



PCIA ADVOCACY BULLETIN

News from Peace Corps Iran Association's Advocacy Committee
Volume 4 #8, 28 August 2020



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.

Neil MacGregor: [Cyrus Cylinder](#)



Joe Cirincione 
@Cirincione

This is an historic humiliation for the United States. We have never lost a vote this badly; never been so isolated on the global stage. Epic diplomatic malpractice.

It is a stinging rejection of Trump and Pompeo. America First, it turns out, is America Alone.

5:57 PM · Aug 14, 2020



Observations by Joe Cirincione, the just retired President of the Ploughshares Fund.

Note from the Editor

by Paul Barker

August 2020 has seen Israel and the United Arab Emirates take steps to further normalize their relations. Rulers in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Sudan have refused US entreaties to join any process to further normalize their relations with Israel until the formula for a 2-state solution is realized and a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital is a reality. Nonetheless, the realignment of some forces in the Persian Gulf is seen as threatening to Iran, while Iran's complex regional relationships are being acknowledged by some in the Iranian regime as not entirely in Iran's best interest.

August 2020 political conventions have seen a Democratic party platform call for a return to historic international agreements like the JCPOA and Paris Climate Agreement while the Republican party decided it does not need a platform this year, other than endorsing whatever leadership President Trump provides.

August 2020 saw the Trump administration's 'maximum pressure' campaign fail to attract more than one supporting vote at the UN Security Council for its efforts to extend the arms embargo on Iran which, per the JCPOA is scheduled to end on 18 October 2020. This embarrassment did not prevent Secretary Pompeo from trying to invoke the snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran, a move which all other JCPOA signatories and 13 of 15 Security Council members believe the US has no standing to do. This issue will come to a head in the September 2020 UN General Assembly opening when the US is expected to declare that the sanctions have indeed snapped back, most of the rest of the world will disagree, and then the Trump administration will probably retaliate against

any country it deems in violation of the snapback sanctions.

Brian Hook resigned as point person for Trump's Iran policy just before the UNSC votes on extending the arms embargo and will be replaced by Elliott Abrams, a neocon strongly in favor of regime change in Iran and Venezuela. If anything could make US policy towards Iran worse, this might be it.

Iran agreed to allow the IAEA to have access to two formerly disputed sites, defusing a recent point of contention.

The best current legislative option for preventing further escalation of tensions and possible war with Iran is to advocate in favor of three amendments authored by Barbara Lee and included in the House version of the 2021 Defense Appropriations Act.

Of special interest to PCIA members may be the 31 August airing and Atlantic Council panel discussion of ['Desert One': How the Hostage Crisis and failed rescue raid still cloud US-Iran relations](#).

Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

Yossi Melman: [Does Iran Really Want to Build Nuclear Weapons at Any Cost? Maybe Not](#)

In the past it took nations three to 10 years to build nuclear bombs, yet 30 years since re-launching its nuclear program, Iran hasn't assembled a bomb. It aspires to be on the threshold

Con Coughlin: [Iran agrees inspection deal with UN nuclear watchdog at two nuclear sites, 2020/8/21](#)

Laura Rosen: [Train wreck averted—for now, 2020/8/26](#)
IAEA, Iran announce agreement after UN rejects U.S. snapback bid

Fanning the Embers of War?

Sina Toossi: [The Beginning of the U.S.-Iran Hot War? 2002/7/27](#)

Sebastien Roblin: [MAD in the Persian Gulf: The threat of mutually assured destruction is protecting Iran from America](#)

Both civil and military shipping in the Persian Gulf is exceptionally vulnerable to mines, cruise missiles and fast boat attacks because its shallow straits force large ships to squeeze through predictable lines of transit.

Reuters: [Iran holds annual Gulf drill amidst growing tensions with U.S.](#)
Satellite images published on Monday showed Iran has moved a mock-up U.S.

aircraft carrier to the Strait, suggesting it will use the fake vessel for target practice in war games there.

Sune Engel Rasmussen: [Iran Fires Missiles in Drill, Prompting U.S. Bases to Go on Alert](#), 2020/7/29

Zach Dorfman, Kim Zetter, Jenna McLaughlin and Sean D. Naylor: [Secret Trump order gives CIA more powers to launch cyberattacks](#), 2020/7/15

Status of Diplomacy

Karen DeYoung: [Brian Hook, the State Department's point man on Iran policy, is stepping down](#), 2020/8/6

Negar Mortazavi comment: Hook could not be reached for comment. A former senior administration familiar with events leading up to Hook's departure said he was "being asked to leave to take the fall for the failed Iran strategy."

