

The Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren  
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### The Iran Deal: Why It's Not About Win or Lose

by Lily Ghebrai

Note from the author:

I am not writing this article for the academic community. Nor am I writing this for the decision makers of our country. They don't need explaining; we do.

I am writing this for the average global citizen who so desperately seeks to navigate and understand the complexity of international politics, but is so often misled by the bombastic speech of fancy politicians. I am writing this article to help dispel the erroneous myths of the Iranian people, and to help remind the global citizen that people are not always synonymous with their governments.

My goal in writing this article is not to gain notoriety, nor is it to stir up controversy on an already controversial deal. I am also not here to advocate whether the Iran deal should or should not have passed. It is now a political reality and it is time we treat it as such.

Rather, I write this article in a desperate attempt to orient the average global citizen towards compassion and humanity, and away from ignorance. As you read this article, I hope you come away with two things: a better understanding of the Iran Nuclear Deal, and a desire to help integrate the Iranian people into the global political and economic arenas. Let us not fear the Iran Nuclear Deal, but rather, let us consider this momentous occasion in modern history as an opportunity for friendship, increased cultural understanding, and ultimately, world peace.

In Peace & Friendship, Lily Ghebrai



For Abdi Sami (April 8, 1954 – June 28, 2012). I miss you.



Lily Ghebrai (center) during 2011 trip to Iran

#### The Previous State of Affairs:

Before we delve into the details of the Iran Nuclear Deal, let us first examine the old status quo—the one that has dominated the globe for the past two decades:

Ever since the discovery of secret Iranian nuclear facilities in August 2002, the United States has repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing weapons of mass destruction. Although Iran once agreed to halt uranium production, this was by no means a permanent initiative. Indeed, following the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, Iran continued to pursue its nuclear enrichment program despite international reprimand, and two rounds of sanctions. The first round of U.N. sanctions in 2006

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banned the import and export of materials and technology used in the uranium enrichment and in the production of missiles. These sanctions only further strained Iran's relationship with the west, and rendered Iran increasingly bellicose.

As a result, the U.S. and Israel entered a joint cyber warfare initiative to expose Iran's secretive program. Ultimately, a second round of U.N. sanctions were imposed in 2010. These sanctions curtailed military purchases, trade, and financial transactions conducted by the Islamic Revolutions Guards Corps.

Thus, U.S.–Iran relations have been strained for over two decades. The two rounds of sanctions crippled the Iranian economy (oil exports—which make up 80% of all Iranian export earnings—declined by 39%), and provoked a troublesome political realignment between Iran, China, and Russia. However, given the increasing level of insecurity in the Middle East following the 2011 revolutions, it became evident that Iran played a significant role in the region. Indeed, political constriction and economic exclusion by the international community was no longer a viable option.

#### **The Deal:**

Fast forward to July of 2015. How did we reach a deal with Iran, when a couple of years ago, an "Iran Nuclear Deal" would have been virtually unfathomable? Moreover, what does this deal entail, and what does it mean for humanity going forward?

In the simplest possible terms, the Iran Nuclear Deal essentially forces Tehran to give up the bomb in exchange for sanction relief (notably with regards to Iran's energy and financial industries). These, however, are "snapback" sanctions, and will be re-implemented if Iran does not comply with the accord. Moreover, Tehran is signatory to "Additional Protocol" which allows International Atomic Energy Agency Inspectors to visit suspect sites on short notice. In return, Iran is allowed 24 days to comply with the request.

#### **Looking Ahead:**

This deal has very significant long-term

geopolitical and economic implications. First and foremost, Iran is one of the key actors in the Syria conflict, and historically has had a vested interest in preserving Bashar Al-Assad's power. Indeed, Iran has been repeatedly exposed for arming the Syrian military, in an attempt to prop up Assad. However, through this deal, Iran is finally being granted an opportunity for leadership, diplomacy, and peace making. Despite Iran's longstanding, iconoclastic support of Assad, the Nuclear Deal could imbue Iran with a sort of diplomatic burden—a call towards ensuring stability in the Middle East, rather than going against it. Since Iran is no longer as economically isolated as it was during the start of the Syrian Civil War, deep financial and military engagements with the Syrian Army are no longer vital to Iran's economic wellbeing. Indeed, as the West is now gradually beginning to embrace Iran both politically and economically, there is hope that Iran will live up to the diplomatic bar being set for it via the Nuclear Deal.

This is a pivotal moment in history. A country that was once ostracized due to its antagonistic and uncooperative nature, now has the possibility to completely alter the geopolitical landscape. As a result of the Nuclear Deal, Iran will finally be integrated into the global economy, thus facilitating increased openness and foreign exposure to the region. This increased international exchange and flow of financial opportunity will inevitably result in a better, more diplomatic worldview on the part of the Iranian government. After all, look at where we were just a decade ago, when any sort of negotiations with Iran seemed beyond outlandish. Now just imagine where this deal could take us a decade from now. The possibilities are exhilarating.

