

[A great heart felt thank you to all the Iranian citizens who showed and continue to show the world personal courage and integrity. This is leadership in action, humanity in action from which we can all learn, and honor. We are watching. I know so many who are sending you prayers, ears, eyes, and hearts. We wish all Iranians well.

The recent events prove Iranian people have long been ready for the kind of leadership called for in this article.

The critical issue discussed has also only multiplied in relevance and importance during this most challenging moment. The nuclear issue may not be immediately visible in the current unknowing, and struggle for survival, but it is deeply involved in the situation.

The article was re-written some weeks before the momentous June 12th election. When I wrote below about the world focusing on you, all eyes being on you, I was talking about the attention being given before the election was even in consideration or a factor, and long before the live TV debates with your candidates. That world attention has now magnified a hundred fold, despite for the moment the press being curtailed.

The article is an extension of a March 2007 presentation attempt to Iran. A single page proposal was presented to The Ambassador's Office of Iran's UN Mission in NYC a few months ago, and before that in the spring of 2008, at the time of President Ahmadinejad's visit to Columbia University here in NYC. It was also put up on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZm7wzC4Nbk>) and my website (<http://www.anthonydonovan.com>) in April 2008.

Since writing, President Barack Obama in Cairo on June 4th addressed Iran directly and offered a sincere hand to meet and work together. He especially mentioned this topic; a world free of all nuclear weapons, and the futility and danger of the arms race. There are claims that the protests were of Western influence, but that is a poor excuse. Events are primarily a mirror of Iran's deep soul. My heart goes out. I support the balance and good to prevail. AD, June 20th, 2009)

Article updated June 2nd, 2009

Title: Have your nuclear weapons, but one favor, help us all to get rid of them.

Dear People of Iran,

The gift of opportunity shines on you today. You have a most rare set of circumstances to truly lead the world in our nuclear challenge. I'm asking you to urge your leadership to bring the nuclear powers back to the table. You may be the only ones who can do this, where the citizenry around the world is largely asleep to the hidden reality that the arms race is full swing.

You have every right to develop nuclear weapons. Your intelligence agency and scientists have worked long and hard. The US and the West have no right to dictate what you can or can't do. If you continue with this pursuit, you join the consortium of assumed empowerment, security, respect, and fear.

Good for you?

Or, perhaps after the gratification of accomplishment, you will awaken to show the kind of great leadership that happens only rarely in human history. Perhaps you might be prescient enough to see this flawed illusion of security for what it is, and recognize the extraordinary opportunity that exists at this very moment, to show what true deep wisdom and inspiration can be, a brilliance that only comes with the highest of human capabilities. Perhaps you would awaken to the reality that in 2009 not only can you do something about Iran's security and position in the world, but you also have the stage to show us the shallowness and wastefulness of stockpiling and securing weapons that must never be used. You can expose the peril and insecurity that the nuclear countries have given the world.

By joining the nuclear club, the very land where the great journey of civilization was nourished, Iran becomes part of our gravest problem.

It may seem hypocritical, but I see one magnificent silver lining with the dawn of your having this ominous technology; You getting the world refocused on what we can positively accomplish together. The good jobs for humanity over mostly military related jobs. Millions have long been tired of the world powers holding this shadow upon the world. Perhaps your scholars can reiterate the reality that throughout history, the balance of power has always been very short-lived illusion. All arms races have continuously changing finish lines, without rest periods.

There is no race here. The opportunity for betterment is always present. Which direction do you wish to go? Enlightened leaders have changed the world, lending humanity periods and pockets of stability, trade, prosperity and good relations between peoples. The land of Iran has had its share of leaders from the ancient Zoroaster, whose teachings remain one of humanity's original beacons of light. Christianity can recall where The Wise Men came from.

A good friend quipped to me today, "Peace *is* a conflict of interest." Doesn't that say it well? I think we owe it to ourselves, and our families, to have the courage to face this. That conflict is with our military related industries, which happens to also be the largest influence in who gets to represent we the people.