"Iran is breaking the limits on enrichment, storage and developing a delivery system. By all empirical data, it is worse than under the [agreement] and they significantly increased their bad actions," the former official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to speak frankly.

"If you thought it was a successful strategy, I don't know why you'd fire the envoy."

Tom Huf comment: it would be helpful for readers to be reminded about who Elliot Abrams is and why commentators in the links you provide say that Trump has found a way to make our Iran policy even worse by appointing him to replace Brian Hook. We should brace for more regime change policy positions.

Abrams has been around for a very long time in Republican administrations stirring the stew of hawkish US militarized diplomacy. There are many Abrams sources to give us a taste of how Iran policy might get worse - as difficult as that is to imagine. I'm on vacation this week and don't have good internet access at the cottage but while out for breakfast this morning saw a few links that could be added to this edition. There are many, including:

The Intercept: [Elliott Abrams Venezuela Coup](#). 2019/1/30

David Graham: [Will Elliott Abrams Become Donald Trump's Resident Neoconservative?](#) 2017/2/6

Daniel Larison: [Trump Names Neocon Regime Changer as Iran Envoy](#), 2020/8/6

With Elliott Abrams at the helm, the president found a way to make his Tehran policy even worse.

Steve Benen: [As Trump's Iran failures mount, a key State Dept official resigns](#)

Trump's policy toward Iran has already been exposed as one of his most spectacular failures. A shake-up at the State Department may make matters worse.

Saheb Sadeghi: [It doesn't matter who wins in November, Iran will not renegotiate the JCPOA](#), 2020/8/11

Reuters: [Putin proposes seven-way online summit to avoid 'confrontation' over Iran: Kremlin](#), 2020/8/14

Sina Toossi: [Are the US and Iran talking behind the scenes?](#) 2020/8/14

The Iran Podcast: [Interview with Trita Parsi: Successful Diplomacy with Iran](#). 2020/8/24

Sina Toossi: [US pressure keeps elite infighting in Iran in check](#), 2020/8/26
Trump's sanctions are hurting the Iranian people, but forcing the country's decision-making elites into cohesion.

UAE-Israel Peace Agreement Implications

The Hill: [Quincey Institute leader downplays UAE-Israel Deal](#)

Robin Wright: [Israel's New Peace Deal Transforms the Middle East](#), 2020/8/14

Barbara Boland: [Bahrain, Sudan and Saudi Arabia Reject Pompeo's Push To Normalize Relations With Israel](#), 2020/8/26

Middle East Institute: [Iran, Israel and the changing geopolitics of the Middle East](#), 2020/9/3
Register for this event [here](#).

Sina Azodi: [Why is Iran concerned about the peace agreement between the UAE and Israel](#), 2020/8/20

Patrick Cockburn: [There is a historic change taking place in the Middle East- the decline in power of the oil states](#). 2020/8/14

The normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE will help Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu politically – but there are more important things happening

David B. Green: [From Friends to Foes: How Israel and Iran Turned Into Arch-enemies](#), 2018/8/5

The two countries enjoyed good relations for 30 years, but since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Israel and Iran have been a study in enmity – despite not sharing

a border or having any territorial disputes

Jim Whitaker Comment: Plenty of responsibility on both sides for the ongoing enmity, as after the Revolution, the Islamic Republic found it convenient to demonize the former relationship, both because it had been associated with the monarchy, but also in a bid to appeal to the Arab Street as a champion of the Palestinians and alternative to their oppressive regimes, as well as create Hezbollah and very appropriately force Israel out of South Lebanon, all the while conveniently not acknowledging that it was thanks to massive supply of Israeli weaponry during the Iran-Iraq War that enabled Iran to repulse Saddam's forces, as relative to weapons needs, Iran was on the ropes at the time.

But really, Iran overreached to its own great detriment by continuing to portray itself as Israel's nemesis and agent of destruction in a bid to appear as a champion of the Palestinians and revolutionary alternative to the Arabic-speaking peoples' oppressive regimes, as all such has done is turn the region against Iran and drive Arab regimes into alliance with Israel, while encouraging anti-democratic/anti-settlement-with-the-Palestinians political forces to manifest in Israel.

