

We of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), gathered at Guilford College on 7/9-13, 2008, do at this time reaffirm our belief and experience in living in the light and power that takes away the occasion of all war. We urge Congressional members and candidates, and the President and presidential candidates to pursue dialogue and negotiations in order to achieve peaceful settlements to threatening situations with the nation of Iran . We do further encourage Friends and others of all persuasions to do the same on a people-to-people basis.

Provocative acts by Iran do not justify further provocative acts by the United States or others. We are now witnessing the repetition of certain events which led up to the war with Iraq and other armed conflicts, leading us to believe that plans for armed hostile action against Iran are in preparation. The events in question include:

Unilateral and unconditional demands that we know cannot be met;

Statements demonizing the Iranian government to engender hatred and fear;

Alarmist pronouncements intended to disturb and frighten United States citizens into believing that war is justified, necessary, and inevitable; and

Threats in the form of congressional resolutions, such as H. Con. Res. 362, which would authorize an act of war through a blockade of Iran by land, sea and air.

In opposing H. Con Res. 362, we note that this resolution would have the effect of putting Congress on record as supporting, even encouraging, hostile action by the President. The inspections called for by the resolution could not be carried out except by the use of force, as voluntary compliance by Iranian vessels may not reasonably be expected. It is very likely that incidents like the January 2008 speedboat incident would occur with increasing frequency and would eventually provoke an armed response that could trigger further violent conflict.

In all likelihood, actions such as the above would have the effect of precluding further diplomacy between the opposing nations, further adding to the likelihood of open warfare. Threatened actions will further aggravate, rather than alleviate, the already untenable situation we face with the world's oil supply, further contributing to destabilization of world economies. The more we instill fear and distrust, the greater are Iran 's incentives to pursue nuclear weapons.

Multilateral shows of force and military strength do not prevent wars, but too often initiate them. For over 50 years the Iranian people have been given reason to distrust the United States and its allies by virtue of our interference with Iran 's internal governance. They have shown that they are capable of mounting a spirited defense of their territory. These truths not being in question, it serves no constructive purpose to further inflame tensions in the Middle East through coercive acts against Iran . We believe that the differences among Iran , Israel , the United States and other allied nations can only be addressed through constructive and nonthreatening conversation.

For the reasons stated herein, we do request that all provocative actions toward Iran be immediately ceased and efforts to begin constructive multilateral negotiations be commenced in good faith by all parties.