

Special Edition

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The Cyrus Cylinder استوانه کوروش or Cyrus Charter منشور کوروش was discovered under the foundation of a Babylonian palace in 1879, making it perhaps the oldest time capsule on record. It commemorates Cyrus' victory over Babylonia in 539 BC and sets out the rights of subjects in his expanding empire. It is often commemorated as the oldest charter of human rights in the world.

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This War Must End

Note from the Editor, Paul Barker

We are now entering the third week of the US-Israel war against Iran. If you consider the current fighting to be a continuation of the war which was launched in June 2025, we are now in the 9th month of the war. We cannot remain silent and still claim allegiance to our roots as volunteers who worked for global peace and understanding.

This second Special Edition of the PCIA Advocacy Bulletin calls out and condemns the damage being inflicted on UNESCO world heritage sites in Iran, but is also mindful of the human suffering and economic and security losses being inflicted in countries between Iran and Israel. It suggests actions that peace activists can take to counter this disastrous war.

If articles in this bulletin resonate with you, please feel encouraged to send them to your legislators together with a personalized message, drawing on your personal experience in the Peace Corps and/or Iran. Call for opposition to supplemental requests for funding for the war against Iran and call for support of War Powers Resolutions to force Congress to reclaim its constitutional responsibilities.

The Advocacy Bulletin includes articles from diverse perspectives from people who have closely followed US-Iran relations for decades. Hopefully you will find them interesting and useful.

The Bombing of 'Half the World'

By Paul Barker, Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran 1971-76

Iranians call Isfahan “*Nesf-e Jahan*” or “Half the world” because of the beauty and richness of its historic architectural wonders. Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Lotfollah Mosque, the Blue Mosque (also called Shah’s Mosque and Imam’s Mosque), Jām’e Mosque, ‘Aāli Qapu Palace, Chehel Setun Palace, ancient bridges and a wondrous covered bazaar are all found in this amazing city. Much of this priceless heritage has now been damaged by reckless Israeli and American bombing, as has the Golestan Palace in Tehran and the pre-Islamic Sasanian fortress in Khoramabad.



Naqsh-e Jahan square

Through its actions, the US is now in the nefarious company of:

- ISIS for their bombing and destruction much of pre-Christian Roman Palmyra in Syria,
- Taliban for dynamiting the enormous ancient Buddhas in the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan,
- British and American forces for their total destruction of historic Dresden after D-Day, at the close of WWII when the Nazis had already lost, and
- British colonialists for their opium war era senseless and retributive burning of the priceless Yellow Palace in China when China stopped buying British opium.

As Peace Corps Volunteers in Iran between 1962 and 1976 we came to appreciate the richness of Iran’s architectural heritage as well as the beauty of its poetry and the gentle



Chehel Setun

kindness of its people. It is with overwhelming sadness that we now bear daily witness to the unfolding horror of the war which engulfs countries between Iran and Israel.

In criticizing the targeting practices of the US and Israeli air forces in Iran, we are not excusing the Iranian response that American bombing has provoked, which includes attacks on neighboring countries which had not directly attacked Iran.

We nonetheless note that this war was started by the US and Israel and not Iran. Without the authorization of Congress or the UN Security Council this war is in violation of US and international law. The toll on civilian lives and infrastructure is already great. We feel deeply the wisdom of the great 14th century Persian poet, Hafez, who wrote”

“The war among 72 nations has left all in misery.
Because they have not seen truth, they have created fairy tales.”

This senseless war must end as quickly as possible. The suffering of innocent people cease; the damage to the international economic and security order be mended; and that UNESCO recognized wonders be respected and restored. Legislative tools to hasten the end of the war must be used. These include blockage of supplemental funding requests for the war, and support for War Powers Resolutions (one of which has already narrowly failed). We call on the Peace Corps Community at large [or “the

entire Peace Corps Community] to participate in large scale demonstrations of opposition to the war. The scheduled No Kings Demonstrations on 28 March will provide opportunities for such public signs of resistance.

UNESCO's Nightmare, and Mine: Losing Our World Heritage

By Carolyn Yale, Shiraz 1974-76

There is one thing that I have believed would never come to pass in Iran: That there could be loss of its cultural treasures. I assumed (naïvely) that these places would be sacrosanct, spared in a conflict. What is happening now brings me to a point beyond anguish: An overwhelming sense of grief and outrage. First, Golestan Palace in Tehran. Now Israeli missiles aimed at the Governor's building in Esfahan, which is near the historic Naqsh-e-Jahan square, have damaged several UNESCO Heritage sites there. So the Governor's building is a security threat? (Or is this an errant exercise in regime change?) I would hazard a guess that neither Trump nor Netanyahu gives a second thought to bombing areas of profound historical and aesthetic significance. Valuing such things is beyond their ken.

