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How can we avoid war and solve the Iran crisis to
everyone's satisfaction?

To H.E. the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Paris

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The "Iran Crisis" has been going on for two years, and we're still hearing the noise of marching soldiers - more than ever, after the alarming words of President Sarkozy and his Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner.

And yet there exists a simple, peaceful, ecological and economic solution that seems almost designed to please everyone ... except the fanatics of the atom bomb. ACDN has expounded it three times to the principal parties the Iranians: in this letter; then in an interview with Mr Moujani, acting head of the Embassy; and then when Mr Moujani came to Saintes with an official delegation for the 2nd RID-NBC Rally, during the public discussion in which he kindly agreed to participate.

The Iranians we spoke to rejected this solution with arguments which we did not find altogether convincing. But at least they heard us expound it. The Ambassador of Israel, also invited on the Rally, did not even see fit to reply. As for the French Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, he would willingly have come.. only his superiors advised him against it.

A pity, wouldn't you say?

What exactly do they all want, these Iranian, Israeli, US ... and French diplomats and governments? Peace? War over nuclear weapons? Nuclear war for the sake of monopolising nuclear weapons? (*)

Saintes, 20 March 2006

H.E. Seyed Mohammad Sadegh KHARAZI

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

4, Avenue d'Iéna - 75116 Paris

Excellency,

ACDN is deeply concerned about the events surrounding the "Iran nuclear dossier", and has been trying for months to draw the attention of French public opinion and political leaders to the need to find a just and peaceful solution to the crisis.

We have helped to distribute the International Appeal of Parliamentarians and Civil Society regarding this dossier. On our website we have published numerous documents about it, most recently the letter sent to Friends of the Earth, Australia, by the Iranian embassy in Canberra.

This desire to make known the Iranian viewpoint on the crisis and to help towards its peaceful solution should not be

seen as a general approval of all the Iranian government's policies, or of the principles and practices of any state whatsoever which imposes on all citizens the rules of conduct drawn from a particular religion.

We protest particularly and with great vigour against the grave infringements of the basic rights of men, women and children, and the attacks on freedom of conscience and expression of which individuals and minority groups in Iran are the victims.

Similarly, we have difficulty believing in Iran's peaceful intentions when we hear its president ask for Israel to be rubbed off the map. Such statements lead us to doubt the assurances given by your country that no military use will be made of the skills and technical means that it is initially using for purposes of "civilian research". The fear expressed by numerous governments and by the IAEA that Iran may one day follow the detestable path of North Korea does not seem to us totally unfounded.

We therefore object in advance to any use of this letter which quotes only the passages favourable to Iran's views and which leaves out the grave concerns that we have just expressed.

Having said that, we still share the feeling that, despite very comprehensible fears, there is discrimination against Iran in the current crisis.

It is, for example, illogical that some states keep their nuclear weapons while forbidding others to obtain any. The NPT in article VI foresaw the removal of this historical contradiction by demanding that the *de jure* nuclear states - including France - should eliminate their arsenals. They must therefore implement without delay this undertaking which they signed.

Nor is it admissible that the *de facto* nuclear states like Israel, India and Pakistan should keep their weapons, and even that the international community should now be preparing to give so-called "civilian" technological assistance to one of them. Like Iran, and like all states with or without nuclear weapons, whether parties to the NPT or not, they must renounce these weapons.

The current crisis therefore raises a problem which is bigger than the single case of Iran - its solution lies in the elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, both in the Middle East and in the rest of the world, including France.

The crisis also shows how dangerous nuclear technology can be, both in itself as the Chernobyl catastrophe proved (and others), and because of its dual nature. This dangerousness suggests a solution where Iran could perhaps take the initiative, if it plays a sort of diplomatic gambit by sacrificing a pawn which is more dangerous than useful, despite appearances.

Indeed, Iran could renounce not only military but also non-military nuclear technology, and invest in energy savings and the development of renewable energy forms that cost nothing once established and cause scarcely any pollution: not only hydroelectric power generation -which you in any case plan to double- but also solar, wind, geothermal, and energy from the waves or ocean currents of the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea. Thereby, Iran could:

1. prove without possible debate that it is not trying to obtain nuclear technology and materials for military purposes, by renouncing them altogether;
2. satisfy its short-term energy needs while preparing for the changeover from gas and oil, at the distant time when

the reserves of uranium begin to run out;

3. avoid adding the possibility of nuclear catastrophe to the seismic risks that Iran already faces;

4. avoid facing the insoluble problem of nuclear wastes which the "nuclear provider" nations are struggling with in vain;

5. avoid all kinds of sanction, and instead benefit from international aid and commercial exchanges without any restriction;

6. stand in the vanguard, internationally, of

â€”

renunciation to nuclear power, actually an energy of the past,

â€”

development of renewable energies, which represent modernity and the future,

â€”

the struggle against the greenhouse effect,

â€”

the struggle against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and for nuclear disarmament, and therefore for the safeguarding of humankind.

