

The reality is, the people’s behavior regarding consumer goods was exemplary — truly outstanding. Chain store sales average 1.4 to 1.45 trillion tomans (\$16.2 million) per day; On the first day of the war, this jumped to 1.9 trillion (\$21.3 million) — a nearly 40% increase. On the second day, sales dropped below the average, and in the following days, returned to normal growth; In other words, people only bought what they needed. There may have been exceptions, but overall, people played their part. That’s why store shelves, which were full, stayed full. Bear in mind, the Zionist regime had talked up a three-day plan: Day one, by targeting commanders and key forces, they would score a military win; Day two, in their wildest dreams, the people would rally behind them; And day three, in negotiations scheduled for Sunday, “surrender” would be agreed upon. But the people, under the Leader’s guidance, stepped forward and truly stuck to what they knew was right — balance in consumption, helping each other,



Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (L) talks with President Masoud Pezeshkian during a cabinet meeting in Tehran, Iran, on June 15, 2025, two days after Israel launched its war of aggression against the country. ● [president.ir](#)

and the spread of voluntary services; Even in the gasoline lines, we saw a man with his young daughter handing out drinks. Under these circumstances, production outstripped our needs; Some producers even ran second and third shifts. Also worth mentioning is the valuable move by the Chamber of Guilds, as guilds stepped up — many sold at cost, and some companies even slashed their prices. This was a significant gesture. Our main worry was about goods in ports and on ships. Here, too, a truly heroic effort took shape, with truck drivers leading the charge — truckers who, just a month earlier, had been protesting and making demands — some of which had been met, some still under review. Suddenly, when this war broke out, truckers threw their weight behind the effort. As a result, cargo unloading from ports doubled compared to normal times; In other words, our strategy paid off. In other areas, too, we saw the people’s remarkable cooperation, and thankfully, the country was well managed economically. Thanks to the delegation of authorities, managers made decisions on the spot. Now, we’ve reached a good conclusion and have asked all agencies to hand in their accounts of

the 12-day imposed war. Since we’re now in a “cessation of aggression” situation, we must stay on our toes to be able to hit back harder if needed. In these reports, sections are to analyze shortcomings so that if there were any lapses or shortages, we can iron out the kinks within the government, God willing, and, using legal mechanisms, get better prepared. Fortunately, the dynamism in the executive bodies during this period was truly remarkable. Besides the government, which held a meeting on the first day, almost all key ministries sent me their decision-making minutes by Saturday morning; Everyone knew where they stood by noon. Thanks to the Leader’s decisive action in appointing commanders — since top military commanders had been martyred, and normally leadership changes take time — within a few hours, the situation was stabilized, so that our first operation was carried out just hours later.

**As you mentioned, we are now in a “cessation of aggression” situation, and our counterparts are Netanyahu**

**and Trump, who may well go back on their commitments. In recent days, the US president has ramped up both direct and indirect psychological warfare against public opinion, doubling down on his previous talk of “unconditional surrender” for Iran, insisting that the Iranians must now come to the negotiating table and accept what they dictate. As the first vice president of Iran, what is your take on the US president’s remarks?**

Look, the word “surrender” doesn’t hold any water in our political and defense culture. We are a civilized nation with a proud, millennia-old heritage; We are not warmongers and did not set off this conflict. We believe in peace and dialogue, but we will never give in. As has been stated many times, including by the Leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, “We do not start wars, but if a war breaks out, we end it.” That is exactly the case now. Our adversary, the Zionist regime, cannot be trusted. We did not grant them a cease-fire. In Lebanon, there was a cease-fire, yet you see that most of the casualties came after it. Their approach to Iran is the same: If the regime senses it has the upper hand in any area, it will certainly make a move. Therefore, to prevent this or to ensure they get a harsher blow, we must hold on to our advantage. That’s why, in this short time, working groups have been set up and we have kicked off strategic initiatives. It’s clear that in some areas we’ve fallen short or need to step up our game; So, we hope that, in a short time, some of the shortcomings and gaps we’ve faced

on those areas will be sorted out, so that we can keep our edge not only in missile operations, but in other areas as well, God willing. In war, you often hear empty rhetoric; You’ve seen that their posturing, especially from Trump, can change tunes several times a day. That’s not our style; We have a stable, well-defined strategy, and our actions are always grounded in national interests and the three pillars that have long guided our foreign policy — dignity, wisdom, and expediency. So, if we give our word, we don’t back out; If we make a statement, we stand by it — and everything we say is based on strategy and the chain of command. That’s why we have confidence in ourselves, and I believe the world’s assessment is that Iran’s positions are clear, stable, and unchangeable. Our intention is to stay the course and, God willing, continue to act accordingly.

