was [counting on the support, and the vote, of horrified citizens](#) from the states that had not been segregated by law. But Iranians don’t have the power of the ballot – whatever good things he did, President Eisenhower deposed a democratically selected Iranian Prime Minister in 1953. Iran has not been able to choose their leaders since. Americans may not remember – it’s not *our* history – but I never met a Persian who didn’t. We’re still paying the price.

So how is the self-sacrifice of these brave women going to make any difference? Mahmood responded, accurately, that dictatorships and theocracies are brought down either by conquest or by collapse from within. But the price of opposition from the inside is death. Dictators hold on to their power with cruelty, murder and fear, major hurdles to

any kind of overthrow. Mahmood shot back that there is growing opposition from within the regime.

I'm convinced that the people of Iran do not want an invasion. Don't be taken in by military solutions – Iranians don't want us with guns and uniforms. They've had too much of that; it would slaughter too many of the people of Iran; and it would end up putting the wrong people in power. They want to own their own future and make it happen their way. And they are convinced that enough sacrifice, horrible as it is, will curdle enough minds, hearts and stomachs even inside the ruling regime that internal dissent will make the dictatorship crumble. That leaves me praying for the wonderful, kind and thoughtful people I knew there. *Salaam Aleykom* سلام عليكم – **peace be with you.**

Tom Huf comment: It is daunting to see how difficult it is to mount an effective internal counter to militarized and brutal dictatorships clinging to power. We need to be very careful to avoid feeding the regime's narrative that the protests are fueled and funded externally.

Protests

[Challenging Benevolence: What's Revolutionary About Iranian Women's Uprisings?](#) Arzoo Osanloo, 2023/6

[Dreaming of a New Iran: Diaries from three young women,](#) Farnaz Fassihi, NYT, 2023/6/14

[Congressional Briefing on Woman, Life, Freedom Movement,](#) PAAIA, 2023/6/6

PAAIA **briefed** over 150 congressional staffers and members of the general public on the latest developments regarding the Woman, Life, Freedom movement and what the U.S. can do to support the Iranian people.

Our esteemed panelists, Dr. Hadi Ghaemi, Dr. Mehrzad Boroujerdi, and Holly Dagres, reconvened from **last October** to provide insight into Iran's internal and international affairs as they relate to the protest movement.

Consistency and Vision Needed in US-Iran Policy

Tom Huf, Babolsar-Sari, Mashhad, and Tehran – from 1967-71
published in MAPA, 2023/5/23

Since the pause or more likely the permanent demise of the Iran nuclear deal and the upsurge of protests over the past year for women's rights and freedom of speech, the issues surrounding Iran and the whole Gulf region have multiplied.

The Biden administration's strategy of insisting on changes – rejected by Iran – to the original agreement as a condition of US reentry into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the official name of the Iran nuclear accord) has failed. The corollary key incentive in that agreement, which was to reintegrate Iran's economy into the larger one of the region and world, has been sidelined, as US-imposed sanctions continue to eliminate any opportunity for mutual respect and leverage for peace.

Domestic political impediments – both in Tehran and Washington D.C. – have created a new, more challenging landscape for any path forward. After a pause in punitive responses to the widespread protests, Tehran has resumed executions of protestors. The Parliament is debating new hardline measures to double down on Hijab requirements, among other invented social control measures that

have nothing to do with Islamic beliefs. On Capitol Hill, the Republicans are now initiating new poison pill legislation to block any diplomatic outreach to Iran.

However, the path to peace is not entirely blocked. It is increasingly important for those of us in the peace community to follow events in the region and to push for a peaceful and just solution. We can't allow the US's militarized foreign policy regarding Iran to proceed unchallenged. Here is my take and quick summary of some important threads.

In addition to the events in the Gulf region, we also need to start paying attention to the Iranian American Diaspora. There are activists in the US working to position themselves for a possible regime collapse triggered from the bottom. A top-down revolution is less likely. There are monarchists rallying around Reza Pahlavi – the former Shah's son. There are human rights activists hoping to foster a turn to a secular and democratic government. There are also activists who are communicating serious threats to existing groups such as the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) and the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) for their past support for removing sanctions.

