



The Cyrus Cylinder استوانه کوروش or Cyrus Charter منشور کوروش was discovered under the foundation of a Babylonian palace in 1879, making it perhaps the oldest time capsule on record. It commemorates Cyrus' victory over Babylonia in 539 BC and sets out the rights of subjects in his expanding empire. It is often commemorated as the oldest charter of human rights in the world.

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Will Iran be Freed from the Birdcage?

Note from the Editor, Paul Barker, Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran 1971-76

[ایران قفس هست یا نیست؟](#) Is Iran a birdcage or not? A central debate in Iran's presidential election revolved over who could best unlock the potential of the people of Iran. Several lessons seem to arise from the outcome of the election. Whenever given a real choice, the Iranian electorate has chosen the more moderate Presidential candidate over the more conservative one. In earlier elections they chose Khatemi, Rouhani and now Pezeshkian. Turnout for the first round of the election was a historic low of 40% but went up to 50% in the run-off when Pezeshkian emerged as a finalist with a good chance to win. Reflecting Pezeshkian's Azari and Kurdish background, support for Pezeshkian was strongest in parts of the country with significant ethnic minorities: the Baluch, Arabs, Kurds, Azaris and Caspian provinces, as well as Tehran,. In the end the winner was Pezeshkian's vision of an Iran which is as open to the West as it is to China and Russia; an Iran where women are not punished for their decision whether or not to wear hijab; and an Iran which is able to deal more directly with the US and Europeans to end or at least seriously relax the international sanctions which have hobbled the Iranian economy.

Unknown is how much flexibility the new President will have from the Supreme Leader to pursue his winning agenda at home and abroad. Also unknown is how capable the United States will be to seize the opportunity that might be on the table to address concerns with Iran's nuclear program and regional behavior. It is hard to imagine Biden seizing on any opening with Iran before the November elections, and who knows what a US President would be able and want to do after the election.

Javad Zarif, the former Iranian Foreign Minister who successfully negotiated with the US and others the historic nuclear deal of 2015 - the JCPOA, has been a key advisor to and supporter of Pezeshkian and is helping him make key appointments for his new administration. Iran might be open to a historic shift in its international outlook, but we would need a reciprocal openness in the US to make it happen.

Iranian Elections

[Will Pezeshkian's Win Lead to a Thaw in U.S.-Iran Relations?](#) Although it's hard to imagine a new nuclear deal, a reformist administration could present some opportunities for de-escalation. Ali Vaez, Foreign Policy, 2024/7/12



Iran's President-elect Pezeshkian and ex FM Javad Zarif on June 22, 2024. (Jamaran)

[Will Iran's New President Forge a New Foreign Policy?](#) Trita Parsi, Azadeh Moaveni, Adnan Tabatabai, Mohammad Ali Shabani, Quincy Institute, 2024/7/12

[Iran's Election Surprise: A Reformist Victory Amid Turmoil](#), Sina Toossi, Center for International Policy, 2024/7/6

[Can Pezeshkian fix Iran's relations with the West?](#) Hamidreza Hazizi, European Leadership Network, July 2024

[Iran's illusion of reform masks the crumbling of Khamenei's regime](#), Ramesh Sepehrrad, The Hill, 2024/7/1

[What You Need to Know About Iran's Election and New President](#), Garrett Nada, USIP, 2024/7/9

[Who is Iran's new president-elect Masoud Pezeshkian?](#) Masoud Pezeshkian will try to convince a public angered by years of economic pain and bloody crackdowns that he can fulfill his promised changes. AP, 2024/7/6

[Early Signals After Iran's Election Suggest More Continuity Than Change:](#) The challenges for Pezeshkian will be navigating Khamenei's influence in addressing the nuclear issue, the regional landscape after the Gaza war, and the economy, Anonymous, The Stimson Center, 2024/10/10

[Iranians Voted for Change. Will They Get It?](#) Sina Toossi, Foreign Policy, 2024/7/10

[Iran Elections: Record-Low Turnout Shows Even Regime Loyalists Are Unhappy:](#) Whether it be overhauling the economy, boosting social justice, equal rights for women or reducing Iran's international isolation, Iranians are more united than ever against the status quo, Saeed Azimi, The Stimson Center, 2024/7/1

[Pezeshkian Victory Presents Opportunities to Ease Pressures on Ordinary Iranians,](#) Ryan Costello, NIAC, 2024/7/17. If whoever wins the U.S. election in November puts sanctions relief on the table, a deal can likely be struck again that puts weaponization at bay and eases some of the pressure on Iran's economy to the benefit of ordinary Iranians.

