

## International Desk

## PERSPECTIVE

The policy that Masoud Pezeshkian's government has chosen involves fostering domestic consensus while engaging in dialogue with the world to overcome barriers in foreign relations and manage sanctions. To what extent will this approach assist in addressing the challenges facing the country?

The government is grappling with numerous economic challenges, which are increasingly manifesting in various imbalances, from electricity and gas shortages to issues within the banking system and pension funds.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is seen at an event in Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan on January 22, 2025  
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# Pezeshkian facing different views on Iran's talks with West



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According to political and economic experts, overcoming this situation requires certain structural reforms, as well as a transformation of foreign relations that are currently hindered by obstacles such as anti-Iran sanctions. Research by IRNA on these challenges has included discussions with several experts across different fields of economics, politics, and foreign policy. This report reflects the viewpoints of Mohammad Kazem Anbarlooei, a member of the Islamic Coalition Party and former editor-in-chief of the Resalat newspaper, as well as Mohammad Ali Vakili, the managing editor of the Ebtekar newspaper, who has previously served as a representative for Tehran in the tenth Parliament.

## Government's response to early criticism

Previously, newly elected governments would generally not face significant waves of criticism from rivals during their initial months in office. However, in recent months, rising currency rates, air pollution, electricity and gas shortages, among other issues, have swiftly become focal points of criticism regarding the government's performance.

In the current situation, Vakili states, "The most significant challenge facing the government is the public's despair over change and the prevailing judgment, both domestically and internationally, that there is little difference between the fourteenth and thirteenth governments." He adds that economic pressures, inflation, and

currency fluctuations are currently the main issues for the government. Simultaneously, there is an effort to attribute all present inadequacies to this government, with some even holding it responsible for regional developments and setbacks faced by the resistance front.

This former parliamentarian describes the political objectives pursued by the government's opponents, saying, "Various factions that have no interest in the continuation of Beheshti's term are striving to portray a fantasy and ineffective government, aiming to depict Beheshti's administration as one caught up in non-essential priorities." However, Anbarlooei, in response to a question regarding the current confrontations with the government, expresses a preference for the term "critique" over "confrontation." He asserts that the government must address these critiques in the realm

of domestic politics and economic issues, even if the burdens now faced by the current government are largely a result of problems accumulated from previous administrations.

According to the former editor-in-chief of Resalat, the criticism directed at the government in the economic sphere pertains to the public's financial struggles, the preservation of the national currency's value, and the safeguarding of its worth. It should not be perceived by Iranian citizens that the government is negligent in protecting the national currency. Therefore, the government must demonstrate that it is "on top of things" in this regard. Within the past two months, part of the national currency's value has diminished, an issue that concerns the entire Iranian populace and disrupts the economic system. He hopes that Pezeshkian's economic team will pay closer attention to the seri-

ous questions surrounding the economy, particularly regarding the depreciation of the national currency.

## Can negotiation solve country's problems?

Some observers argue that as long as our issues with the world remain unresolved, a significant portion of the country's problems will persist. In this context, Anbarlooei states, "We have experienced negotiations with the West over the past 45 years, particularly during Hassan Rouhani's administration. The door to negotiations has always been open from the Iranian government's side, and agreements have even been reached, but the other side has failed to uphold any of its commitments. This sends a clear signal to our government that it must only concede what we demand in negotiations, without expecting any reciprocity." He warns that sanctions re-

main firmly in place and may even intensify, with no concessions granted in return for any benefits offered to us.

"The Trump administration is currently in power, and Trump is the individual who tore up the JCPOA [The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action also known as the Iran nuclear deal]. Based on the advice of his advisors, the door to negotiations for greater concessions remains open, while he is also being advised to maintain military readiness to confront Iran. This recommendation comes from Richard Nephew, the architect of the sanctions against Iran. Therefore, we are unlikely to achieve anything from negotiations, as past experiences have shown that we will not receive any concessions, and sanctions may become even more complex."

This political activist adds, "The government should focus its efforts on opening corridors for foreign relations through international agreements, such as BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Our breathing space lies in circumventing sanctions, and as Trump's advisors have suggested, expanding relationships with China, Russia, and India is crucial. They have acknowledged that these three countries do not coordinate with the global community on sanctions against Iran. One of the criticisms directed at the government is that while China aims to establish a strategic partnership with Iran, the necessary diplomatic and consular frameworks are not yet in place. Russia also has strong collaborations in various domains, and we have not fully capitalized on

the opportunities presented by our relationship with Russia."

## Efficacy of consensus in improving conditions

According to Anbarlooei, the government's focus on national consensus is a very effective approach. This concept is essential for national security, defense, and interests, making it a commendable slogan. However, he acknowledges that there are critiques that Pezeshkian is attentive to. "If we can bridge the gap between the government and the people, no cognitive warfare or soft conflict can be effective. Thus far, Pezeshkian's government has stated that its goal is to implement the Leader's general policies and to carry out the country's Seventh Development Plan, which has left little room for maneuvering for adversaries. Moreover, this can serve as a fundamental axis for creating consensus among political forces."

However, the editor-in-chief of Ebtekar newspaper holds a different view regarding the effectiveness of consensus in aligning political forces to address the country's problems, stating, "In such conditions, insisting on consensus as it has been pursued so far has primarily empowered the government's opponents and dissatisfied its supporters. Consensus, in this sense, equates to retreating from both sides in favor of the opposing party. Thus far, only the government has retreated, while the opposing side has managed to gain ground."