Civilians, hospitals, schools, historic/cultural sites ... all are incidental collateral damage. If Gaza is any indication, it is apparent that the Israeli military will stop at nothing; nothing will assuage their country's lust for 'security.' And I doubt that the US, led by a man who glories in gaudy trappings of wealth, and has shown no respect for (or even knowledge of?) history or cultural heritage, will know or care about the accomplishments of "Persia."



Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

I have visited Esfahan many times, always making sure to pass through the square and the mosques there—Sheik Lotfallah and the splendid Masjed-e-Shah, with its blue tiles. In all my years and travels, I have seen nothing that equals the sensitive craftsmanship and utter beauty of these mosques—particularly the *Sheikh Lotfallah mosque*, built under Safavid rule in the early 17th century. Over the centuries admirers from many countries and cultures have remarked on its extraordinary beauty. Entering Lotfallah I sense I am in the presence of something that, in proportion and creative vision of the tilework, rises above particulars.

Such inspired and inspiring places are part of our shared humanity. To destroy them is barbaric. This insane war must end before there's nothing left of us.

A note on UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

In cooperation with the relevant national government, UNESCO lists sites of cultural, historical and natural significance. There are protocols for protecting these sites. Iran ranks ninth among all countries, with 29 designated sites. Israel withdrew from UNESCO when Palestine was recognized as a nation, and the Trump administration has announced that the US will withdraw at the end of 2026.

In Tehran, the Golestan Palace, a UNESCO cultural heritage building was damaged in a nearby missile strike. In Esfahan, the Shah Abbas Mosque and Chehel Setun, both UNESCO sites, have been damaged. To my knowledge, Lotfallah mosque remains intact

See [this link](#).



Blue Mosque

No Funding for Trump's Unconstitutional War on Iran

March 12, 2026

Dear U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives,

We, the **undersigned 251 organizations**, have a range of institutional missions and mandates, but are united in seeking an end to an unconstitutional, unauthorized U.S. war. **We therefore urge you to vote against any additional funding for Trump's unconstitutional war on Iran**, including the reported supplemental appropriations bill that could provide \$50 billion or more for this devastating war.

By launching a war against Iran, Trump has violated the Constitution, defied international law, flouted the will of the American people, and has put millions of lives across the region at risk. A vote for President Trump's Pentagon supplemental funding package would be a vote to commit the U.S. even further to this crisis, which has already killed seven U.S. servicemembers and nearly 2,000 people from across the region, and which endangers the lives of many more.

The Constitution assigns responsibility for authorizing war solely to Congress to ensure that the president does not unilaterally impose the costs and tradeoffs of armed conflict. Congress and the administration have slashed crucial programs as Americans experience soaring economic costs across the board. Waging a war of choice that costs an estimated \$1 billion a day not only fails to address the economic squeeze and healthcare crisis facing working Americans, it also diverts federal funding that could otherwise be utilized.

The Pentagon budget already now totals more than \$1 trillion, after the extra \$150 billion the agency received in the tax and budget reconciliation bill. The \$50 billion that the administration reportedly seeks for a new Pentagon supplemental would be enough to restore food assistance for four million Americans that was taken away in the tax and budget reconciliation bill, establish universal pre-K education, and pay for the annual construction of more than 100,000 units of housing, among other possible priorities. Congress must not allow the illegal commencement of hostilities to force a de facto decision to prioritize warmaking over other needs.

The choice before Congress is whether it will choose to prevent this unconstitutional war from dragging out and potentially escalating or enabling dangerous and deadly protracted conflict. We urge you to refuse funding for this illegal war that Congress never authorized and a majority of the American people oppose.

Sincerely,

251 organizations, including PCIA

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Statement on the US-Israel-Iran War
Board of Directors Peace Corps Iran Association
March 4, 2026

Fifty years ago (between 1962 and 1976) we served as Peace Corps Volunteers in Iran. We worked in Iranian schools and offices. We lived in Iranian communities. We earned salaries comparable to those of our Iranian counterparts. We learned to speak Farsi and to appreciate the depths of Iranian friendship and hospitality. Some of us even married Iranians. Our love and appreciation of many things Iranian has endured over the decades.