[Iran's supreme leader is terrified of people power:](#) A zealot and a reformer will contest a second-round poll on July 5th, The Economist, 2024/6/29

[A new president—and more,](#) Holly Dagues, The Iranist, 2024/7/12

[With Diverse Tactics, Women's Rights Activists Shaped Iran's Elections,](#) Shima Tadrissi Hassani, Bourse & Bazaar, 2024/7/19

Iranian Politics and Policies

[Iran's Supreme Leader Is Worried:](#) Why else would he bring his political rivals back in from the cold? Arash Azizi, The Atlantic, 2024/7/10

['The Axis of Resistance': The Role of Religion in Iranian Foreign Policy,](#) Ezgi Uzun, Academia.edu, July 2018

HARDLINER

REFORMIST



اصول‌گرا

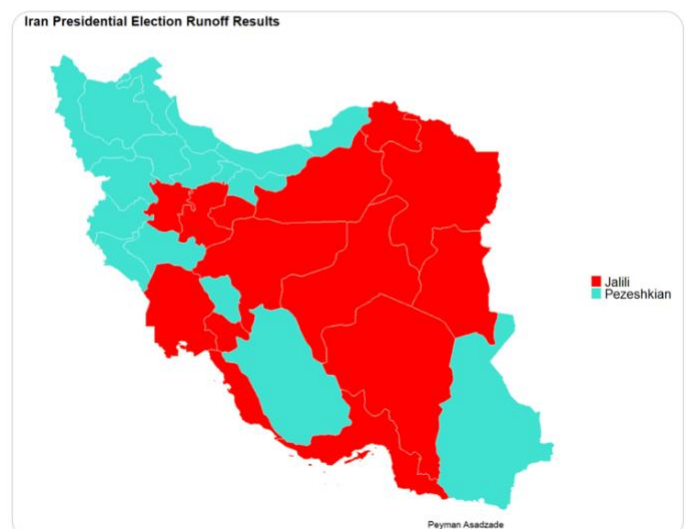
اصلاح‌طلب

A popular meme shared to compare the difference between "reformists" and "hardliners" (X)



Peyman Asadzade
@PeymanAsadzade

Here's the provincial map of Iran's runoff election results, showing the winners by province. Pezeshkian mostly won in the northern and western provinces, while Jalili took the central and eastern provinces.



[How Iran's Next President Sees an Emerging "New World Order", Javad Heiran-Nia, Javad Heiran-Nia, Stimson Center 2024/7/17.](#) In general, Pezeshkian's approach is practical and pragmatic, recalling the approach of predecessors Rafsanjani, Khatami and Rouhani

[Perspectives of Sunnites on the Foreign Policy Making Process of Iran Balochis and Kurds, Mohammad Rigi Derakhshan, Academia.edu, 2021](#)

[Reza Pahlavi's Speech at NatCon 4 Marks Another Shift in Political Strategy, NIAC Action, 2024/7/19](#)

Rethinking Sanctions Policy

by Carolyn Yale, Shiraz 1974-76

The election of Masoud Pezeshkian as President has ushered in a 'moderate' who is interested in opening ties with European countries and the US. Assuming this is a direction the Supreme Leader and Guardian Council are willing to explore, this may be a promising change of heart. Doubtless Iran will seek loosening of sanctions, which were cranked up to 'maximum pressure' in the Trump administration and retained by Pres. Biden. In fact, Iran has the unique distinction of being the most sanctioned country in history, without evidence of achieving the intended results. In a recent book, [How Sanctions Work: Iran and the Impact of Economic Warfare](#) authors Narjes Bajoghli, Vali Nasr, Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, and Ali Vaez make the case that rather than provoking regime change, sanctions have the opposite effect: hardening the Iranian government's will against the oppressor, cracking down on internal opposition, all the while strengthening the hand and lining the pockets of the military Revolutionary Guard.

The contours of this situation are well known. What is new in this book is the closer look at how Iranians have over the years adapted to sanctions that have become increasingly onerous. Anthropologist Narjes Bajoghli observes through interviews how people have learned to cope with the restrictions. To think that sudden lifting of sanctions would transform behavior and circumstances is unrealistic: Unfortunately, the sanctions have led to a widening income gap between rich and poor/middle class; there is corruption; the government's suppression of dissent has worn people down – in short, the experience of Iranians under sanctions has undermined capacity for a thriving civil society. President Pezeshkian has a steep hill to climb if he holds to his promises.

Is there any hope for improved relations between Iran and sanctioning countries in the West? Here I will add my own observations and answer: Possibly, but not on the terms the US has set. Pezeshkian refers to a rebalancing of relations that includes China and Russia as well as Western states. That more open, less-hegemonic vision runs counter to the US view of its role in the world (which political writer Peter Beinart has called "Manichean").