More importantly, however, is that the Iran Deal sets a significant precedent for other countries who are currently also hidden behind the veil of isolation. Indeed, this is a defining moment for Iran to start playing a more active role in the international community—one that is characterized by rationality and diplomacy, rather than bellicosity and impulsiveness. Furthermore,

*("Iran Deal" continued)*

this deal presents the rest of the world with an exciting new challenge of our own: the political, economic, and diplomatic integration of the Iranian people. In fact, Iran boasts a rich history, incredible natural resources, and a sophisticated and well-educated population (99% literacy rate). Iran's young people have been yearning for economic opportunity, but have so often been denied due to the longstanding sanctions that crippled their economy (in 2014, youth unemployment was at 26%). Through this deal and through the gradual integration of Iran into the global economy, young Iranians can now look forward to a brighter future, rather than the usual anxiety and desperation that characterizes much of the Middle East.

Lastly, the Iran Deal—although just a minor political event to some—is actually a major juncture for humanity. For decades, we operated under a toxic “us vs. them” mentality. For years, we easily disregarded the woes of our brothers and sisters in Iran, because the media facilitated the dehumanization of the Iranian people. We are all products of media exposure and dominant political rhetoric. But we now have the opportunity to break out of those rigid, ignorant molds and embrace the positive changes that are bound to come through this deal. Moreover, we finally have the perfect set of geopolitical conditions—which occurs once in a blue moon—to advocate a policy based on peace and mutual understanding, rather than hate and self-interest. This is indeed a very thrilling time in contemporary human history, one that occurs every few decades (kind of like the fall of the Berlin Wall, the advent of the digital age, the Arab Spring... you get the idea). Indeed, a time when political, economic, and social events are all perfectly aligned to inspire dialogue, invoke compassion, and ultimately incite world peace. However, we, as global citizens, need to take it upon ourselves to see this through. We cannot let this fortuitous moment go to waste. Rather, we need to capitalize on this nearly perfect set of circumstances, and work collectively towards a brighter global future.

It is so easy to get discouraged by all of the tragedy occurring across the world. However, we should not get so discouraged that we ultimately become desensitized, and are unable to recognize opportunity in the world. The Iran Deal offers just that: a unified call to action for humanity, to start embracing those who were once shunned under the status quo.

**Questions or comments about this article can be directed to the author, Lily Ghebrai: [ghebrailily@yahoo.com](mailto:ghebrailily@yahoo.com)**

*\*\*\* Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not in any way reflect the views of Eurasia Group.*



## Secretary's Fall Schedule

*From the desk of Jessica Quiroz...*

This fall brings some exciting and significant milestones for our family. With our eldest daughter starting her senior year at Nathan Hale High School, and the twins starting Kindergarten at our neighborhood school in Everett, we've got a lot of commuting logistics to work out!



With the assistance and support from our Executive Committee, I have developed an action plan that will allow me to juggle our new schedules and remain committed to Olympic View as your administrative assistant. Here is what my schedule will look like starting mid-September:

### **Mon/Wed/Fri:**

*In the OV Office, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm*  
**206.525.8900**

### **Tues/Thurs:**

*Telecommuting, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm*  
**206.683.6252 (cell)**

On the days when I am working from home, church voice mail and email will be checked frequently throughout the day; you can also reach me anytime on my cell phone! Thanks for your support, and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Peace & blessings!



*The ever-growing Seattle skyline as seen from Maple Leaf Reservoir Park.*

## **Life's Crossroads...**

### *Discerning and discovering our path*

As we gathered to hear Ken's last message to us on Sunday, August 9 it was great to see so many familiar faces.

We are moving into a phase where Pastor Ken will be around from time to time, but not in the pulpit. His last day with Olympic View is September 23. We will be hosting a Farewell Reception for Ken and his family at Olympic View Church in the near future. Once the date has been set, please help us give them a great send-off!

In the meantime, we have several guest speakers lined up to fill the pulpit. Bobbi Dykema preached on August 16, and Mike O'Cain, Director of Camp Koinonia, joined us on August 23. John Braun brought the message on August 30, and coming up we have John Russell on September 6, Jan Wood on September 13, John Braun again on September 20, and Shane Carlson with KRISTA Camp ministries on September 27.

The Executive Committee is also working with our District Executive, Colleen Michael to see who is available as an Interim Pastor, with the goal of one starting no later than October 1. Having an Interim Pastor to preach, counsel, visit, teach and work with Jessica to deal with pastoral and administrative duties will free the congregation up to look to the future of Olympic View with undivided attention. It is a good and wise direction we have been counseled to pursue.

As all this is going on, we would also like to hear from you! We will be holding Congregational meetings starting the end of this month in order to hear your views and insights into the future direction of our church. We hope that as many of you as possible will sign up. The sign-up sheets are available for daytime and evening meetings so everyone will have an opportunity to pick the time that works best for them.

There will be up to 6 congregants per meeting with at least one facilitator. Questions will be prepared for your input but you will be free to share as the spirit leads.