We know enough history to know that our country has sometimes been a strong ally and sometimes a foolish enemy of Iranian national aspirations for a better life with dignity, freedom and prosperity. We are pained to witness now some of the worst strands of that history repeated and amplified. Our country has become the major party to a war of choice against Iran, launched in defiance of American laws and the US Constitution as well as international laws and structures. The war is highly destabilizing to regional and likely global economic and political security.

We are deeply sympathetic to the aspirations of the Iranian people for a government that reflects the values animating recent anti-government demonstrations: Women's rights, life and freedom (*zan, zendigi, azadi*). We are also deeply aware of the limitations of American military power when it comes to affecting positive change in foreign societies. We are mindful of the costs to international order when laws and conventions are willfully violated. We know that it is easy to blow things up, and ever so complicated to create and build on solid foundations for a better future.

We call on the US Congress to reclaim its constitutional responsibility for debating and making consequential decisions of war and peace. We urge the American people to deepen their understanding of what is being done to the Iranian people in our name. And we extend to the Iranian people our memories of and hope for a deep and enduring legacy of friendship. May leaders in both of our countries find a way to that worthy future.

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.

John Limbert Interviews:

- [Epic Fury Day 2](#), Newsmax, 2026/3/2
- [Day 6 of Israel-US-Iran War](#), Newsmax, 2026/3/6
- [Mojtaba Khamenei Named as Supreme Leader](#), Newsmax, 2026/3/7
- [Centcom: 7th US Service Member Killed](#), Newsmax, 2026/3/8

War Damage

[US and Israel Strikes Damage 17th-Century Palace in Isfahan](#). The Safavid-era Chehel Sotoun palace, known for its richly detailed frescoes, is among several landmarks impacted in the recent attacks. Rhea Nayyar, 2026/3/10

[Strikes on Iran Damage Cultural Heritage Sites, Infuriating Iranians](#). Revered cultural icons that have withstood the upheavals of history are being hit hard in the war being waged by Israel and the United States. Farnaz Fassihi, NYT, 2026/3/10

[As Hell Rains Down on Iran, Western Media averts its Gaze](#). Kamin Mohammadi, Informed Comment, 2026/3/15

[Iran's Samson Option: Gulf Oil Reprisals for Kharg would Crash the World Economy](#). [Juan Cole](#), Informed Comment, 2026/3/14

[When Your Country Attacks Your Homeland](#), Orly Noy on being Iranian and Israeli during this horrific war, Beinart Notebook, 2026/3/11

Why This War?

[Phillips O'Brien on Iran](#). How clueless are our leaders? Very. Paul Krugman Interview, 2026/3/14

[Trump's Nuclear Hoax](#), Joe Cirincione and David Corn, Strategy & History, 2026/3/15. "This may be the worst planned war in history."

[What Trump Didn't Know About Iran](#), Ezra Klein interviews Ali Vaez, The Ezra Klein Show, 2026/3/15

[Bernie Sanders Holds Conversation With Iran Experts About Ongoing Iran War](#). Trita Parsi, Negar Mortazavi and Sina Toossi on Forbes Breaking News, 2026/3/12

[The Unbelievable Madness of Our War With Iran](#). Last year, I warned about the possibility that Israel might drag the United States into a regional conflict. What's happening now is worse than I could have ever imagined. Anelle Sheline, The New Republic, 2026/3/10

['Boogeyman mullahs': How decades of anti-Iran hysteria set us on the path to war](#). [Nura Hossainzadeh](#), Middle East Eye, 2026/3/10. Western portrayals of the Islamic Republic as irrational and one-dimensional, devoid of political complexity, have helped ingrain prejudice and normalise a once-unthinkable war

How Can The War End?

["Iran Will Decide When this Ends:" Juan Cole on Sam Seder's "Majority Report"](#)

[Trump faces prospect of no decisive win in Iran war.](#) “We don’t want to go back every two years,” Trump said today, as analysts see the growing prospect of an indecisive conclusion to the U.S. war on Iran. Laura Rozen, Diplomatic, 2026/3/11

[Trump’s War Alliance With Israel Is Reshaping the Middle East. But It Carries Risks.](#) President Trump is the first American leader to embrace fighting a full-fledged, joint war with Israel. Washington has tried to avoid that level of coordination in the past. Anton Troianovski, NYT, 2026/3/13

[China’s Middle East envoy touring in the region to mediate between Iran, America and Israel to stop the war.](#) Nadia Helmy, Modern Diplomacy, 2026/3/14

