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The deal with Iran: Give peace a chance

Maureen Fiedler | Dec. 17, 2013 NCR Today

I have been both saddened and mystified by the reaction from some quarters in Washington after the United States joined five other nations to make a deal with Iran that would begin to curtail its ability to make nuclear weapons. It's a six-month deal, hopefully a step toward a long-range agreement.

Some members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, want to impose new economic sanctions on Iran. This would, of course, blow up the deal. What would they prefer: a war? I am at a loss to understand how anyone would not want to give this agreement a chance, give improved U.S./Iranian relations a chance -- yes, give peace a chance. (Never has a peace song been so relevant.)

The deal itself would ease some of the economic sanctions currently imposed on Iran, but it would not change the basic structure of the sanctions. Iran will still be hurting, economically speaking. On Iran's part, however, it would freeze or reverse progress at that country's nuclear facilities, halt installation of new centrifuges (used to enrich uranium), and put a limit on the amount and type of enriched uranium Iran is permitted to produce. Iran must also stop work on a heavy-water reactor that could someday provide Iran with a source of plutonium. Finally, Iran agreed to daily monitoring, much more than before.

OK, granted, the U.S. and Iran have not been on friendly terms since the Carter administration, when the fledgling Iranian theocracy kidnapped several people from our embassy in Tehran and held them for months. And the previous president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was hostile and grossly anti-Semitic.

But Iranians voted for Hassan Rouhani earlier this year, and he is a more moderate political figure. And frankly, the sanctions hurt, and he needs to cut a deal.

So why not test the situation with this six-month deal? Catholic social teaching (and plain old common sense) says we should try to stop the spread of nuclear weapons but also give preference to diplomacy over war, and both are parts of this deal.

So to those who want more sanctions, I say: Sit back, take a deep breath and give peace a chance!

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