

Give Peace a Chance!

by the Rev. Robert Moore

On July 14, after nearly two years of tough negotiations, an Agreement on the Iran Nuclear Issue was reached. For obviously partisan reasons, many Republicans came out against the agreement before it was even delivered to them. On August 6, the Senate's third ranking Democrat, Chuck Schumer, also came out against it.

I am reminded of a slogan many of us used in opposing the Vietnam War: *Give Peace a Chance!* Polls show that a majority of Americans support this Agreement, and want it to be implemented. But Congress now has until September 17 to take action and could reject the deal, possibly even over-riding a promised Presidential veto.

Walking away from this hard-won agreement will result in Iran being able to get a bomb in as little as two weeks, while having international sanctions collapse. The US would be soon face another disastrous Middle East War, far worse than the ones in Afghanistan and Iraq.

A decade ago, the Bush Administration walked away from a nuclear agreement with North Korea. In response they withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and simply raced to a bomb with no constraints.

The hard won Iran agreement is based on verification, not trust. While Iran's behavior until the Interim Agreement freezing and taking initial steps toward curtailing Iran's nuclear program in November 2013 generated doubts, almost all experts rate their compliance since then as excellent.

The verification of the Iran Nuclear Agreement would be the strongest, most intrusive in history. There will be 24-7 monitoring of all declared sites for the entire nuclear production chain, from uranium mining to its final use. Suspect covert sites would be subject to prompt, intrusive inspections.

Yes, some of the limits on Iran's centrifuges and amount of enriched uranium it can possess begin to sunset after 10-15 years. Diplomacy requires compromise, and this is the best agreement that could be reached after very difficult negotiations. It keeps Iran at least one year away from obtaining a bomb for up to 15 years. The strongest in history inspections remain in place for 25 years, with most continuing permanently.

Several scientific experts with whom we work recently published an article in *Science Magazine* with the excellent proposal to continue negotiating with Iran during the 10-15 years this agreement buys to pursue multi-nationalizing their enrichment program—an idea Iran previously proposed. This would mean a number of countries would have significant monitoring and control over its enrichment, and should prevent it from being used for nuclear weapon purposes.

US officials in charge of Iran sanctions put the amount of sanctions relief, which only begins after Iran complies with the key restrictions above, at about \$50 billion. While that's a lot of money, Iran's government will remain under tremendous pressure, especially from the 60% of its population that is under 30, to invest in its civilian economy rather than supporting terrorism.

I find Iran's support of terrorism to be reprehensible, but no one agreement can realistically deal with all problems. Terrorism-related sanctions will remain in place, and we should pursue other measures to press Iran to cease such behavior. Just as with the former USSR, we should curtail nuclear weapons as an essential international security need, while pursuing other problems in parallel.

I urge supporters of the Agreement to immediately contact their two US Senators and US Representative through the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and urge their support, or, at a minimum, that they oppose any Resolution of Disapproval. Help *Give Peace a Chance!* Visit peacecoalition.org or call 609-924-5022 for further information.

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