

Pezeshkian says favors balance in foreign relations

Iran's newly elected president said his government will create "balance in relations with all countries" in line with national interests and the prerequisites for peace but alerted the United States that his country "will not respond to pressure."

Masoud Pezeshkian penned "My Message To The New World" in the country's state-owned Tehran Times late Friday, praising the latest presidential election that "demonstrated remarkable stability," and vowing to uphold "promises I made during my campaign."

Pezeshkian, a 69-year-old heart surgeon and veteran lawmaker, bested former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili to clinch July 5's runoff election to replace president Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash in May.

"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," he said in his message.

Ties with neighbors

He said his administration would "prioritize strength-

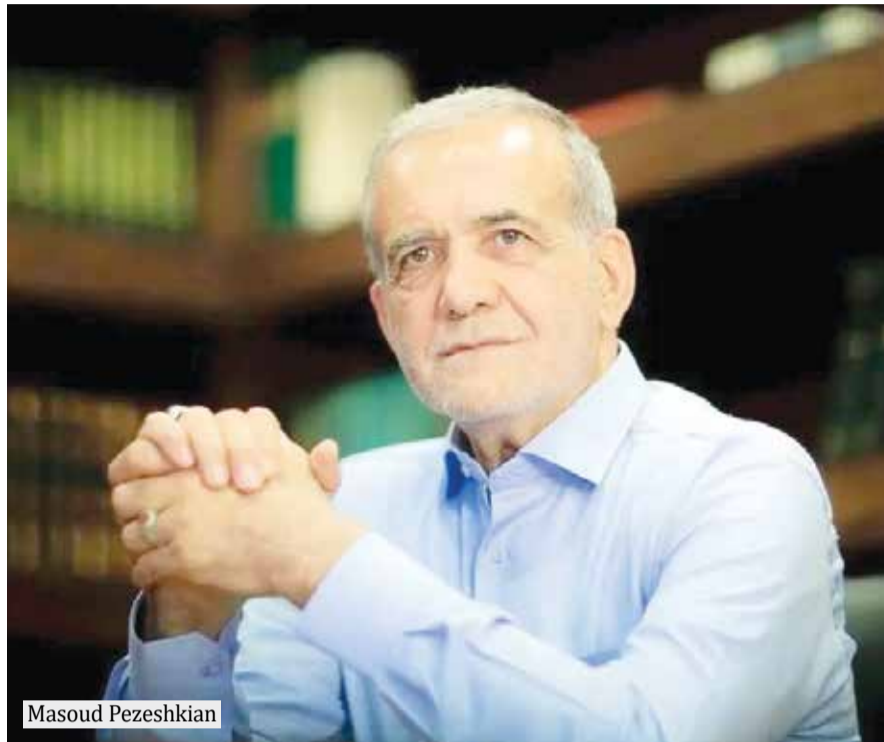
ening relations with our neighbors."

Pezeshkian said he firmly believes 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," he stated.

"We look forward to cooperating with Turkey, 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," Pezeshkian added.

The president-elect wrote that as a first measure, his administration "will urge our neighboring Arab countries to collaborate and utilize all political and diplomatic leverages to prioritize achieving a permanent ceasefire in Gaza with the aim of stopping the massacre and preventing the



Masoud Pezeshkian

broadening of the conflict."

Relations with Russia, China

Pezeshkian, in the letter on Friday, hailed his country's relations with Russia and China which "consistently stood by us during challenging times." He said Moscow was "a valued strategic ally" and his government would expand bilateral cooper-

ation. He also expressed willingness to "support initiatives aimed at" achieving peace between Russia and Ukraine in the ongoing war that entered its third year.

The new chief executive also said he looked forward to furthering cooperation with Beijing and applauded it for brokering a deal to normalize relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia after seven

years of diplomatic tensions.

Constructive dialogue

Pezeshkian said he looks forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with European countries "based on principles of mutual respect" despite a relationship that has known "its ups and downs."

In May 2018, the US unilaterally withdrew from the

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear agreement that also included Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany and re-imposed sanctions on Iran. Pezeshkian accused the European countries of reneging on their JCPOA-related commitments following the US withdrawal to ensure "effective banking transactions, effective protection of companies from US sanctions, and the promotion of investments in Iran." However, he added there were still many opportunities for collaboration between Iran and Europe.

"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 Union spokeswoman Nabila Massrali had earlier congratulated Pezeshkian on his election, saying the 27-member bloc was "ready to engage with the new government in line with EU policy of critical engagement."