Although the executions and brutal suppression of protests have left the streets in Iran's cities quiet for now, the uprising is not over. It has exposed the vulnerability of the Islamization of government and has encouraged dreams of a return to a secular country that respects its Islamic roots and cultural diversity. The failed dream and mantra of the 1970s and 80s Iranian political optimists for a peaceful path that was "neither east nor west" has resurfaced among some opposition groups as a non-threatening avenue for significant change that manages to avoid a violent revolution.

Counter to the hopes for change, the response of the current government has been to double down on their narrow definition of political Shia Islam that comes with strict prescriptions of thought and behavior. It appears that the leadership has been seriously challenged and fears its own demise. Whether the promising direct talks between Iran and the Saudis are partly a result of effective Chinese peace-brokering, the US pulling back, or a combination of several factors, they are what Trita Parsi has been advocating as the next steps for the countries in the region: to take charge of their own destinies. This could transform and possibly start to demilitarize diplomacy in the region.

The Norwegians have taken this opportunity to again host very quiet talks with the press spotlights turned off. This encouraging peace effort echoes the type of discreet diplomacy they practiced in the aftermath of the failure of the Oslo Accords, when they hosted talks between Palestinians and Israelis. Those talks were not, as hoped, a precursor to a new Oslo Accord II agreement, but they had some small successes.

With the unique exception of the JCPOA, the US has in the past decade largely abandoned our prior pretense of being an honest, even-handed broker in the region. Whether in the Israel / Palestine conflict or the conflicts between Iran and its neighbors, our actions and words have greatly reduced our leverage to solve problems.

This myopic diplomacy did not start with the Trump administration's withdrawal from the JCPOA, but it did shine a spotlight on our lack of a long-term strategy for peace and prosperity in the Middle East. Our inept, tough-guy position with regard to the resuscitation of the JCPOA is another example of a Washington that fails to respect the fundamental needs and cultural and domestic frameworks of Iran and others in the region. Allowing international affairs to be dead ended by domestic politics has left us and the Ra'isi regime in Tehran with fewer cards to play.

The much-touted Abraham Accords normalizing relations between Israel and the U.A.E., Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco may have opened some possibly constructive conversations among those countries, but their fundamental premise was to circle the wagons to further isolate Iran. Those accords and our cruelly punitive sanctions regime are seen by all for what they are: continuation of a divide-and-conquer approach to the region that guarantees continued conflict and sells more weapons. America, Iran, and the whole region deserve better.

US Policy Options and Legislation

[Make ISIS Iran's Problem](#), Eric Bordenkircher, The American Conservative, 2023/6/5

Our continued presence in Syria is another example of the national security establishment funding a futile forever war.

[Graham, Menendez, Blumenthal Introduce Iranian Enrichment Monitoring Act, S.1981](#), 2023/6/14

Sanctions

[Sanctions undermine Iranians' quest for freedom](#), Jamal Abdi, Ryan Costello, NIAC, 2023/6/9

[Children Are Dying Because Companies Are Too Scared to Sell Medicine to Iran](#), Murtaza Hussain, The Intercept, 2023/6/12

Joe Biden kept Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" sanctions — discouraging even legal, humanitarian trade.

[US sanctions Iranians over alleged plots to kill John Bolton and others around the world](#), Fatima Hussein, Mathew Lee, Ellen Knickmeyer and Eric Tucker, AP, 2023/6/1

[Iranian Banks Keep Foreign Currency From Oil Revenues – Leaked Document](#), Iran International. 2023/6/1

[How new EU sanctions on Iran's Revolutionary Guards could backfire](#), Bahar Makooi, France 24, 2023/5/30

The European Union levied new sanctions against Iran's Revolutionary Guards last week over a brutal crackdown on protesters. But some experts question the effectiveness of sanctions, saying they risk pushing Tehran closer to other sanctioned states, namely Russia and China. Instead, they advocate the creation of a special task force similar to the one hunting down Vladimir Putin's oligarchs.

