

OPINION



EDITORIALS

Persuasive case
against deal with Iran

Netanyahu tells Congress that Israel would rather face ISIS than nuclear-armed Tehran.

As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday addressed a joint meeting of Congress, 4,090 miles away in Montreux, Switzerland, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif dismissed as "unacceptable" President Obama's proposal that the Islamic Republic suspend its sensitive nuclear activities for at least 10 years.

That is precisely why Mr. Netanyahu made his visit to Washington – he wanted to make a direct case to Congress that a nuclear Iran represents an existential threat to the state of Israel.

Iran is competing with ISIS, he said. "Both want to impose a militant Islamic empire, first on the region and then on the entire world." Mr. Netanyahu warned: "In this deadly game of thrones there's no place for America or for Israel; no peace for Christians, Jews or Muslims who don't share the Islamist medieval creed; no rights for women, no freedom for anyone."

And, yet, if Israel had to choose the lesser of two evils, it would be ISIS, he suggested. That's because ISIS is "armed with butcher knives, captured weapons and YouTube, whereas Iran could soon be armed with intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear bombs."

That's why Mr. Netanyahu said he felt "a profound obligation" to come to Washington to voice his nation's opposition to the long-term nuclear agreement the Obama administration is negotiating with Tehran.

The current deal between Washington and the mullahs makes two major concessions, he informed lawmakers: It would "leave Iran with a vast nuclear infrastructure, providing it with a short break-out time ... to amass enough weapons-grade uranium or plutonium for a nuclear bomb." It also would lift virtually every restriction on Iran's nuclear program in about a decade.

Much has been made of the controversial circumstances by which the Israeli leader appeared on Capitol Hill – accepting an invitation from House Speaker John Boehner to address lawmakers that wasn't cleared with the White House. Mr. Netanyahu did much to allay the controversy during his well-received speech.

"We appreciate all that President Obama has done for Israel," he said, listing specific actions the president had taken on Israel's behalf in recent years – including missile interceptors provided when Israel was under attack by the terrorist organization Hamas last summer.

Nevertheless, Mr. Netanyahu remains unpersuaded that Iran "will change for the better" if the Islamic Republic reaches an agreement with the United States. Neither is he convinced that Israel would no longer need fear the threat of a nuclear attack by Iran, whose supreme leader – Ayatollah Ali Khamenei – has declared the Jewish homeland "a true cancer on this region that should be cut off."

Unjustified accusations

Mayor Nguyen not soft on communism.

For those who have had family members, friends and their country taken by communists, the Cold War isn't over. The Vietnamese Diaspora knows this painfully well.

But while those old hatreds understandably die hard, the recent insinuations that Garden Grove Mayor Bao Nguyen has forgotten that history – because of his vote against sending a letter to Riverside criticizing that city's sister-city arrangement with a city in Vietnam – appear unfounded.

Every week, members of the Vietnamese community attend the Garden Grove City Council meeting to condemn Mr. Nguyen for being too soft on the communist state, or even contend that he is pro-communist.

While Mr. Nguyen has yet to confront his accusers, preferring to take his rhetorical lashes in silence, he released a statement repudiating the criticism of his tenure of office. According to Mr. Nguyen, he is "opposed to communism in Vietnam because I am opposed to oppression and corruption everywhere," stating that his record in Garden Grove is proof of that fact.

We cannot disagree. Mr. Nguyen has charted a commendable course on property rights, reversing the previous council's ban on a tattoo parlor downtown, transparency in the city's controversial dealings with its former fire chief and observing the sovereignty of democratically elected representatives of the people by respecting Riverside's sister-city agreement.

In reality, those expressing frustration of Mr. Nguyen's stance on Riverside's sister-city arrangement by name-calling and threatening a recall display a greater inclination than has Mr. Nguyen toward the types of intimidation that are more commonly found in totalitarian societies. We hope both sides will show civility in their disagreements.

QUOTE OF
THE DAY

“Enslave the liberty of but one human being, and the liberties of the world are put in peril.”

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

LABOR

Why private sector
unions are waning

Less than 7 percent of nongovernment workers are unionized.

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Unions have had a tough go of things in recent years, and their setbacks are only the latest in a long-term decline.

In 2011, Wisconsin restricted public employees' collective bargaining rights. The next year, Indiana became a "right-to-work" state, passing a law ensuring that workers do not have to join a union or pay union dues or fees as a condition of employment. Michigan followed suit in 2013, becoming the 24th right-to-work state.