Any support Iran may have mustered among the region's Arab peoples totally collapsed with its massive, prolonged intervention on behalf of the horrid Syrian Assad regime and the saving it from defeat, by thereby illuminating Iran's hypocrisy.

As an Iranian conservative politician associated with the regime was quoted last week: "All we've accomplished is to frighten the Arabs and drive them into the arms of Israel!"

Meanwhile, the billions Iran has spent on its proxy interventions throughout the region, has, along with other factors, contributed to its dire economic woes.

Failed Extension of Arms Embargo on Iran

Win Without War: [UN Was Right to Reject Trump's Iran Embargo. But Danger Is in What Comes Next.](#) 2020/8/14

Juan Cole: [No Longer Leader of the Free World: Trump Admin. Humiliated at UN over Iran Arms Embargo,](#)

Let us underline this. The most powerful countries in the world and the current representatives of the main global blocs just sided with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei against Donald J. Trump

Mark Fitzpatrick: [Pompeo set to double down on failure to extend Iran arms embargo,](#)

2020/8/15

Snapback Fiasco

Rebecca Kheel: [UN Security Council rejects US demand to snap back Iran sanctions](#), 2020/8/25

Richard Gowan and Wendy Sherman: ICG Report on Snapback
[Video](#); [Report](#)

John Bolton: [Iran 'Snapback' isn't worth the risk](#), 2020/8/16
It would weaken the Security Council veto, which serves US interests at the UN.

J-Street: [Triggering JCPOA Snapback Would Isolate Us, Hamper Future Diplomacy](#), 2020/8/16

Congresional Progressive Caucus: [CPC Leaders Condemn Trump Administration Efforts to Trigger Iran Deal 'Snapback' Provisions](#)

Kelsey Davenport: [The Dangerous Consequences of Trump's Plan to Snapback UN Sanctions on Iran](#), 2020/8/17

Major General (Ret.) Paul D. Eaton [response to Trump threat on Iran snapback sanctions](#)

Ellie Geranmayeh & Elisa Catalano Ewers: [Europe Can Preserve the Iran Nuclear Deal Until November](#), 2020/8/18

Parisa Hafezi, Michelle Nichols: [Despite U.S. sanctions bid, Iran aims to keep nuclear deal alive until U.S. election](#), 2020/8/18

Anton Mardasov: [What's next for Russia-Iran military partnership?](#) 2020/8/27
If the arms embargo on Iran ends in October, what arms might Tehran buy from Moscow?

Iran – China Pact

Sabena Siddiqui: [Potential China-Iran pact has major implications for Pakistan](#)
As speculation abounds over a leaked draft of an economic and security deal between Iran and China, its potential effects on Pakistan stand out as particularly

dramatic.

Sabotage inside Iran

AI-Monitor: [Iran arrests US-based leader of exile group](#)

Authorities in Tehran say they detained Jamshid Sharmahd, the leader of a California-based opposition group, inside Iran, yet questions remain about his detention.

Reese Erlich: [Trump's Desperate, last-ditch Effort to Hike Tensions with Iran](#)

Nuclear Proliferation

Warren P. Strobel, Michael R. Gordon and Felicia Schwartz: [Saudi Arabia, With China's Help, Expands Its Nuclear Program](#)

Kingdom harbors hopes for a civilian nuclear power program, but U.S. critics worry about its ambitions for nuclear weapons

2020 Foreign Policy and Political Choices

Kelley Beaucar Vlahous: [Neoconservative Wolves Dressed in Never-Trumper Clothing, 2020/8/10](#)

They're sniffing around Joe Biden's foreign policy circle, bent on influencing his China policy—and more.

Jason Rezaian: [An Iranian-born progressive unseating a Trumpist veteran in Texas? It could happen. 2020/8/26](#)

Shira Hanau: [Meet the Iranian-Jewish 'progressive prosecutor' vying to be Manhattan's next district attorney](#)

(JTA) – Shootings are up in New York City. So are anti-Semitic incidents. And federal law enforcement is recasting itself as an adversary, not an ally, to local authorities. That is the climate in which Tali Farhadian Weinstein seeks to become Manhattan's top prosecutor. Farhadian Weinstein, 44, stepped into the city's crowded district attorney's race last week with a vision for "progressive prosecution" — or what she says is applying the office as a lever to both improve public safety and increase equity.

AI-Monitor: [Could fraud allegations shatter Iranian parliament speaker's dream for](#)

[presidency?](#) 2020/8/3

Fresh fraud allegations leveled against Iran's powerful parliament speaker could mar his expected bid for the presidency next year, while exposing widening rifts within the conservative camp.