[How will Iran react to snapback?](#) Jane Kinninmont, European Leadership Network, 2023/5/28

[The Invisible War](#), Nargol Aran, Guerenica, 2023/4/5

Sanctions aim to hit a space where the enemy-state is weakened but the people of the nation remain unscathed. No such space exists.

Iran Nuclear Program

[Hoping to Avert Nuclear Crisis, U.S. Seeks Informal Agreement With Iran](#), Michael Crowley, Farnaz Fassihi and Ronen Bergman, The New York Times, 2023/6/15

Hoping to Avert Nuclear Crisis, U.S. Seeks Informal Agreement with Iran. The U.S. goal is to reach an informal, unwritten agreement, which some Iranian officials are calling a "political cease-fire."

[Amid flurry of diplomacy, Iran's top nuclear negotiator invited to Oslo again](#), Amwaj, 2023/6/13

[**An Iranian nuclear facility is so deep underground that US airstrikes likely couldn't reach it**](#), Jon Gambrell - Associated Press, 2023/5/22

Near a peak of the Zagros Mountains in central Iran, workers are building a nuclear facility so deep in the earth that it is likely beyond the range of a last-ditch U.S. weapon designed specifically for such sites

[**Iran puts its nuclear programme beyond the reach of American bombs**](#), The Economist, 2023/5/30

[**Reducing Nuclear Dangers in a Time of Peril**](#), Jake Sullivan, Arms Control Association, 2023/6/2

[**Iran's Increasing Nuclear Capacity, various interviews**](#), Behnam Ben Talebu

[**Nuclear Near-misses, close calls and early warnings**](#), Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, May 2023

[**West resumes talks over how to deal with Iran nuclear crisis**](#), Andrew England, Felicia Schwartz, Najmeh Bozorgmehr, Financial times, 2023/6/2

Trita Parsi Comment: Imagine all the good that could have been achieved for the Iranian protesters had the diaspora "leaders" not wasted energy on killing nuclear diplomacy? For the last decades, killing diplomacy has been Israel's agenda, not that of Iran's civil society...

[**5 Years On: Where Trump's Iran Deal Exit Leaves Us Now**](#), Iran Diplomacy Works, J-Street, 2023/6/16

Drones, Missiles

[**Iran seeks 'billions' worth of Russian aircraft and weapons in exchange for drones**](#), Joby Warrick, WAPO, 2023/6/9

White House expresses alarm over deepening military ties between Moscow and Tehran.

[**Israel Reveals Iran's Secret Underground Drone Base**](#), Iran International, 2023/5/16

[**Ukraine's parliament approves sanctions against Russia ally Iran**](#), Al Jazira, 2023/5/29

[**Iran presents its first hypersonic ballistic missile**](#), Parisa Hafezi, Reuters, 2023/6/6

Region

[**Israel's ties with pre-revolutionary Iran provided a road map for the Abraham Accords**](#), Jason Brodsky, MEI, 2023/6/7

[**Redefining Middle Eastern Alliances: Sultan of Oman Mediates Diplomatic Shifts Between Iran and Egypt**](#), NIAC, 2023/5/31

[**Nascent Egypt-Iran détente puts normalization on horizon**](#), Amwaj, 2023/5/31

[**Inside story: Iran's Riyadh embassy reopens as Saudi ops resume from Tehran 'luxury hotel'**](#), Amwaj, 2023/6/6

[Iran, Pakistan Open Border Marketplace, Power Transmission Line](#), VOA, 2023/5/18

[Iran and Taliban in Diplomatic Dance over Hilmand River Disputes](#), NIAC, 2023/5/25

[The Taliban is using leftover American gear to fight Iran](#), Nicholas Slayton, Task & Purpose, 2023/5/28

[Taliban claims: 'We will conquer Iran soon' amid water dispute](#), Ariella MARwden, Jerusalem Post, 2023/5/29

[Iran exchanges heavy gunfire with Taliban on Afghan border, escalating tensions over water rights](#), Jon Gambrell, AP 2023/5/27

[Inside the Taliban's war on drugs - opium poppy crops slashed](#), Yogita Limaye, BBC, 2023/6

[Iran's Victory in Syria is Not Worry Free](#), Arman Mahmoudian, Stimson Center, 2023/5/24

[Leaked Report: "CIA Does Not Know" If Israel Plans To Bomb Iran](#), Ken Klippenstein, The Intercept, 2023/5/24

A leaked intelligence report from February says "Netanyahu probably calculates Israel will need to strike Iran to deter its nuclear program."

