

SHABBAT SERMON
MATOT – MAS'EI

I have written to my senators and congressman only once. It was a couple of years ago after the Syrian government used biological weapons on its own people. In that case, I wrote to our two senators and our congressman encouraging them to support authorizing the president to bomb the Syrians if they did this again. Senator Rubio and Congressman Radel opposed bombing Syria; Senator Nelson supported it. I believed then and do now that it was a mistake for the president not to follow through on his threat to the Syrian government.

I'll be writing to our representatives again next week asking them to oppose the proposed nuclear agreement with Iran. The holes in that agreement are so large that it is, in my opinion, ineffectual. As currently written, it is likely to destabilize the Middle East even more and create a more serious threat to Israel.

I did not come to this decision lightly. I work hard not to listen to the screamers – the people who are quick to say that the sky is falling in; who say that **everything** the politician- they-oppose-does is bad. The information on which I based my position came from Dr. Marvin Feuer, a policy analyst with AIPAC, who I've heard before and respect. Dr. Feuer's presentation was specific and detailed. I also garnered information from articles in the WSJ and the Washington Post – newspapers that rarely agree with each other - that corroborated the information Dr. Feuer presented.

Let me also say that I support the principle of negotiating with Iran. Going to war should always be our option of last resort; the action we take when everything else fails. As we teach our children, using words is always a better option than using fists. But more than that, Iran is too large, too powerful and too dangerous a country to ignore. It was a good thing to try to open the door to some kind of relations, and enter into negotiations to restrict Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The current agreement with Iran is unacceptable for several reasons: **Nuclear agreements need to include “anywhere, anytime” inspections of nuclear facilities.** Before the agreement was an-

nounced, people on both side of the political aisle agreed that “anywhere, anytime” inspections were essential.

- Energy Secretary, Ernest Moniz, who was involved with the negotiations, said in April, “We expect to have “anywhere, anytime access.” Ben Rhodes, a Deputy National Security Advisor, also said in April, “In the first place we will have anytime, anywhere access [to] facilities.”

But when the agreement was announced, the president said that the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA, “will have access where necessary, when necessary.” That’s not “anywhere, anytime.” The agreement, as written, allows no surprise visits ever. Indeed, access to any given facility can be blocked by the Iranians for as long as 24 days.

The agreement calls for the lifting of sanctions at various time intervals; 8 ½ and 15 years to be specific. In other words, the lifting of sanctions is not based on verified compliance, just the passage of time.

The agreement calls for no dismantlement of centrifuges or nuclear facilities. Even if some facilities will not be operational, they need not be taken down.

Finally, in nuclear agreements, a country must accurately declare its nuclear activities and procurement. The Iranians should have done so before the negotiations began.

But the IAEA found that the Iranians had repeatedly failed to do so; and that they’ve been caught cheating in the past.

The president said that this agreement will be based on verification, not trust. It seems to me that the very opposite is the case.

The Iranians are not worthy of trust.

- They are sponsors of terrorism around the world, including against Israel.
- They actively support the Assad regime in Syria, the one that gassed its own people.
- They bombed the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires 21 years ago.

They have consistently acted against the interests of freedom, stability and peace.

The United States has negotiated with its adversaries in the past. We negotiated with the Chinese, the Former Soviet Union, with Russia today. I disagree with the contention that we should have nothing to do with the Iranians. But when negotiating with adversaries, one needs to use – borrowing the Wall Street Journal’s term – “**coercive** diplomacy.” One needs to keep on the pressure to make sure the other side makes serious concessions and complies with the agreement. The new agreement with Iran does not do that, and in this failure, it leaves Israel and the rest of the world less safe.

So I am writing to Senator Nelson next week to ask him to vote against this agreement. If you agree with me, I encourage you to do the same. Too much is at stake to remain silent.