

1 February 2007

The Honorable Michael R. McNulty
2210 Rayburn
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Representative McNulty:

Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace greatly appreciates your participation at our 4th Anniversary Press Conference on January 21st – truly your press conference – and the eloquence of your remarks. Not every politician has the courage to say “I was wrong and you were right”; and of course we are gratified that you are realistic enough to recognize that the power of the purse is the only real power Congress has vis-à-vis this tone-deaf President.

We are writing now to ask you to help forestall an expected U.S. air attack on Iran. We are concerned that the President’s rhetoric about Iran as well as administration’s belligerent behavior resembles the period before the attack on Iraq. There is the same selective and faulty reading of intelligence about Iran’s potential military nuclear capability, the same dismissal of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in assessing the status of non-proliferation adherence, the same rejection of direct diplomacy, and now the same shifting between concerns over nuclear issues and political ones (regime change, support for insurgents).

We strongly urge you to read the enclosed “Position Statement on the Iranian Nuclear Issue” from the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, for it proceeds from eminently reasonable “Guiding Principles” and research-based recommendations. BNP fully endorses and adopts this statement.

We believe that an attack on Iran would be an ineffectual means to prevent nuclear proliferation and would embroil the United States in a war far worse than that in Iraq. Instead of fomenting a civil war between and among Sunni and Shi’ite factions, as in Iraq, a war on Iran would unite Iranians against us and could ignite a regional war. Instead of risking the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis and the collapse of Iraqi civil society, a war on Iran would risk a world-wide conflagration.

It is of course easy to garner emotional support from the American public for “regime change” in a nation supposedly headed by Ahmeninejad, but even had he not been elected in a fair, democratic election, our nation is obliged to refrain from seeking regime change by military means both by the UN Charter (which we are constitutionally required to follow) and by our democratic traditions. In no place is the hazard of imposing regime change more plain than in Iran, where the 1953 CIA-engineered coup against Mossadegh led to the Khomeini revolution of 1979 and the current theocratic control of the country.

Any concerns about Iran’s support of one or another of the Shi’ite factions in Iraq and of Hezbollah are, as the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group suggests, best addressed by direct diplomacy, which could also address issues related to nuclear proliferation. But we note that diplomacy involves give-and-take and not a set of ultimatums.

This letter was adopted by Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace at its general meeting of January 31.

Sincerely,