Legislation

2021 Defense Appropriations Bill

The Appropriations Committee included [Rep. Lee's amendments in the Defense bill](#) to do the following:

1. End Congress' 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) granting a blank check to the President to wage war against anyone, anywhere, at any time. The 2001 AUMF would sunset effective 240 days after enactment of the law.
2. Repeal the 2002 AUMF authorizing military force against Iraq, which no longer serves any operational purpose as deployments and operations carried out under the 2002 AUMF officially concluded in 2011.
3. Block the President from starting a war with Iran absent express authorization from Congress.

Barbara Boland: [Surprise! \\$29.4B In Pentagon Pork Tucked into GOP Relief Bill](#), 2020/7/28

Millions in new spending for missile defense and F-35's. How's that related to coronavirus?

Media

Atlantic Council: ['Desert One': How the Hostage Crisis and failed rescue raid still cloud US-Iran relations](#)

- => Monday, 31 August 2020 12:00 PM

ONLINE EVENT – Panel discussion of the new documentary 'Desert One'. Directed by master documentarian Barbara Kopple, with new archival sources and unprecedented access to key players on both sides, the film reveals the true story behind one of the most daring rescues in modern US history: a secret mission to free hostages captured during the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Panel members:

Nasser Hadian, *Professor*, University of Tehran

Barbara Kopple, *Director*, “Desert One”

Ambassador (Ret.) John Limbert, PCIA member, US State Department and US Naval Academy

Col. (Ret.) Ed Sieffert, United States Marine Corps

Moderated by Barbara Slavin, *Director*, *Future of Iran Initiative*, Atlantic Council

COVID Implications

Roxane Farmanfarmaian: [Iran, sanctions, and the COVID-19 pandemic](#), 2020/8/14

BBC: [Coronavirus: Iran cover-up of deaths revealed by data leaks](#), 2020/8/3

Hikmet Çetin: [Sanctions on Iran put the health of US allies at risk](#), 2020/7/31

From its onset, COVID-19 has repeatedly sent us a clear message: “I am deadly. If you do not work together to defeat me, I will keep on killing you.” Unfortunately, humankind has so far not heeded this haunting message.

Al-Jazira: [In rare talks Iran and UAE Foreign Ministers discuss COVID-19](#), 2020/8/2

Human Rights

By Farnaz Fassihi: [He Was Iran’s Homegrown Tech Star. The Guards Saw a Blackmail Opportunity](#). 2020/8/21

A Canadian-Iranian software engineer for Facebook, a tech celebrity in his native Iran, visited family in Tehran in January. His recent revelations of what happened next have stirred outrage.

Amnesty International: [Petition for release of Narges Mohammadi, Atena Daemi and Saba Kord Afshari](#)

Iranwire: [Iran's Quiet Ban on Muslims Visiting Other Places of Worship](#), 2020/8/24

History

Vanessa Thorpe: [MI6, the coup in Iran that changed the Middle East, and the cover-up, 2020/8/2](#)

Julian Borger: [British spy's account sheds light on role in 1953 Iranian coup](#)
interview given by MI6 officer in 1980s was discovered in research for new documentary

Daniel Larison: [The Jakarta Method: How The U.S. Used Mass Murder To Beat Communism](#)

New book tracks how Washington helped the Indonesian government slaughter more than a million people because of their politics.

Even when regime changes “work” in the near term, they inflict a ghastly toll on the people in the targeted country. The U.S. would do well to reject regime change, covert or otherwise, and to respect the sovereignty and independence of other states instead. The U.S. should also avoid another Cold War with a major power rival that leads to such monstrous crimes as the mass murder in Indonesia.



Dylan Williams ✓
@dylanotes



Hook being shown the door is a tacit recognition by the administration that their Iran “strategy” has utterly failed, but replacing him with Elliot Abrams is just doubling down on disaster



Negar Mortazavi نگار مرتضوی ✓ @NegarMortazavi · 12h

Brian Hook was asked to leave to take the fall for Trump's failed Iran strategy, a former senior official says.

“If you thought it was a successful strategy, I don’t know why you’d fire the envoy.”

[washingtonpost.com/national-secur..](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/)

8:37 PM · Aug 6, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Previous Editions of PCIA Advocacy Bulletin

Earlier editions of the PCIA Advocacy Bulletin can be found at [this link](#).

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.

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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



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