We know we still need an efficient military, but military establishments around the world continue to over thrive by maintaining our fears of each other, selling us on how they keep us "safe." The percent of military spending is at a record high this past year (10% increase), especially in China and the US. Worldwide, these industries expend most of our capital and resources, while in our dire financial crisis, remind us how their industry is necessary for our economies. We as people need to put food on the table, and yes, our military related industries grow as a prime employer. We can transform these industries toward more positive jobs, and our greater common needs.

As tied as our President Obamas' hands may be with our military industries, he would be more able to respond with an outpouring of good intentions, great ideas, and pressures that come from others. All great leaders need others, need us. Positive initiatives would greatly help him stem our own insidious militarism.

Why you, and how?

Iran, all eyes are on you. All concern and attention is with you. Mounting fears and the press are focusing and thriving on you. This is a rare chance of relevance in global affairs, to turn the world on it's head, in the clear and right direction.

By saying to the Nuclear powers—China, Russia, the US, UK, Pakistan, India, France, and Israel—that you will consider transparency, non proliferation and nuclear disarmament under this condition: that they urgently come back to the table, that they all show commitment to begin again doing the same as they ask of you, and with all sincerity begin this task with verifiable results.

Too much to ask? Will it work with one feeble attempt? Of course not. Is it not worth a sincere try? And another? What is the worst that can happen? Perhaps, no immediate change in military policy, and more threats? But what might then come from the support of having the world's people praise you? In the end, light dispels the dark, at the speed of light. And just maybe, a whole lot more good could come out of this. Courage strengthens.

The prosperity and mutual benefits of Iran coming forth with this boldness, this wisdom in action, are immeasurable.

With your wanted or unwanted international pulpit, perhaps your scientists can remind us all what scientists have known and warned of since the 1940's: that one nuclear explosion would be more devastating than any war or genocide. Iran being a proponent of international law knows that a single nuclear warhead throws away the decades of human sacrifice, achievement and struggle. It breaks all international law, all humanitarian law, all our international conventions, and what may be left of any laws of armed conflict. It is far beyond criminality. This particular widely misunderstood device's use is against Allah's teachings.

It's appropriate to say, "tell your own country this, not us!" You are right, we do. This is not a personal attack against Iran. It is in support of Iran. It has from the start been about our one shared delicate ecosystem, our species' survival, our common humanity. It is about a rule of law that we can all *live* with.

Correct me if I lack accuracy with this nutshell of your nuclear history: Iran signed the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty in 1968, which legally allowed it to develop research, and production "to be used for peaceful purposes". Who urged this development, and the year before supplied the Nuclear Research Centre at Tehran University with its first research reactor? Yes, the United States. It was business as usual, the nuclear industry lobbying and selling themselves hard, diminishing or ignoring any drawbacks. Nuclear plants have always been huge business deals for those few profiting in China, Russia, the US, France, Germany, India, etc.

I've never been against scientific and nuclear research, on the contrary. You might say nuclear energy and nuclear armament material are two very separate matters. Many say this, especially those powers above in the industry. And then, you might wish to look at how they have been intimately related and entwined from the start. One not so minor fact just might be that nuclear

reactors with their never ending tons of multi-mellenium lasting lethal waste provide a fine source from which weapons grade material is separated.

In 1973 the Shah decided to build several nuclear reactors. Construction began by Germany's Siemens Company in 1974 in Bushehr. France also soon signed deals to build two plants. Our nuclear industry complaining it was being left out, shouted and in 1978 President Carter signed an agreement to build 8 nuclear power plants in Iran. But the Islamic Revolution quickly ensued and all these foreign agreements fell through and construction halted. Should the Shah's statue now be erected in front of these plants that have made this great emergence of "power" possible?