Or does the pathway of sanctions lead us closer to outright war with Iran? It could, if we are not careful to balance our judgment of Iran and other countries engaged in the Middle East. We need a realistic assessment of the results of our interventions in the region and act with caution. We should be reminded that sanctions are a kind of warfare that, history tells us, makes enemies, not friends, and can presage direct conflict.

The book is: How Sanctions Work: Iran and the Impact of Economic Warfare, Narjes Bajoghli, Vali Nasr, Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, and Ali Vaez. Stanford University Press, 2024.

See also: <https://quincyst.org/events/sanctioned-realities-iran-and-the-failure-of-economic-warfare/>

Sanctions

[US Sanctions Shadow Banking Network](#), USIP, 2024/6/25

Iranian Economy

[Iran's ex-Central Bank chief calls for resolving issues with the US](#), Iran International, 2024/7/6

US, European Policy

[A Blueprint for a Progressive U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East](#), The Century Foundation, 2024/7/15. The document includes a wide range of policy proposals for refocusing US foreign policy in the greater Middle East, including Iran.

[A Chance for Renewed Diplomacy with Iran](#): If the U.S. were willing to pursue serious diplomatic engagement with Iran, Pezeshkian's election could be a significant opening for renewed nuclear negotiations. Daniel Larison, Eunomia, 2-24/7/8

[US Rules Out Resuming Nuclear Talks With Iran's New President](#), Dave DeCamp, AntiWar.com, 2024/7/9

[Managed reform: What Iran's new president means for European diplomacy](#), Ellie Geranmayeh, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2024/7/10

[Vance Isn't Hiding His Hawkishness on Iran](#), Daniel Larison, Subtrack, 2024/7/16

[The Many Foreign Policy Lies Trump Told](#), Daniel Larison, Eunomia, 2024/7/20

[U.S. Detected Iranian Plot to Kill Trump Separate From Last Weekend's Shooting](#), Peter Baker, Adam Goldman, Julian Barnes, NYT, 2024/7/16

Nuclear Issues

[Constraining Iran's Nuclear Potential in the Absence of the JCPOA](#), Kelsey Davenport, Arms Control Association, 2024/7

Israeli historian calls for nuclear attack on Iran: [To Survive, Israel Must Strike Iran Now](#), Benny Morris, Haaretz, 2024/6/30. If Israel proves incapable of destroying the Iranian nuclear project using conventional weaponry, then it may not have any option but to resort to its nonconventional capabilities.

[Iran's New Nuclear Threat: How Tehran Has Weaponized Its Threshold Status](#), Eric Brewer, Foreign Affairs, 2024/6/25

[US imposes fresh sanctions on Iran over apparent nuclear escalations: Blinken says Tehran has expanded uranium enrichment project 'in ways that have no credible peaceful purpose', Robert Tait, The Guardian, 2024/6/27](#)

Region

[Iran-Bahrain talks on horizon signal more sunset on US hegemony:](#) Evidence that Washington can no longer dictate the order of enemies in the Middle East, Graham Fuller, Responsible Statecraft, 2024/7/1

[Another American War in the Middle East?, Juan Cole, Counterpunch, 2024/7/3](#)

The article includes a good, brief, history of Yemen's woes and the evolution of the Houthis going back to 890 AD.

[IDF jets target Houthi regime in strike on Hodeidah energy infrastructure,](#) Yonah Jeremy Bob, Maya Gur Arie, Sam Halpern, The Jerusalem Post, 2024/7/20

[3 Israelis arrested for allegedly carrying out tasks for Iranian intelligence agents,](#) Jeremy Sharon, Times of Israel, 2024/7/16

Human Rights

[Iran Summons Women for Hijab Violations on Ashura,](#) IranWire, 2024/7/18

[266 Prisoners Executed in the First Half of 2024,](#) Hengaw.net, 2024/7/13

Environment

[Iran's water crisis leads to alarming ground collapse,](#) Shabnam von Hein. DW, 2024/6/19

History

[Sectarian Dilemmas in Iranian Foreign Policy: When Strategy And Identity Politics Collide,](#) Afshon Ostovar, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2016

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Peace Corps Iran Association advances peace and understanding between Americans and Iranians through education, outreach and advocacy, and upholds the legacy of the Peace Corps in Iran.

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Peace Corps Iran Association advocates for peace and understanding through education, outreach, and cultural diplomacy.

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1. Understanding and acceptance of other people and cultures are the building blocks of friendship, inclusiveness and world peace. As citizens of a world power, Americans bear a special responsibility.
2. Tolerance and mutual respect form the foundation for peaceful interactions between countries and their citizens.
3. Bringing countries and their citizens into the global community through cultural and economic ties reinforces international cooperation and reduces the likelihood of armed conflict.
4. Negotiation and diplomacy are essential to resolving international issues.

5. Force is rarely justified in dealing with conflicts. Peace is built and sustained through voluntary agreement and consent.

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