Iran could then, in the strength of this freely chosen and exemplary renunciation:

- ▶ demand the application of the UN resolution in favour of a nuclear-free Middle East, including Israel - on condition naturally that the leaders of Iran recognize the Hebrew state and engage with it and the other states of the region, including the viable Palestinian state which must be created and recognised, with reciprocal security agreements that are really trustworthy;
- ▶ demand that the nuclear powers, who claim now that they can impose their rules on Iran, that they remember their own obligations and that they themselves renounce their nuclear weapons (article VI of the NPT);
- ▶ play a major role on the international scene as a pioneer of a nuclear-free world, for example by proposing a reform of the NPT (article IV) to replace the right to nuclear energy with the right to renewable energy and sustainable development, a right supported by the creation of a specific UN agency, which Iran would be the first to benefit from.

The world is at a turning-point. The "Iran nuclear crisis" is an opportunity to choose a path leading to a nuclear-free world without civilian or military nuclearism, a world reconciled with the planet and with future generations. And Iran can play a decisive role in this.

According to a communiqué from your embassy on 6 March, Mr Larijani, the secretary of the Supreme Council of National Security, has notably declared that Iran wished for "reasonable decisions to be taken, so that all the parties can find a way of saving face. No party should feel despised. We do not want to join in a win-lose game. By a win-win game, security in the region would be assured for all."

It seems to us that the solution we have just outlined fits these criteria perfectly. That's why we submitted it to you, as we have submitted it to the US President. We beg you to send these suggestions to the Iranian government. If Mr

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Kofi Annan, in response to the appeal recently made to him by former statesmen and various NGOs including ACDN, decides to create a UN Conciliation Commission, Iran could very well propose this solution to a crisis which threatens to degenerate into war.

Finally, we have the honour to invite you to the 2nd Rally for International Disarmament, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (2nd RID-NBC) at Saintes on May 6-8, 2006. At it you could present your government's point of view, during a panel discussion, and perhaps, away from the public debate, meet various political and diplomatic personalities who have been invited also.

We remain available to explain to you any aspects of this letter, and we would enjoy publishing your reply as soon as possible.

Hoping to hear from you, we assure you of our sincere admiration for the Persian civilisation.

Yours respectfully,

Jean-Marie Matagne, president,

Catherine Moreau, secretary

Reminder:

▶ [Iran Nuclear Crisis:](#)
[The solution exists, it just has to be seized!](#)

PS:

(*) On 18 September 2007, a note of hope and commonsense came from the most unexpected quarter: from Shimon Peres, the "political" father of Israel's bomb (and Nobel peace laureate nevertheless).

According to Agence France-Presse, 'on Monday [18 September] Israel's president Shimon Peres pleaded for his country to play a role in developing non-polluting energy sources, so as to free itself from dependence on oil, and said that Israel could "rely on the sun more than on the Saudis."

"We want to shift from hydro-carbon energy to solar energy" said Peres during a meeting with the foreign press. "We can rely on the sun more than on the Saudis. The sun is more sustainable, more democratic and ... more objective", added Mr Peres in a humorous tone. He expressed that wish that Israel, with its Mediterranean climate, might become "an experimental laboratory and testing-ground for most of the alternatives" to fossil fuels.'

By an irony of history, this is the avant-garde role that ACDN had suggested (back in the spring of 2006) that Iran should play in the development of renewable non-polluting energy, and which Israel could now claim for itself in autumn 2007... This shows that ideas that at one time seem "utopian" can later gain ground and become reality.

Is it too late for Iran to follow the good (non-military) example of the worst enemy of its president Mr Ahmedinejad? Too late for Israel to renounce nuclear weapons, as the Iranians say they want to do? A nuclear-free Middle East, with no nuclear weapons or nuclear plants, is the path that could lead this region to general peace, a *modus vivendi* in which everyone's rights and duties would at last be fully recognized.