After many of the reactors were destroyed in the devastating Iraq invasion of your land and that tragic long war, Argentina and Spain offered in the late 1980's to rebuild them. The contracts fell through and China came in to supply four research reactors at the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Centre. Russia stepped in with the reconstruction of Bushehr. China also had contracts to build plutonium production reactors at Esfahan and Darkhovin. I'm unclear if these contracts were completed.

Our infamous President inappropriately, and irresponsibly labeled your nation an "axis of evil," and serious inquiries were pressed. In response, on October 21st 2003, in a response to the International Atomic Energy Agency at the UN, Iran officially reported that your scientists had indeed conducted experiments in plutonium separation techniques. It also stated that between 1988 and 1992 Iran maintained experiments with reprocessing. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei rightly issued a fatwa in 2005 saying the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons was forbidden under Islam. Intelligence indicates there may be some fatwa loopholes?

May I give just a few highlights of our human struggle in opposition to nuclear weapons?

From the start in 1945 many of the scientists who designed and built the nuclear bomb in the "Manhattan Project", disagreed with their use on a virtually defeated Japan. They publicly recognized the extreme danger of their new technology and quickly established the Federation of American Scientists, gathering some 3,000 members at the time. One of the greatest of them, Albert Einstein helped form "the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists" devoting themselves to publicizing nuclear dangers, and championing nuclear disarmament. Einstein believed we catastrophically had no idea what we had in our hands. With Soviet spy infiltration of the Manhattan Project from the start, they had a nuclear device within four years. This information would take only decades to be secretly spread to the corners of the world. The genie was out of this ominous lantern, the race of death was on. Our Korean war briefly muffled the anti-nuclear movement, as many wars do. Wars are used to justify themselves with heightened militaristic rhetoric drowning out voices of reason, mainly for those substituting gullibility for patriotism.

In 1954, among other world leaders, India's Prime Minister Nehru led the group of non-aligned nations in criticizing H-bomb tests in the Pacific Ocean. The US Senate introduced legislation to move toward disarmament, and to halt nuclear tests, citing their severe radiation hazards.

What would Nehru think today? Soon after India's first nuclear testing in 1998, Indian citizens formed the Coalition for Nuclear Peace and Disarmament with doctors, scientists, academics, writers, and social activists, stating that their people were so preoccupied with everyday problems that they understood nothing about what these weapons were. This ignorance, they warned, was the earth's greatest peril. By 2002, India would have an estimated 150 nuclear warheads and growing, with Pakistan fast trying to catch up. Commonly, this Coalition in India, and all who agreed with them were accused of being unpatriotic, and told that they should instead be proud of India joining the big power's nuclear club. Sound familiar Iran? How are those who oppose nuclear power and/or nuclear armament development esteemed? Which leaders call for transparency and disarmament today?

In 1955 fifty two Nobel Laureates signed a warning to cease nuclear weapon building. That same year over 2000 scientists signed a petition and delivered it to the White House. Two years later, scientists from both the East and West met at Pugwash finding common ground immediately. By the beginning of 1958 the United Nations was given another petition signed by 9, 235 scientists, including 37 more Nobel Laureates urging with all vigor, the cessation of all nuclear weapon testing. Hundreds of citizen and professional groups began forming to hold vigils and protests outside testing and launch areas, armament manufacturing centers, and transport sites for missiles and nuclear material.

In 1957 the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) was founded and soon had over 25,000 members and over a hundred chapters. A rally filled New York's Madison Square Garden. U.S. President Eisenhower listened and offered to stop nuclear testing for one year provided that the Soviet Union also refrained. His offer wasn't taken, but it was a start.

President Dwight Eisenhower, America's great general who helped rid the world of fascism, responded to these movements positively, warning us himself about his concern of the rise of our own military industrial complex. He also stated "I think that people want peace so much that one of these days government better get out of the way and let them have it."

