

Iran 2025

Strategic opportunities in post-Western world



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**OPINION
EXCLUSIVE**

As the world approaches 2025, it faces a series of fundamental changes and complex challenges that Iranian policymakers and decision-makers must understand promptly and accurately. The liberal international order established after World War II is now on the verge of collapse, and the world has entered a period of uncertainty followed by rapid and sometimes shocking developments, such as the wars in Gaza and Lebanon. Clearly, these new conditions present both threats and opportunities for our country, requiring intelligent analysis of the upcoming situation and appropriate strategic planning. In these circumstances, correctly identifying emerging geopolitical trends and adopting smart approaches to preserve and enhance national interests has become more crucial than ever. Below, I will highlight some of these trends.

One of the most important trends that should be considered by Iranian policymakers is the phenomenon of irrational responses in the international arena. This phenomenon refers to a situation where political and social actors, including governments, political groups, and even influential individuals, exhibit reactions that seemingly contradict their rational and long-term interests.

This trend, rooted in the increasing polarization of societies and the spread of misinformation, has significantly reduced the predictability of international actors' behavior. For example, we can point to the decisions of the first Trump administration to withdraw from international treaties, adopt protectionist economic policies in the age of globalization, or show unconventional reactions to international crises. This phenomenon may result from domestic pressures, the influence of social media, or rapid changes in public opinion. For our country, which has always faced numerous challenges in the international arena, understanding these complexities and adapting its diplomatic strategies accordingly is of particular importance. This is especially crucial in conditions where unilateral sanctions and international pressures continue as it can provide new opportunities for creative and multilateral diplomacy for our country. Policymakers must consider this new reality, set aside old and ineffective methods, and design strategies that offer greater flexibility in dealing with sudden changes in international politics.

Another trend that should be carefully considered and analyzed is the growing inconsistency in the external commitments of countries. This phenomenon refers to a situation where countries adopt different and sometimes contradictory approaches when facing similar international issues. This inconsistency may be rooted in specific political, economic, and even geopolitical issues and challenges of each country. For example, we can refer to the difference in countries' reactions to various international crises, such as the Palestinian issue and the Ukraine war. While some countries react strongly in one case, they may remain silent in a similar case.

This situation, which indicates the increasing influence of domestic and geographical factors on countries' foreign policies, can create various opportunities and challenges for our country, Iran. On the one hand, this inconsistency can make it difficult to predict the behavior of our international partners and pose challenges for planning our long-term interaction with them. On the other hand, this situation can provide an opportunity to strengthen strategic relations with emerging powers and like-minded countries. Our policymakers must design strategies that offer greater flexibility in dealing with changes in other countries' policies by understanding this complexity. Moreover, strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations with countries that share common interests with our country can help reduce the vulnerability caused by this inconsistency.

Alongside these developments, the emergence of new influential voices in the international arena presents a new perspective for our country's foreign policy. This phenomenon refers to the entry of non-governmental and non-traditional actors into international politics, which can influence global decision-making. These new actors include famous entrepreneurs (like Elon Musk), social media influencers with millions of followers on Instagram and other social networks, international NGOs, and even famous artistic celebrities who can shape and guide global public opinion. It is evident that in the coming months and years, our country should seek to increase its constructive communication and interaction with such individuals and organizations to secure its desirable image and interests in the mediated world.

This transformation, accompanied by the gradual decline of Western hegemony, could pave the way for the formation of a new multipolar order in which independent countries like our dear Iran play a more important role. In this regard, strengthening effective relations with emerging Asian powers, especially China and India, and active and non-passive participation in new regional and international cooperation structures, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS group, can secure our country's strategic interests. Moreover, our policymakers should provide strategies for more effective engagement with the global community, including strengthening

digital diplomacy, cooperation with international NGOs, and creating mechanisms to increase our country's communication and dialogue with global intellectual and business leaders.

Questions to consider

Given what has been stated, in these complex conditions, five fundamental questions should be posed to our policymakers, as answering them can determine the future path of our country's foreign policy:

1. How can we ensure our country's security in a collapsing world order? This issue is particularly important for our country, which has always emphasized independence and self-reliance, as traditional international institutions like the United Nations have become largely ineffective. Therefore, our country must quickly design new strategies to ensure its security and interests. This may include strengthening regional alliances, developing deterrent defense capabilities, and participating in multilateral security initiatives.
2. How can we understand and exercise the concept of sovereignty in the contemporary world? Given external pressures and efforts to limit our country's power in various hard and soft areas, this issue requires a realistic approach while remaining committed to revolutionary ideals. In fact, our policymakers must find a wise way to preserve and strengthen national independence and sovereignty while actively participating in international structures.
3. How can we participate in reviving and redesigning the glob-

al trade system? For years, economic sanctions have become a serious challenge for Iran and have provided the ground for the erosion of some valuable resources and capacities of the country. While striving to lift sanctions, our country must find ways to increase its role in the global economy, despite existing limitations. This could include strengthening economic cooperation with like-minded countries, participating in regional economic initiatives such as economic corridors, or even focusing some of the country's existing resources on developing high-value-added industries.

4. How can we maintain our country's innovative and technological capabilities under international restrictions? Maintaining and enhancing the country's technological capabilities is vital to preserving our country's competitive power in the coming years. Therefore, our country must design strategies for developing advanced technologies, especially in areas such as artificial intelligence, renewable energies, and biotechnologies. This may include revising the country's educational policies and guiding elites to technological fields, increasing investment in research and development, strengthening international scientific collaborations, and creating innovation centers in various industrial and economic fields.

5. Given that climate issues have become a global concern for public opinion, how can we participate in global initiatives to combat these changes and thus present a positive image of our country's constructive role on the global stage? It is evident that greater attention from our policymakers to the issue of climate change can be an opportunity to increase international cooperation and attract foreign investment to our country's industries. Fortunately, our country has high potential in this area due to its geographical location and natural resources, and international participation can help rapidly develop infrastructure for utilizing renewable energies and maintaining and securing sustainable water resources for our country. Moreover, participation in this area can act as a lever to reduce international pressures and improve relations with other countries. Given the increasing importance of environmental issues in global politics, Iran can strengthen its position in international negotiations by adopting pioneering positions in this field.

In general, and considering what has been stated, securing our country's national interests in 2025 requires an accurate understanding of global developments, intelligent strategic planning, and coherent implementation of developed policies. On this path, maintaining national cohesion, strengthening domestic capacities, expanding international cooperation, and maintaining flexibility in the face of unexpected domestic and foreign developments will be the keys to success.



President of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian (l) and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian arrives in Basra, Iraq, on September 12, 2024, as part of a three-day visit to the country. [president.ir](https://www.president.ir)

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