

My message to the new world

By Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian

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TEHRAN – On May 19, 2024, the untimely passing of President Ebrahim Raeisi- a deeply respected and dedicated public servant- in a tragic helicopter crash precipitated early elections in Iran, marking a pivotal moment in our nation's history.

Amidst war and turbulence in our region, Iran's political system demonstrated remarkable stability by conducting elections in a competitive, peaceful, and orderly manner, dispelling insinuations made by some "Iran experts" in certain governments. This stability, and the dignified manner in which the elections were conducted, underscore the discernment of our Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, and the dedication of our people to democratic transition of power even in the face of adversity.

I ran for office on a platform of reform, fostering national unity, and constructive engagement with the world, ultimately earning the trust of my compatriots at the ballot box, including those young women and men dissatisfied with the overall state of affairs. I deeply value their trust and am fully committed to cultivating consensus, both domestically and internationally, to uphold the promises I made during my campaign.

I wish to emphasize that my administration will be guided by the commitment to preserving Iran's national dignity and international stature under all circumstances. Iran's foreign policy is founded on the principles of "dignity, wisdom, and prudence", with the formulation and execution of this state-policy being the responsibility of the president and the government. I intend to leverage all authority granted to my office to pursue this overarching objective.

With this in mind, my administration will pursue an opportunity-driven policy by creating balance in relations with all countries, consistent with our national interests, economic development, and requirements of regional and global peace and security. Accordingly, we will welcome sincere efforts to alleviate tensions and will reciprocate good-faith with good-faith.

Under my administration, we will prioritize strengthening relations with our neighbors. We will champion the establishment of a "strong region" rather than one where a single country pursues hegemony and dominance over the others. I firmly believe that neighboring and brotherly nations should not waste their valuable resources on erosive competitions, arms races, or the unwarranted containment of each other. Instead, we will aim to create an environment where our resources can be devoted to the progress and development of the region for the benefit of all.

We look forward to cooperating with Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and regional organizations to deepen our economic ties, bolster trade relations, promote joint-venture investment, tackle common challenges, and move towards establishing a regional framework for dialogue, confidence building and development. Our region has been plagued for too long by war, sectarian conflicts, terrorism and extremism, drug

trafficking, water scarcity, refugee crises, environmental degradation, and foreign interference. It is time to tackle these common challenges for the benefit of future generations. Cooperation for regional development and prosperity will be the guiding principle of our foreign policy.

As nations endowed with abundant resources and shared traditions rooted in peaceful Islamic teachings, we must unite and rely on the power of logic rather than the logic of power. By leveraging our normative influence, we can play a crucial role in the emerging post-polar global order by promoting peace, creating a calm environment conducive to sustainable development, fostering dialogue, and dispelling Islamophobia.

Iran is prepared to play its fair share in this regard. In 1979, following the Revolution, the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran, motivated by respect for international law and fundamental human rights, severed ties with two apartheid regimes, Israel and South Africa. Israel remains an apartheid regime to this day, now adding "genocide" to a record already marred by occupation, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, settlement-building, nuclear weapons possession, illegal annexation, and aggression against its neighbors.

As a first measure, my administration will urge our neighboring Arab countries to collaborate and utilize all political and diplomatic leverages to prioritize achieving a permanent ceasefire in Gaza aiming to stop the massacre and prevent the broadening of the conflict. We must then diligently work to end the prolonged occupation that has devastated the lives of four generations of Palestinians. In this context, I want to emphasize that all states have a binding duty under the 1948 Genocide Convention to take measures to prevent genocide; not to reward it through normalization of relations with the perpetrators.

Today, it seems that many young people in Western countries have recognized the validity of our decades-long stance on the Israeli regime. I would like to take this opportunity to tell this brave generation that we regard the allegations of antisemitism against Iran for its principled stance on the Palestinian issue as not only patently false but also as an insult to our culture, beliefs, and core values. Rest assured that these accusations are as absurd as the unjust claims of antisemitism directed at you while you protest on university campuses to defend the Palestinians' right to life.