In 1960 numerous people partook in a Walk for Peace beginning in San Francisco through the US and Europe to Moscow. It took them 10 months.

With much back room work between USSR's leader Krushchev and President Kennedy, the first partial nuclear test ban was signed. It was a start. For millions of us practicing futile drills by placing ourselves under desks at school and work, noting the symbol for where the bomb shelters were, and those in the suburbs who built their own backyard or basement shelters, stockpiling food, it was a great moment to exhale briefly.

Two decades later I would have the honor to meet a prophetic statesman who would become a dear personal mentor, Ambassador Zenon Rossides of Cyprus. When Cyprus won statehood, he was its first representative to the United Nations. His first public address to the world forum in 1960, was like all of his, without a prepared text, and full of conviction. Without hesitancy he faced the powers that be (namely China, USSR and the US) and charged that their arms negotiations were “a stagnant pretense to deceive the people that something was being done about the arms race, which is a galloping reality.” He was right then, and continues to be. He would go on to say “We, the small countries, say listen to the scientists! Get rid of the idea of accumulating nuclear weapons.... Why spend billions of dollars on weapons that must never be used?!” Until his death in 1990 he pushed for a UN getting back to its original purpose of becoming a forum for true collective security, a positive concept, more than just trying to keep count of the numbers of our weapons for a “balance of power”. He repeatedly encouraged us wisely with “It is not the power of weapons, but the power of Spirit that can save the world.”

Stressing his vision in 1962 and 1963 in meetings with President Kennedy, at the White House they “hit it off”. Kennedy was curious and responsive, affirming his wish to meet and further explore the possible strategies, but was taken from this world soon after, by who knows whom. Ambassador Rossides would send a lament the day after his assassination, “President Kennedy’s dedication to the cause of peace, justice and freedom engaged the conscience of mankind, and made of him a symbol of its trust and hope for survival and human progress amid the growing dangers of self-annihilation in a nuclear age.”

John Lennon’s song *Imagine* would become a top hit around the world in 1971. In Germany that year local citizens, farmers, housewives, and businessmen sat down in front of the bulldozers arriving at a new nuclear construction site. Police cleared the area by using water cannons and made arrests. Some held out overnight. Within a week 28,000 from all over Germany and France arrived in support. The site stayed occupied for over a year, educating others about nuclear issues as the case went to the courts. Six years later the panel of judges finally ruled against a plant being built. Dedication.

All the great anti-war marches on Washington involving millions, from the 1960’s to the end of the Vietnam war always had large specific contingents of people with banners against nuclear weapons. It was an issue inseparable from the protest and business of war. Without naivete on recognizing we still need efficient militaries, we saw this as distinct profiteering, the ultimate ominous extension of an uncontrolled “military industrial complex”. When is enough ever enough?

There are too many specifically focused nuclear armament actions to list, and too numerous an amount of people that made personal sacrifices protesting. I’ll share a few of the larger engagements remembered, where at least a portion were jailed for civil disobedience, blocking entrances, occupying grounds.

Seabrook Nuclear site 1976, 1,414 people arrested. Diablo Canyon, August 1978, almost 500 people arrested. In Groton more than 3000 people came to support blocking the first nuclear-armed submarine’s launch. Over 200 people were jailed. That year in Oklahoma, 500

people were arrested for protesting the construction of a nuclear power plant, which led to three years of legal action and protests resulting in the State deciding not to build the plant. A single protest that same year at Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant in New York landed 600 citizens in jail. Ten years of court battles and continuous protests finally closed down that facility.

Ask any UN member who attended the First Special Session on Disarmament in 1978 what they experienced and heard on their way to work. Outside the UN offices over 20,000 people stood and called out to them, organized by “Mobilization for Survival.”

