

Critique (in yellow highlights) by Paul Surovell, Chair, South Mountain Peace Action

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Statement by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach on the Announcement of Senator Cory Booker that He will Support the Iran Deal:

Nearly 25 years ago, I introduced Cory Booker to the Jewish community and had him serve as President of our Jewish student group at Oxford University, the L'Chaim Society. Ever since then, I have been proud to share a stage with him at countless Synagogues and Jewish communal events and we have studied thousands of hours of Torah together amid a mutual commitment to universal Jewish values. The substance of our exchange often revolved around the shared suffering of our two peoples and the horrors visited upon them due to irrational hate.

Cory is my soul-friend and no matter of policy will ever get personal or come between us.

But in his statement today, supporting a deal which he himself calls “dangerous” and “deeply-flawed,” Cory never even once condemns the Iranian promise to exterminate the Jews of Israel or distance himself from a deal which he admits will legitimize a genocidal regime. Indeed, he acknowledges Iran’s “determination to destroy the United States and our ally Israel.”

<<This is factually wrong. In his statement, Senator Booker says, "Iran is an existential threat to the State of Israel and to the Jewish people.">>

How then can he vote for a deal that gives Iran the means by which to achieve this evil objective in just 10-15 years?

<<The answer is straightforward: If we reject the deal, Iran has a 3-month breakout with no inspections, no restrictions. If we accept the deal, we can delay a 3-month break out for 15 years and we gain the ability to instantly detect any effort to break out. For these reasons alone, the deal makes it far more difficult for Iran to build a bomb. Rejecting the deal makes it much easier for Iran to build a bomb.>>

<<In Senator Booker's words: " Make no mistake, this deal, while falling short of permanently eliminating Iran’s pathways to a nuclear weapon, succeeds in either delaying it or giving us the credible ability to detect significant cheating on their part and respond accordingly. It establishes historically unprecedented mechanisms to block Iran’s near-term pathway to a nuclear weapon. This deal will remove 98 percent of Iran’s enriched uranium stockpile—taking the amount of fissile material from 12,000kg—enough to make multiple bombs—to 300kg, which isn’t close to enough material for even one. None of their enrichment will be underground at the Fordow facility. The agreement will remove and fill with concrete the core of Iran’s heavy water reactor at Arak. The deal will establish the most robust monitoring and inspections

regime ever negotiated, covering Iran's entire nuclear supply chain for 15 years. Some of the most intrusive monitoring, including of its uranium mines and mills and centrifuge production facilities, will last well beyond that period. The agreement will also establish strict limits on Iran's research and development for the next ten years.">>

His statement of support is riddled with logical inconsistencies, such as condemning the fact that the deal was negotiated at all – as he writes, “With the JCPOA, we have now passed a point of no return that we should have never reached” – and then, astonishingly, electing to embrace it.

<<What you call "logical inconsistencies" are actually efforts to weigh the pros and cons. Senator Booker expresses disagreement with some aspects of the deal and voices regret that it wasn't stronger. But he compares what he sees as negatives with what he sees as positives, and he concludes that the positives outweigh the negatives. The Senator has assessed a complicated agreement with the intellectual rigor and intellectual honesty that it requires.>>

Cory says that, “The deal will establish the most robust monitoring and inspections regime ever negotiated,” a claim which he surely knows has zero credibility after the recently exposed secret side-deals between Iran and the IAEA allowing for self-inspection at Parchin, making a mockery of verification.

<<Again, you are factually incorrect. The story of Iranian "self-inspection" at Parchin has been debunked by the State Department and the IAEA. Iran will not self-inspect at Parchin: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/19/politics/iran-nuclear-deal-inspections-parchin/>>>

Most troubling is Cory's statement that, “With this deal, we are legitimizing a vast and expanding nuclear program in Iran.” How on earth could he participate in making Iran's nuclear program kosher amid their never-ending pledge to carry out a second holocaust?

<<The agreement allows a civilian nuclear program. Perhaps you did not see PM Netanyahu's statement earlier this week that "Israel doesn't oppose a civilian nuclear program in Iran." <http://www.timesofisrael.com/pm-israel-not-opposed-to-a-civilian-nuke-program-for-iran/> >>

Equally stupefying is his admission that, “Even under the deal, we should expect that Iran will cheat when it can... that it will continue or even ramp up its destabilizing activities and sponsorship of terrorism with the additional resources provided by increased sanctions relief.”

<<This is not "stupefying" nor is it an "admission." It is what everyone agrees is the nature of the current regime. The agreement addresses nuclear matters, but Senator Booker is being responsible by also addressing non-nuclear matters.>>

Is Cory admitting that the deal is worthless because the Iranians are liars and cheats, and is he further admitting, against all his efforts as Mayor of Newark to get guns out of the hands of criminals, that he will now vote for a deal which will give Iran weapons by which to murder innocent men, women, and children, and especially American soldiers?

<<You have misstated what Senator Booker has said. He has said that for the deal to be effective, Iran must face consequences for violations. If it cheats it will be punished.>>

<<You are also wrong when you say that the deal "will give Iran weapons." In fact, the deal extends by 5 and 8 years -- contingent on Iran's compliance on the nuclear deal -- the time that sanctions will end on conventional weapons and missiles. To repeat, the deal extends the sanctions that would have been lifted on these weapons.>>

Cory references his visit to Yad Vashem, the holocaust museum in Jerusalem, when he was 25, a trip that I arranged trusting that he would absorb the never-ending Jewish struggle for survival in a world inhabited by the kind of evil represented by the Iranian regime. He had just completed his term as President of the Oxford University L'Chaim Society. I subsequently introduced him to Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel and the three of us even held a public speech together in NYC in 2009.

<<Among the 10 Jewish Senators, thus far 6 have approved the deal, only 2 have opposed it.>>

<<In the House, among 18 Jewish Representatives, thus far 9 have approved the deal and 5 are opposed.>>

<<Most Jews understand that this deal is the best option to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and they understand that rejecting the deal would make it easier, and more likely, for Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon.>>

I realize that amid his troubling and tragic choice to support this agreement, Cory pledges to be "united with all who are determined to ensure that we never again see genocide in the world."

But I remind him about the famous and prophetic words of Elie Wiesel, whom I had asked Cory to meet with to discuss this deal, "We have learned to trust the threats of our enemies more than the promises of our friends."

<<Senator Booker is very clear that he does not trust Iran. He supports the agreement because it is not based on trust. In fact it assumes that Iran cannot be trusted and imposes the most comprehensive and intrusive verification systems and controls, and the toughest consequences for cheating ever devised.>>