[U.S. Navy Steps Up Efforts to Curb Iran's Ship Seizures in Strait of Hormuz](#), Eric Lipton, 2023/5/23

The United States is increasing patrols in the busy shipping lanes, where Iranian forces have taken two internationally flagged tankers in recent weeks.

[China Does Not Have to Be a U.S. Adversary in the Middle East](#), Barbara Slavin, Just Security, 2023/6/16

Iranian Politics

[Iran further narrows scope for political participation as it prepares for key elections in 2024](#), Anonymous, Stimson Center, 2023/6/14

The Iranian regime is sidelining even some conservative political factions as it tries to increase the odds that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei will have a hardline successor, possibly his second son, Mojtaba

[Zarif's Latest Statements Ignite Controversy In Iran](#), Iran International, 2023/6/8

[Shamkhani Resignation: More About Iran's Domestic Than Foreign Policy?](#) Javad Heiran-Nia, Stimson Center, 2023/5/25

Shamkhani's effectiveness aroused some jealousy and his Saudi mediation, in particular, caused disputes between the security council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[The Mahsa Jina Amini case: security and ethnic dimensions](#), Walter Posch, Chatham House, 2023/5

As a woman of Sunni denomination and as a Kurd, Mahsa Jina Amini embodied all three dimensions of the Islamic Republic's systemic discrimination: gender, religious denomination and ethnicity.

[Iran's Coming Succession Crisis, Ali Reza Eshraghi, 2023/5/24](#)

The Race to Be the Next Supreme Leader Will Be Chaotic and Perilous

[What a ministerial impeachment says about corruption in Iran, Bijan Khajepour, Amwaj, 2023/5/24](#)

[A Regime Unveiled Social and Ethno-Sectarian Tensions and Democratic Evolution in Iran, Walter Posch, Academia, 2022/10/13](#)

[2023 Survey of Iranian American Public Opinion, PAAIA](#)

Environment

[It's Not Just Iran: Conflict over Water Resources is on the Rise as Climate Crisis Grows, Lauren Fagan, 2023/6/13](#)

Advocacy

The National Iranian American Council (NIAC) provides excellent [news updates on conditions in Iran](#) and political challenges of Iran's international behavior and relations. It also provides [internet links for action on more than a dozen topics](#) of priority interest to Iranian Americans and their friends in both Iran and the US.

J-Street also maintains an important website with news and views related to preventing war with Iran: [Iran Diplomacy Works.](#)

Reflections on PCIA National Meeting in Chicago

Originally [broadcast on WAMC 2023/6/6](#)

By Stephen Gottlieb, Shiraz 1965-67

My wife and I met years ago when we both served in the United States Peace Corps in Iran. There have been no American Peace Corps Volunteers in Iran since 1976. Peace Corps Volunteers got to know a wide segment of the Iranian population, as we do everywhere, realized trouble was brewing and Peace Corps officials pulled them out. Here in Albany we've been part of a group of former Peace Corps Volunteers who've served in all parts of the world. We meet monthly, share a pot luck dinner, provide a forum for newly returned Volunteers, and listen intently to news about goings on in the many countries where we used to serve and the many organizations who work with people there and with immigrants from those countries here.