Less than a year later the Three Mile Island nuclear facility accident ignited many hundreds of protests all around the country over many months. In NYC alone, 200,000 rallied in the streets. A series of sold out concerts ensued at Madison Square Garden called “No Nukes” for a “Non-nuclear future” organized and performed by stars Bonnie Raitt, Graham Nash, Jackson Brown, John Hall, Bruce Springsteen and many others. We were not thinking of Iran to be non-nuclear, but for the US and the world to be non-nuclear.

In 1980 citizens broke into a General Electric plant with hammers damaging the Mark 12A nuclear warheads (a new first-strike weapon). Their high profile prosecution was one of many that battled on for ten years in the courts. Constant actions continued for years at Diablo Canyon nuclear site and in one September day in 1981 more than 900 protesters were again arrested.

On June 21 1982, 1,400 blockaders disrupted business as usual at the Livermore [Nuclear] Laboratories and were arrested. Soon after, 1,691 blockaded the United Nations offices of those having nuclear weapons. Then, in one week in August major demonstrations sprang up in every US city. The largest demonstration in history, one million of us, marched down the streets of New York City, all for an end to the nuclear arms race.

It's easy to remember those million faces. We were so encouraged by the selflessness and spontaneous community in diversity around us. We were serious, passionate, dedicated and caring for something greater than ourselves. We couldn't be anywhere else that day. Those protesting were teachers, doctors, professionals of all walks of life, races, religious and non-religious, young and old. Most took off from work, interrupted comforts of their lives, some risked their reputations, jobs and were tainted with criminal records, laboring through the rigors of our court system, all to support their universal hopes for disarmament in our world, peacefully protesting all powers that would have it otherwise.

These are just some of the millions of people who would hail Iran's leadership in this matter. It is not a military power telling you what to do. It is people around the world who are asking you, people who remain concerned for you as much as for themselves.

We've had to take on many wearying social and political humanitarian battles, but until resolved this one remains vital. An organization called Greenpeace gained supporters internationally in

the 1980's risking their lives (and tragically losing some) by bravely sailing boats into French and other oceanic nuclear testing sites. These Nuclear Free Seas campaigns resulted in all countries agreeing and signing to ban any nuclear weapons on all surface ships in 1987. The executive directors of Greenpeace were later arrested in Tianamen Square protesting China's nuclear program. What may seem small personal protests remain indispensable, continuing to educate around the world.

There was little let up. At our underground nuclear test site at Nevada in 1986, thousands protested, 154 were jailed. Then a taste of the worst happened. That year we experienced what we all have been assured would never happen. On April 26th, 1986 from an obscure area in the Soviet Union, now in the Ukraine, despite the claim of a safe clean up, the world was polluted by a nuclear plant called Chernobyl, the less visible effects of which will last generations.

For those who maintain nuclear weapons and the "peaceful uses of nuclear power" are unrelated issues, this single accident released four hundred times more radioactive fallout than the Hiroshima bomb, and spread it far further into our shared atmosphere.

We are still assured our safety by the same people. There have been numerous other lesser accidents not publicized. Because of extensive cover-ups by the Soviet Union, and even complicity by our media letting the story fade (the nuclear business is big business worldwide) we have never had a full accounting of cancer deaths or deformities, illnesses, nor complete study of the full effects in the region. I know a nun who to this day cares for orphans in the area. She tells me over 20 years later, she cares for many who are born deformed or with side effects.

From 1986 to 1994 often calling themselves "Peace Test" rather than "nuclear test" demonstrations, in the US alone there were well over 500 mass citizen actions and 15,740 recorded arrests.

In many of the court cases the legal argument used by the defense was the "necessity argument": The argument that people *had* to act out of a moral necessity, in order to prevent a greater harm or danger to society, to humanity.

Hundreds of sit-ins, fasting and candlelight vigils, and prayer groups were joined with massive protests organized by socially concerned religious based groups such as Pax Christi and Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker (firmly against nuclear weapons since the 1940s), The Friends (Quakers), to name just a couple that are still active today in this. The Pope, The Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King, Jr. and most all spiritual and moral leaders I can recall all issued statements supporting mankind's peaceful development and ending this specific great menace.