China and Russia have consistently stood by us during challenging times. We deeply value this friendship. Our 25-year roadmap with China represents a significant milestone towards establishing a mutually beneficial "comprehensive strategic partnership," and we look forward to collaborating more extensively with Beijing as we advance towards a new global order. In 2023, China played a pivotal role in facilitating the normalization of our relations with Saudi Arabia, showcasing its constructive vision and forward-thinking approach to international affairs.

Russia is a valued strategic ally and neighbor to Iran and my administration will remain committed to expanding and enhancing our cooperation. We strive for peace for the people of Russia and Ukraine, and my government will stand prepared to actively support initiatives aimed at achieving this objective. I will continue to prioritize bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Russia, particularly within frameworks such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Eurasia Economic Union.

Recognizing that the global landscape has evolved beyond traditional dynamics, my administration

is committed to fostering mutually beneficial relations with emerging international players in the Global South, especially with African nations. We will strive to enhance our collaborative efforts and strengthen our partnerships for the mutual benefit of all involved.

Iran's relations with Latin America are well-established and will be closely maintained and deepened to foster development, dialogue and cooperation in all fields. There is significantly more potential for cooperation between Iran and the countries of Latin America than what is currently being realized, and we look forward to further strengthening our ties.

Iran's relations with Europe have known its ups and downs. After the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) in May 2018, European countries made eleven commitments to Iran to try to salvage the agreement and mitigate the impact of the United States' unlawful and unilateral sanctions on our economy. These commitments involved ensuring effective banking transactions, effective protection of companies from U.S. sanctions, and the promotion of investments in Iran. European countries have reneged on all these commitments, yet unreasonably expect Iran to unilaterally fulfill all its obligations under the JCPOA.

Despite these missteps, I look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with European countries to set our relations on the right path, based on principles of mutual respect and equal footing. European countries should realize that Iranians are a proud people whose rights and dignity can no longer be overlooked. There are numerous areas of cooperation that Iran and Europe can explore once European powers come to terms with this reality and set aside self-arrogated moral supremacy coupled with manufactured crises that have plagued our relations for so long. Opportunities for collaboration include economic and technological cooperation, energy security, transit routes, environment, as well as combating terrorism and drug trafficking, refugee crises, and other fields, all of which could be pursued to the benefit of our nations.

The United States also needs to recognize the reality and understand, once and for all, that Iran does not—and will not—respond to pressure. We entered the JCPOA in 2015 in good faith and fully met our obligations. But the United States unlawfully withdrew from the agreement motivated by purely domestic quarrels and vengeance, inflicting hundreds of billions of dollars in damage to our economy, and causing untold suffering, death and destruction on the Iranian people—particularly during the Covid pandemic—through the imposition of extraterritorial unilateral sanctions. The U.S. deliberately chose to escalate hostilities by waging not only an economic war against Iran but also engaging in state terrorism by assassinating General Qassem Soleimani, a global anti-terrorism hero known for his success in saving the people of our region from the scourge of ISIS and other ferocious terrorist groups. Today, the world is witnessing the harmful consequences of that choice.

The U.S. and its Western allies, not only missed a historic opportunity to reduce and manage tensions in the region and the world, but also seriously undermined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by showing that the costs of adhering to the tenets of the non-proliferation regime could outweigh the benefits it may offer. Indeed, the U.S. and its Western allies have abused the non-proliferation regime to fabricate a crisis regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear program - openly contradicting their own intelligence assessment - and use it to maintain sustained pressure on our people, while they have actively contributed to and continue to support the nuclear weapons of

Israel, an apartheid regime, a compulsive aggressor and a non-NPT member and a known possessor of illegal nuclear arsenal.

I wish to emphasize that Iran's defense doctrine does not include nuclear weapons and urge the United States to learn from past miscalculations and adjust its policy accordingly. Decision-makers in Washington need to recognize that a policy that consists of pitting regional countries against each other has not succeeded and will not succeed in the future. They need to come to terms with this reality and avoid exacerbating current tensions.

The Iranian people have entrusted me with a strong mandate to vigorously pursue constructive engagement on the international stage while insisting on our rights, our dignity and our deserved role in the region and the world. I extend an open invitation to those willing to join us in this historic endeavor.