

Pursuit of peace instead of war in the conflict with Iran

An immediate end to sanctions and threats of war

A declaration from the peace movement and those involved in peace research

The conflict with Iran is escalating dangerously. Both the planned oil embargo and boycott of the Iranian Central Bank by the West are perilous interventions. Once in the past, in the 1950s, Britain and the USA imposed an oil embargo on Iran. This led to the overthrow of the democratically elected Mossadegh government. The impact of today's oil and financial embargos will primarily be felt by the ordinary people of Iran. And in light of the historical parallels, these measures will only serve to vindicate the current regime's claim to be a victim of Western aggression and enable it to present itself as the legitimate defender of Iran's independence, an uppermost political goal of all Iranians. Militarists in the Islamic Republic now even feel justified in threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. To embark upon a further escalation of sanctions will inevitably lead to war. This would not only have catastrophic consequences for the people of Iran, but also destabilize the entire region for many decades to come.

All evidence suggests that the Iranian people have no desire either for war or an Iranian nuclear bomb. They will, however, defend themselves from any foreign military threat. Israel's nuclear arsenal and the military encirclement of Iran by the USA, which at present maintains military bases in almost all of the countries neighbouring Iran, are important motives behind Iran's efforts to arm itself. By tolerating Israel's nuclear arsenal while simultaneously opposing the Iranian nuclear programme, the USA and the EU must bear chief responsibility for fact that hardly any opposition politicians in Iran dare to question the nuclear policies of the Islamic Republic.

We in Germany and in Europe as a whole also feel confronted with the growing danger of war, as it would clearly pose serious consequences for Europe and the world. Those interested in eliminating the Islamic Republic though foreign intervention simply ignore realistic solutions to resolving the nuclear conflict. We therefore warn influential players in the USA and their exiled Iranian supporters from attempting to instrumentalize the nuclear conflict in order to push for regime change. The claim that a nuclear armed Iran can only be prevented through war is a deceptive claim that we decisively reject.

We call upon the President of the United States, Barack Obama:

To stop the embargo against Iranian oil and the Iranian Central Bank. Do not allow the upcoming American presidential election campaign or Israel to instigate a war with unforeseeable consequences. Offer Iran a mutual non-aggression pact, preferably together with Israel, in compensation for the supervised restriction of its nuclear programme in accordance with the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We demand from the German Chancellor:

Publically rule out any German participation in a war against Iran and put a stop to the dangerous escalation in sanctions. Support, preferably with other European governments, the UN conference for a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone, which is scheduled to begin in 2012 and which has received next to no public attention. The conference, which could be supplemented by something similar to the CSCE, aims to achieve a completely new opening for peace and cooperation in the whole region. Only a policy that requires all states in the Middle East, including Israel, to pursue nuclear disarmament and the renunciation of nuclear weapons can overcome mutual distrust as well as hostile stereotypes between the region's religions, peoples, and states. The arms race and regional dictatorships would lose their *raison d'être*.

We ask the United Nations to convene the planned conference as soon as possible, even if it is boycotted by Israel or Iran. In the long term, no one in the region can afford to impede the perspective offered by the conference without losing their credibility and legitimacy. A permanent Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME) would raise hopes that a new framework for peace policies would arise to help solve – in addition to the current nuclear dispute – other existing problems, in particular, the Middle East conflict.

At the invitation of Andreas Buro, Christoph Krämer, and Mohssen Massarat, the following individuals have expressed their support for this declaration:

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