The Supreme Court's *Harris v. Quinn* decision in June rebuffed union attempts to organize home-care workers in Illinois. In response, newly elected Illinois Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner issued an

order last month eliminating a requirement that workers represented by a union but who do not want to be members must still pay fees to the union. "These forced union dues are a critical cog in the corrupt bargaining that is crushing taxpayers," Rauner said in announcing his signing of the order. "The structure that is currently in place, inside government, forcing government employees to pay union dues, even if they don't want to be in a union – that is fundamentally unconstitutional, and it is against the American system of freedom of choice," he told Fox News.

As if all this was not bad enough for the unions, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in late January that the rate of union membership among American workers had fallen to 11.1 percent, down from 11.3 percent last year. This marks the lowest rate since 1912. Union membership has been increasingly dominated by the public sector, which is 35.3 percent unionized – more than five times the private-sector rate of 6.6 percent.

That imbalance should come as no surprise since politicians responsible for negotiating and approving union contracts oftentimes depend on campaign contributions from those same unions. In the private sector, if unions exact too much from their employers and drive labor costs too high, their companies become less competitive and wither – as we have seen in the legacy steel, airline and auto industries – so they have a greater incentive not to make unreasonable demands. In the public sector, by contrast, union interests are on both sides of the negotiating table, and added costs are freely heaped onto taxpayers.

Even liberal icon President Franklin Delano Roosevelt noted that the special "nature and purposes of government" make collective bargaining with public unions inappropriate. "All government employees should realize that the process of collective bargaining, as usually understood, cannot be transplanted into the public service," Roosevelt wrote in 1937 to Luther C. Steward, president of the National Federation of Federal Employees.

Unions can serve a useful purpose in helping members earn market wage rates and bringing workplace issues before management, but they should do so through voluntary action, not through compulsion. They become unjust when government rules tip the scales in favor of unions, granting a union monopoly negotiating power (à la the Wagner Act) and coercing employees or employers to accept employment contracts and union dues with which they may not agree. This violates the individual worker's freedom of association (or, more accurately, nonassociation, if he does not want to join a union) and freedom of contract for her own labor.

Too often, unions have used dues to enrich union officials and advance political agendas instead of serving the interests of workers, exploited government protections to obtain above-market wages (raising prices for consumers and reducing employment in their own industries in the process) and engaged in threats and violence against union opponents and "scab" workers who cross picket lines or replace strikers.

Increasingly, workers are voting with their feet, seeking greater economic opportunities in right-to-work states, which have been significantly outpacing forced-unionism states in real compensation and job growth. Non-right-to-work states would be wise to note that freedom and economic growth tend to go hand in hand.



TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Government
needs to get out
of the way

The premise of "Misunderstood millennials" [Opinion, Feb. 22.], if correct, offers hope for those who would like to see California emerge from the economic doldrums, and Southern California regain its status as a center of innovation and growth, capable of creating widespread prosperity.

In particular, Joel Kotkin's vision of suburban Riverside as a center of a millennial culture is encouraging. The area offers much of what attracted Americans to Southern California during the 1900s. The air is clean, there is room to grow, and recreational possibilities are limitless. The relatively young residents are energetic and interested in improving their prospects

for the future.

Growth in the area faces two major government-imposed challenges. The absence of a world-class airport can be lethal to local growth. While Ontario International is only 25 miles from Moreno Valley, a trip between the two almost invariably involves a heavy dose of freeway madness. Very few companies will subject their employees to the traffic ordeals involved in locating east of the I-15. State government, with a bias in favor of high-density coastal populations, will do its best to impede placement of a new airport in the area.

A second handicap, once again imposed by our state government, is extremely costly energy. Given the high summer temperatures in the area, air conditioning on a large scale is a necessity to live and work. Our state's fruitless, but costly, energy policies result in typical costs of 45 cents per kilowatt hour, compared with 6 cents per kilowatt hour in com-

peting areas of neighboring states.

Without a change in the basic outlook of our state government, Mr. Kotkin's vision will remain a nice, but unattainable, dream.

Kenneth Brown
Laguna Niguel

BUDGET WOES NO SUPRISE

Re: "State budget still on road to ruin" [Editorial, Feb. 23]: The statement from the Legislative Analyst's Office regarding Gov. Brown's budget is almost laughable. Two contributing factors to our budget woes are high-speed rail and the penal system. I would relieve the governor of these two problem areas. First, appoint a special task force, stop all work on the bullet train, and audit the entire program. Second, get answers as to why the death penalty is considered unconstitutional in California. Then, take corrective action on both issues.

Lee Boydston
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REGISTER

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MALLARD FILLMORE



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