A few years ago my wife was asked to become president of the Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA). It's been a very interesting and active organization. They've identified the vast majority of former volunteers, developed a history of the Peace Corps in Iran, published an anthology of stories by former Volunteers about their Peace Corps service, have a book group that discusses literature about Iran, a current events group that meets to discuss developments involving Iran, and they have newsletters about relevant current events and activities of former Volunteers. Even while constantly studying and discussing current events, PCIA avoids taking positions about policy choices other than pointing out to all who will listen that most of the Iranian people,

as opposed to its clerical leadership, have long had very warm feelings toward the U.S., alongside considerable national pride.

PCIA just held a national meeting. At all our meetings we've shared memories and stories about our experiences. But the depth of the relationships between Volunteers and our Persian hosts was a theme of this meeting. Some of the Persians who trained us to serve in Iran spoke at the meeting and we talked about the effects we had on the Persians and they on us. I discovered that another Volunteer who worked in the same city held weekly discussions with an Iranian cleric; they'd agreed to teach each other Eastern and Western philosophy. I wished I'd been a fly on their wall.

Discussions at their meetings have been consistently level-headed and enlightening. One of the speakers was John Limbert, a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Iran and American diplomat who eventually headed the Iran desk for the Obama Administration. Unfortunately, he was in the embassy when it was seized during the Revolution and spent 444 days as a hostage, but yet manages to focus on the future, not the past, on how we might have a more productive relationship going forward, and has written a marvelous and very perceptive study of the [Iran nuclear deal](#) that I highly recommend. So I feel very grateful for the ability to keep up my interest in and concern for the people of Iran and follow the international politics through the Peace Corps Iran Association.

I know no society where everybody's an angel or devil. Too many in this country have been immersed in a bath of prejudice – Iranians are this, immigrants are that, rich people are worthy, poor people are not. Level-headed people in the Iranian diaspora have been [attacked](#) from various sources with [threats and false information](#) to [prevent](#) their opposing war, supporting negotiations or the women's life and freedom campaign. Violence and intimidation make progress and reasonable discussion difficult if not impossible. We can all do better. I know there are better ways.

Media

[A Rapper's Detention Shows Iran's Crackdown Is Failing](#), Holly Dagues, NYT, 2023/5/31

[Feminist Futures](#), Narges Bajoghli and Sareh Afshar, iRethinking Iran, SAIS

Feminist Futures is a multimedia platform that builds upon the "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprisings in Iran to take stock of the continued increase in social movements around the world that are led by women* and queer people.

The "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi" uprisings in Iran fostered an impulse to call the women-led movement a "revolution." However, theorists of revolution may challenge the labeling as a misnomer. In light of this, we ask: what would it mean, or take, to redefine "revolution" away from the violent usurpation of state power? *Feminist Futures* considers this redefinition as its point of departure, viewing it as an opportunity to reexamine the often overlooked power of global feminist uprisings.

[Women, Life, Freedom](#), Negar Mortazavi, The Iran Podcast, 2023/5/23

[US and Iran, Tensions or Diplomacy](#), Negar Mortazavi interviews Barbara Slavin, 2023/6/2

[Europe and Iran](#), Negar Mortazavi interviews Rouzbeh Parsi, The Iran Podcast, 2023/6/9

Human Rights

[Iran executions spike by 76% with 142 people hanged in May](#), Beatrice Farhat, Al-Monitor, 2023/6/1

A new report reveals that Iran carried out 307 executions in 2023 as rights groups' pleas fall on deaf ears.

[Female Activists Speak Up About Forced Stripping In Prisons](#), Maryam Sinaee, Iran International, 2023/5/31

[Loss for Iran's wildlife: woman jailed in Tehran calls for environmentalists' release](#), Patrick Wintour, The Guardian, 2023/5/31

Aras Amiri, a former British Council employee, was held in Evin prison with seven members of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation

[Olivier Vandecasteele: Belgian aid worker freed in exchange for Iranian diplomat](#), David Gritten, BBC, 2023/5/27

[Iran's Strategic Shift in Hostage Diplomacy](#), Brittany Dimock, Jimin Gim, Ashar Omer, Lili Rao, Stimson Center, 2023/5/31

The year 2014 was the turning point when Iran transitioned into making hostage taking a strategy instead of a tactic.

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

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