**You touched on the post-war period and reconstruction. Where do we stand on that?**

This is a very important topic. Even before the cessation of aggression kicked in, we had already gotten the ball rolling. Our assessment was that this phase would be wrapped up one way or another, but we must anticipate a much bigger stage ahead. We have launched some promising initiatives, though I won’t go into details now, but I assure the people that we are even better prepared than we were during the 12-day war. Our strategy is to maintain our advantage in a short timeframe, and the social cohesion and capital that have been built up must be preserved. A working group has been put together to focus on this. For weaknesses in goods, ports, or other issues, other groups are working on it. God willing, at the earliest opportunity — which shouldn’t be far off — we’ll be able to report back to our good people with a comprehensive update.

**How do you assess the role of the Leader in managing the country, particularly his command during the 12-day war?**



A man shows a victory sign as he buys groceries during Israel’s war of aggression against Iran, on June 19, 2025. ● [AMIR KHOLOUSI/ISNA](#)

If we take a quick look back, the general policies in various sectors are crystal clear, including the Leader’s deep insight, foresight, and the transparent positions he lays out in every area. Truly, it is this vision and leadership that, despite all the hostility, have overcome all the



Leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (C) attends a mourning ceremony on the eve of Ashura at the Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyeh in Tehran, Iran, on July 5, 2025. ● [khamenei.ir](#)

challenges we’ve faced since the Revolution, and sanctions that the West claims are crippling, moving us forward. If I were to highlight the Leader’s specific focus, it is on the development of science and technology. If you look through his statements over the years, you’ll see this is where he places the greatest emphasis. He has steered the country’s behavior and actions toward science-based development. Fortunately, this perspective has taken firm root in the defense sector under his strategies. The achievements in our defense sector are all thanks to our young, homegrown scientists. This outlook has now put our defensive capabilities in the region in a top position. Compare the early days of the imposed war in 1980 with now — it’s night and day. This is the result of his vision. He applies this same outlook to field management; From his position as the commander-in-chief, we see the same approach. In managing this war, if you look at his recent televised addresses, his main

focus has been on uniting the people and getting them to step up, then on encouraging the fighters to act bravely within the law. And we’ve seen the results: In less than 10 hours, the highest-ranking military officials were appointed — a remarkable feat. I often tell my colleagues: Appointing the head of a small department with 15 staff can drag on for a month, and even then, the new chief may ask for a week to get started; But in this case, within 10 hours, commanders on par with the martyred leaders

were appointed and carried out successful operations within hours. This is the hallmark of the commander-in-chief’s leadership. And it’s not just those of us who have worked with him for 40 or 50 years who say this — even our adversaries acknowledge his courage and command.

**When the Leader came to the Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyeh on the eve of Ashura, you were present; could you share your account of that event?**

His presence at that ceremony was truly exceptional. I don’t think anyone in the Hosseiniyeh expected him to come. Even we assumed that if he didn’t show up, it would be due to pressing work. Let me share an anecdote: During the Bam earthquake, we accompanied him on that famous 707 flight. When he was supposed to return, a severe storm hit, and his office told us the flight would be pushed back — We weren’t allowed to fly that night. After an hour, it turned out that the Leader, despite the storm, had flown back, but didn’t allow us to join him — we had to leave the next morning. That shows his courage in tough conditions. So, with all the nonsense and empty talk the enemies have spouted — and will continue to spout — they’ve only exposed themselves each time. They claimed he wouldn’t show up for various reasons, but he did. The crowd at the Hosseiniyeh, caught off guard, broke out in spontaneous chants. As I witnessed, their reaction was instinctive — everyone was stunned for a few minutes, and the atmosphere was deeply spiritual and moving. After a few minutes of reflection, I thought it was natural; The Leader surely came that night, so no one could claim he was afraid to attend because of the attacks. I personally sensed a few things: His personal qualities — authority and courage combined with prudence — his spiritual leadership among Muslims and Iranians — seeing a religious leader is itself a blessing in our view — and, third, the high-level leadership he showed during the war. His presence changed the mood of the country; The energy and vitality doubled, and we still feel its effects: That yes, this is who we are, we fear nothing but God, and we step into the fray with courage — just as the Leader’s actions and our people’s admirable response have shown.

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From day one, the Pezeshkian government was thrown into war; A dear guest of our country was assassinated, and the message of this assassination was the continuation of this path by the Zionist regime and its backers. So, in October 2024, we came to the conclusion that we had to factor in a wartime mindset in managing the country. The strategy drawn up was to keep a lid on public anxiety so that people wouldn’t feel the country was at war, but for government officials, it was wartime management.