It's a natural impulse to think we need to get things moving and have things settled as soon as possible. But we encourage everyone to step back from any sense of urgency so we can take the time needed to honestly and openly discuss our commitment to the future of Olympic View church.

Please look for the sign-up sheets in the Social Hall or call us if you want to be included in a meeting but aren't able to be at church to sign up.

Feel free to speak to anyone on the Exec team if you have questions. Roger Edmark—425.422.3137, Bill Hershberger or Sylvia Hershberger—425.337.9353, or Kristi Morris—206.409.8915.

— *OV Executive Committee*

## Summer Fun at Camp Koinonia

We are blessed to have such a wonderful place like Camp Koinonia to hold our summer Brethren camp week. This year we had 31 campers and about 24 directors, counselors and camp staff that pitched in to make it a great week. The theme this year was 'Power Up' and focused on the amazing and powerful ways that the Holy Spirit touches each of our lives.

There was a little of everything done at camp this year including the Prayer Hill climb (see picture of Kids camp hikers), the Tunnel hike, swimming, field games, archery, capture the flag, water kickball, some fun and interesting craft projects (see picture of quilt), lots of singing of silly as well as deeply moving songs, star gazing, inspirational sharing and worships, campfires by the glow of a lamp (no fires allowed), talent show, skits, and three hearty meals each day (plus snacks).

An added element to this year's camp was that the High School youth gave something back to the camp and to Camp Koinonia by helping with meal setup, activities, and building a picnic table bench (it is both). You will just need to come to camp to see it. It is awesome!

All of this was possible because of the generous support of the church by providing scholarships to help the youth pay for camp and providing transportation. This year 16 of the youth at camp were either a part of the Thursday night youth group (Max, Buom, Kashai, Taylor, Solomon, Luis); children and grandchildren of Olympic View members (Lyah, Ahnna, Jason, Josiah, Angela, Andy, Melen); or friends of our youth (Nick, Odi, Eva), and that does not count 7 adults (Roger & Kathy Edmark, Melissa & Free Hinton, Bill & Sylvia Hershberger, Amy Paine) that were there because of connections to Olympic View.

Thank you to all of you that helped to make it happen!!!

— Roger Edmark



*Kids Camp climb up Prayer Hill*



*This year's group craft project—a prayer quilt; led by Kathy Edmark.*



*The stunning view of Mt. Rainier from Maple Leaf Reservoir Park!*

## Maple Leaf Park and Summer Social

If you have never been to Maple Leaf Reservoir Park you have missed out on something good. The park on about 82<sup>nd</sup> and Roosevelt Way has been upgraded in recent years by completely redesigning the children's play area, and putting a lid over the old reservoir to create a big play field area. The 16 acre park is a great place for North Seattle residents to take a walk, get some exercise, or take their kids to play. The playground includes a zipline, swings, slides, climbing structures, and a children's garden for the kids; and basketball and pickle ball courts, sports courts, hitting walls, ball fields, soccer fields and a number of walking and jogging path for all ages. That by itself would make this park an asset to the community, but that is not all. From the upper level of the park you get amazing views of Mt. Rainier, Lake Washington, and the city of Seattle skyline. Wow!

Kathy and I explored all of the corners of the park at the Maple Leaf Community Social on July 29<sup>th</sup>. Olympic View Church, as a organization within the Maple leaf Community, has had a table with displays about the church for a number of years. It is a great way to let our presence be known to the people that live in the neighborhood. We saw several church families that came to be a part of the festivities and mingled with all the rest. If you had been there, you would have enjoyed free ice cream, cookies, coffee, as well as a live musical group with great sounds, lots of friendly folks interested

## Sharing Together in Prayer

### *In Our Community:*

- For the family and friends of our dear **Dorothy Bollinger**, mourning her death Wednesday, August 19. Prayers especially for her twin sister and life long companion, **Betty DeBon**. Thanksgiving for the legacy of love and joy that Dorothy leaves us all with!
- For **Goldie Barnes and family**, mourning the death of her brother, Steve Weldon, age 64, on August 25.
- For our dear **Bobbi Dykema**, who is sick and in need of our prayers.
- Thanks for the good news that **Jeanesse & Rob Miller** are expecting their 3<sup>rd</sup> son in February!
- Thanks to **all those** who faithfully tend to our altar with such loving devotion and beautiful flowers each week!

### *In Our State, Nation, and World:*

- For the **brave men and women fighting numerous forest fires** around our state, and for those displaced by the fires, prayers for their continued safety.
- For the **girls of Chibok, Nigeria**, kidnapped last year by Boko Haram, and especially for **Luggwa Sanda**, continued prayers that she and her classmates are found and returned to their families and that violence will cease in the region.



*Emilee Woo recognizes her folks, Carmen & Aaron, in pictures on the OV display board!*

in enjoying the event and some offering educational materials and services to keep Seattle and North Seattle a very desirable and progressive part of the fabric of the city.

If you missed the Social this year, don't miss it next year! In the mean time, take a nice relaxing walk in the park—you will enjoy it!

— Roger & Kathy Edmark