

Here is a letter to Senator Chris Coons concerning the upcoming vote on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran

Dear Senator Coons,

It has been my pleasure to follow your political career in Delaware, both as the County Executive for New Castle County and as a Senator from Delaware. I have been a strong supporter of your efforts and initiatives and, as a minister of the Gospel, have admired your spirit-filled eloquence as a speaker. Whether you were offering words of comfort at a funeral, speaking in a formal auditorium setting, or in the open air, your own conviction as a person of faith and champion for justice and wholeness in society has been evident.

I urge you now in that same Spirit, to cast your vote in Congress to adopt the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed upon by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Russia and Iran. Adoption of this agreement will provide the best strategies for curbing Iran's nuclear weapon ambitions. Under present circumstances this agreement offers our best chance for peace, especially in the Middle East, including the security of Israel and our other allies in the region. The United Nations Security Council has unanimously approved implementation of it. The European Union, our prime partner in enforcing financial sanctions, has unanimously endorsed it, and our leading European allies are already moving to normalize economic relations with Iran.

A refusal by the U.S. Congress to accept this hard-won agreement would isolate the United States, not Iran. Should the United States reject this international diplomatic effort, we could not expect our allies to then back a more aggressive posture against Iran. They could refuse to retain sanctions or to impose new ones, or to join in possible military action. On the other hand, sanctions imposed by the United States alone would have little effect on Iran without the international community's economic leverage. Moreover, as the President has argued, rejection of the pact would increase the risk of armed conflict with Iran and would further destabilize the Middle East, which is already in turmoil. Clearly, diplomatic negotiations with adversaries and mobilizing broad international coalitions of support can more durably resolve contentious issues than the threat or use of military force.

There is an alternative to rejecting adoption and all the negative consequences that probably would ensue. That alternative is to accept the agreement as it stands and then remain committed to collective diplomacy with Iran and all of our international partners including Israel and our other allies in the Middle East. One aim of this diplomacy is to share intelligence and resources for monitoring fulfillment of the agreement. Another is to detect and respond collectively against any subversive, terroristic or destabilizing activity in the region perpetrated or supported by Iran, or by another nation or entity with Iran's support or cover.

In addition, the ultimate goal of our diplomacy with Iran can be more than the prevention of a war. It can be the pursuit of true peace and security among us and all of our partner nations with Iran by engagement between our cultures, people and ideas. While the government of Iran and the governments of the West have had profound differences, no doubt the people of Iran like most people everywhere have this in common: They want peace, prosperity, and the pursuit of happiness just as much as Americans do.

This vote may well be one of the most significant that you will ever be called upon to make. The pressure on you to make the right call must be intense. I pray that being grounded in your faith, and guided by the Spirit and your own sound reasoning, you will courageously support and work for our government's adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan as agreed upon by major nations of the world.

Peace,
Lloyd+

The Rev. Canon Lloyd S. Casson