Numerous other notable interfaith groups and representatives of all religions joined hands in marches and/or making strong criticisms of the nuclear arms race, supporting measures for a multi-lateral nuclear arms freeze: The US Catholic Bishops, the World Council of Churches, the United Presbyterian Church, the Episcopal House of Bishops, the United Methodist Council of

Bishops, the National Council of Churches of Christ (comprised of thirty Protestant denominations, and many other churches.) The National Jewish Association, the America Jewish Congress, the Federation of Reform Synagogues, The Council of Jewish Federations, etc. They all knew that such weapons were the antithesis of the teachings of all our prophets and the origins of our faiths. There is no *smiting of an enemy* alone with a nuclear weapon, the world is too small, and the destruction too wide and horrifying.

In the US alone, many other diverse professional groups formed and issued strong anti nuclear statements, often joining together in common actions. To list just a few: Educators for Social Responsibility, Lawyers Committee for Nuclear Policy, Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control, Union of Concerned Scientists, Business Executives for National Security, Architects for Social Responsibility, Social Workers for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, Union of Concerned Psychoanalysts and Psychotherapists, Artists for Survival, Nurses for Social Responsibility, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (Soviet and American MD's), High Technology Professionals for Peace, and literally hundreds of others.

In 1982 even with a popular and hawkish President Reagan pushing and lobbying for stronger nuclear weaponry, polls ranged from 60-85% that the American people favored a freeze of nuclear weapons. 25 Senators put their name on a proposal to freeze them. With thousands of military industry lobbyists then flooding Washington, the resulting bill lost, but just by two votes in the House, 204 to 202. The ever-close loss here was a devastating loss. Many individual State legislatures then went on to pass their own bills freezing any manufacturing or nuclear activity back home.

It is in this desperate but charged environment in 1982 that I began "World Peace?," a book based on personal conversations with 50 foreign diplomats brainstorming solutions on the arms race, terrorism, and our other pressing global challenges. When each were asked specifically about the nuclear arms race, most every one of them voiced grave concern, outrage, or discouragement. Each proposed more cooperation, joining for an end to the "madness." Only those counted on one hand who had these weapons, cited their necessity in maintaining a balance of power (meaning their own power) and in keeping the world "safe." The resulting work was given to all in the US Congress and all UN Missions.

In the US election of 1984, 64 percent of the candidates who ran on "pro freeze" platforms won, against the policy of the re-elected popular president. A House resolution (bipartisan) on a freeze was then overwhelmingly passed that year, 278 votes to 149. Unfortunately it was non-binding.

Although nothing would have been done without decades of daring individual exchanges of thousands of Soviet and US professionals and citizens on this issue (and others from around the world), the world owes a large debt to the reform lead by Mikhail Gorbachev in his few short lived years in power. In this brief time he made more positive progress on this issue than any single leader, or disarmament committee. Without his trusting and disarming openness, President Reagan would have continued his evil empire rhetoric while building warheads full speed ahead. Unlike Reagan, President Gorbachev was so moved by the outpourings of

disarmament protests in the West and the international citizen groups, that he admitted they strongly influenced his initiating the nuclear testing moratorium. This diplomatic activity then lead to a number of first measures in nuclear disarmament, including our first INF Treaty (the removal of U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range nuclear weapons from central Europe). He can hold his head high while he continues to be marginalized and unpopular with the militarists in his own land. Under President Putin Russia has lobbied themselves back to the arms race along with everyone else.

Iran, initiating such a negotiation would be a true turning point recognized by all those mentioned here, but more importantly, by future generations to come. There are many millions of us, in Iran and around the world, with similar hopes and vision, waiting for such leadership to emerge, to reflect the highest of our character, the highest of our promise. This is it. This is your chance. Please feel the support.

Anthony Donovan

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New York City