[The Israel-US and Iran War: A Geostrategic Transformation.](#) Zakir Hussain, ME Monitor, 2026/3/14

[How Will Mojtaba Khamenei Rule Iran — and for How Long?](#) What Mojtaba Khamenei’s succession could mean for Iran’s politics, regional posture, and relations with the United States, Barbara Slavin, Stimson Institute, 2026/3/11

[Mojtaba Khamenei’s First Letter Signals Escalation and a Wartime Doctrine for Iran,](#) NIAC Insights, 2026/3/13

[Israel ‘Wants a Failed State’ in Iran: Ben Rhodes Slams the War and the Dems’ Weak Response to It.](#) Zeteo, 2026/3/13

[Is Trump’s War in Iran Justified? A Debate.](#) Trita Parsi and Matthew Kroenig debate. Foreign Policy, 2026/3/12

[How Will the War in Iran End?](#) Jeremy Scahill, Vali Nasr, Rula Jebreal, Mehdi Hassan, Zeteo, 2026/3/12

[Iran’s Islamic Republic 2.0 is coming — and it won’t be pretty.](#) How Trump’s tactical victory could turn into a forever war. David Ignatius, WAPO, 2026/3/12

[Trump’s war is a gift to Iran’s hardliners.](#) Conflict risks strengthening the country’s most confrontational actors while narrowing the space for reformists. Emad Khatemi, Responsible Statecraft, 2026/3/13

[Pahlavi’s ‘call to arms’ draws fire from Iranian dissidents, government supporters,](#) Amwaj, 2026/3/15

[Why Americans Should Root for Iran,](#) Robert Wright, The Earthling, 2026/3/14

Nuclear Concerns

[Trump won’t say what happens if Iran keeps its uranium stockpiles.](#) The White House used the existence of enriched uranium to justify the war — but seizing it would likely require ground troops, Vaughn Hillyard, Ian Sherwood and David Rohde, MSNow 2026/3/11

[U.S. Negotiators Were Ill-Prepared for Serious Nuclear Negotiations with Iran,](#) Kelsey Davenport, ACA, 2026/3/11

Sina Toosi Commentary 2026/3/11:

- [Iran's Strategic Patience Tactic Failed. What Comes Next Could Be Far Worse.](#) *Al Jazeera English*, I argue that Iran's long-standing strategy of "strategic patience" collapsed with the outbreak of war and that the lesson Tehran may draw is that only nuclear deterrence can guarantee its security.
- [Iran Supreme Leader Mystery Regime – Mojtaba Khamenei.](#) In *The Guardian*, I examined the appointment of Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, arguing that his selection reflects a wartime logic of continuity and the central role of Iran's security establishment in sustaining the regime.

Below is a brief comment on the broader strategic picture emerging from the war so far:

"The war with Iran was launched on a set of assumptions that now appear deeply flawed. Many in Washington believed Iran was a "paper tiger," that the regime was brittle and could collapse under one more push, and that a military confrontation would be relatively low-cost.

"In reality, Iran had already [demonstrated](#) significant resilience and retaliatory capability over the past decade: the 2019 strike on Saudi Aramco, the destruction of large portions of the Al Asad airbase in Iraq in January 2020, the ability to penetrate layered U.S. and Israeli air defenses in the April and October 2024 exchanges, and the June 2025 war, when Iranian strikes hit major targets in Israel [including](#) the Haifa refinery, the Weizmann Institute, and [several](#) military and intelligence facilities.

"Despite this record, the dominant narrative in Washington became that Iran had been severely weakened to the point of imminent collapse. The course of this war so far suggests otherwise. The Strait of Hormuz remains effectively closed, Iran has absorbed significant blows yet continues sustained ballistic missile and drone attacks across the region, and strikes have reportedly inflicted serious damage on U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf, THAAD batteries, and critical radar systems. Israeli targets have also been hit, though the extent remains difficult to assess given tight wartime censorship.

"The result is a conflict that increasingly resembles a strategic quagmire for the United States. How it ends could have far-reaching consequences—not only for the regional balance of power, but also for U.S. credibility, alliances, and its broader strategic position in a rapidly changing global order."

[Economic Pressure on Iranian Society Amid the Expanding War](#), NIAC 2026/3/11

History

[Michael Hudson: Persia's Monopoly Concessions to Britain, 1872-1901](#), Yves Smith, Naked Capitalism, 2026/3/14

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 in this issue are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the Board of PCIA. Letters and contributions to the Advocacy Bulletin are most welcome and may be submitted to the editor at Paul@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](#).