US must face 'reality'

Pezeshkian then addressed the US, underscoring the Islamic Republic's strong

resolve and its refusal to "respond to pressure."

"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," said Pezeshkian, who is to be sworn in on July 30.

He added that Iran "entered the JCPOA in 2015 in good faith and fully met our obligations." Pezeshkian said the US backing out has inflicted "hundreds of billions of dollars in damages to our economy," and caused "untold suffering, death and destruction on the Iranian people - particularly during the Covid pandemic" due to sanctions. Pezeshkian said Western countries "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." He emphasized that "Iran's defense doctrine does not include nuclear weapons."

Pezeshkian also accused the US administration in his open letter of escalating "hostilities" by assassinating Iran's Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a US drone strike in neighboring Iraq in 2020.

Intelligence Ministry reports 79 confrontations with terrorists in 45 days



MIZAN

Iran's Intelligence Ministry said in a statement that its forces identified various terrorist ring-leaders and engaged in 79 direct confrontations with them in a period from May 1 to July 5.

Dozens of terrorists, their supporters and suppliers of weapons and ammunition were arrested during 45 days of operations, it added.

The ministry noted that 560 types of weapons, 41,895 war cartridges, 9 bombs and significant amounts of explosives were also confiscated. It said Daesh terrorists hatched plots to infiltrate into the country and carry out terror acts during the funeral processions held for late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi, foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their associates who were killed in a trag-

ic helicopter crash in May.

The terrorists also sought to carry out acts of sabotage during two rounds of Iran's presidential election, it added.

However, the ministry detained the terrorists who had entered the country to conduct terror attacks mainly in the provinces of Tehran, Alborz, Qazvin, Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormuzgan and Bushehr. According to the statement, a number of terrorists were killed in Iran's eastern border areas before entering the country. It also pointed to miscalculation of the anti-Iran Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group, which sought to sow insecurity in Iran, and said six operational cells linked to the MKO

were identified and all the terrorists were arrested. Workshops for the production of handmade launchers were also seized. The statement added that the security forces have detained one of the main culprits behind two terrorist blasts in the southeastern city of Kerman earlier this year, identifying him as Abdullah Quetta.

At least 103 people were killed and 211 more injured in twin terrorist explosions near the burial site of Iran's anti-terror figure Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in Kerman on January 3.

It added that the intelligence obtained from Quetta has played a leading role in uncovering many Takfiri conspiracies, identifying other major elements involved in the plot and discovering their hideouts in regional countries.

Meanwhile, Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, said on Saturday that Iran has listed the names of 120 terrorists and has asked the neighboring Iraq to extradite them to the country.

Gaza's health ministry said dozens were killed Saturday in an Israeli strike on a displacement camp in an area where Israel claimed it targeted Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif. It is the latest mass-casualty incident in the Al-Mawasi area, where many Palestinians had fled, and came as international mediators pushed on with efforts to halt the nine-month war between Israel and Hamas, according to AFP.

Armed forces ready to work with new gov't: Top general

National Desk

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said on Saturday that the country's military forces are ready to fully cooperate with the new government in all fields. Mohammad Baqeri made

the remarks after a meeting with Iran's president-elect Masoud Pezeshkian who won the July 5 runoff election to replace the late president Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash on May 19.

Iran's top general said that the military forces along-



side their main obligations, which are defending and establishing security in the country, will also stand by the new government with all their might, just like the previous governments.

Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Gharaei Ashtiani, Army Chief

Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami and Police chief Brigadier General Ahmadreza Radan also attended the Saturday meeting with Pezeshkian.

Dozens killed in Israel attack on displacement camp in Gaza

Sanders: US complicit in Israeli crimes

The Israeli military claimed it had targeted Deif and Rafa Salama, a brigade commander, calling them two of the masterminds of the October 7 operation which sparked the Gaza war. A Hamas statement called the claim that Deif had been targeted "false allegations" intended "to cover up the magnitude of the horrific massacre".

The US Senator Bernie Sanders said the US is complicit in the Israel's genocide in the Gaza Strip.

"Yet, in the midst of this horror and violations of international law, the United States continues to send billions of dollars and thousands of bombs and other weapons to support this

war. We, as Americans, are complicit."



HATEM KHALED/REUTERS

"We must end our support for Netanyahu's war. Not another nickel to make this horrific situation even worse. I intend to do everything I can to block further arms transfers

to Israel, including through joint resolutions of disapproval of any arms sales. The United States must not help a right-wing extremist and war criminal continue this atrocity," Sanders said in a statement.