



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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Questions for President Pezeshkian

Note from the editor, Paul Barker

Last month the PCIA Advocacy Bulletin shared a letter and article which we had sent to President Biden urging him to embrace the opportunity for new diplomatic openings which exist with Iran following the election of President Pezeshkian.

Next week President Pezeshkian will be traveling to New York to participate in UN General Assembly meetings. It is anticipated that he will also hold side meetings with diplomats and journalists. What messages would we wish to communicate and what questions should be asked of President Pezeshkian?

Finding an alignment of political will and interests in both Iran and the US is often elusive. The closest the two countries have come to improving relations strained by decades of mistrust and missteps was during the presidencies of Obama and Rouhani and resulted in the historic nuclear non-proliferation agreement, the JCPOA. That opening was slammed shut by President Trump and has so far remained largely shut during the Biden administration.

With the new openness demonstrated by the election campaign of now President Pezeshkian and the changes that will be ushered in by the upcoming US presidential election, it is timely to explore the avenues and boundaries of any potential diplomatic opening.

So President Pezeshkian, we would like to ask:

- With your new administration in Tehran, is there a genuine opportunity to begin to repair relations between Iran, the US and Europe?
- Recognizing the US is in a volatile election season, what public actions might the outgoing Biden Administration take that would be well received by the Iranian people?
- What public actions might your administration take that might be well received by the American people?
- Is there a way to restart direct contact and negotiations between the US and Iran, getting around the cumbersome indirect communications through third parties?
- Recognizing that American views on Iran tend to be polarized and that neither President Biden nor Kamala Harris nor Donald Trump will be able to make public declarations of new openings with Iran before the November 5 election, are you nonetheless open to preliminary talks on frameworks to de-escalate tensions over Iran's nuclear program and its arms exports to Russia and various countries and militant groups in the region?
- How do you think the Iranian export of missiles and drones to Russia is and should be viewed especially in Europe but also in US.

Iranian Politics

[U.S. pre-elections diplomatic limbo](#), Diplomacy on key foreign policy goals on de facto hold ahead of the U.S. elections in November. Laura Rozen, Diplomatic Subtrack, 2024/9/17

Iran will seek to message it is ready for negotiations: The new Iranian presidential and foreign ministry team will seek in New York to project that they are ready for negotiations, said Ali Alfoneh, a political scientist who specializes in Iran.

The Iranian president “will be spending almost an entire week in New York, and Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister, will be spending ten days,” Alfoneh said. “This tells me that the Islamic Republic under Pezeshkian is engaged in some kind of charm offensive in the United States. They truly want to use the General Assembly to send out the message to the world that Iran is willing to engage in negotiations.”

[Zarif resumes VP duties as Iran signals desire for diplomacy](#), Amwaj, 2024/8/29

[Return of Iran’s JCPOA negotiators ‘last opportunity for west to make a deal’](#), Amwaj, 2024/9/2

[First Sunni Governor Appointed in Iran After Four Decades](#), NIAC, 2024/9/20

[The Iranians who hacked Trump's campaign have deep expertise](#), Christopher Bing and Gram Slattery, Reuters, 2024/8/23

[Iran indicates 'JCPOA not good enough for us anymore'](#), AMWAJ, 2024/8/26

['No Barrier' to Nuclear Talks With U.S., Iran's Supreme Leader Says](#), Eve Sampson, NYT, 2024/8/27. It was unclear if Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's comments signaled any shift in Iran's stance, but the country's new president has called for an accord that would relieve Western sanctions against it

[What an Assassination in Tehran Reveals About Iran's Intelligence Mishaps](#): One month after the assassination of Haniyeh, Iranian authorities are still hard-pressed to explain away the colossal national security bungle, Kourosh Ziabari, Stimson Center, 2024/8/29

[Iran's new foreign minister on the JCPOA and future negotiations with the West](#), Iran Briefing: European Leadership Network, September 2024

[How Iran's Gen Z imagines a better, different future](#), Holly Dagues TEDx Talk, 2024/9/5

[Woman, Life, Freedom: The Second Anniversary](#), Haleh Esfandiari, Wilson Center, 2024/9/16

US Policy

[What Harris and Trump should say about Iran](#): Tonight's debate offers both candidates the chance to get real about how to deal with Tehran. Ryan Costello, Responsible Statecraft, 2024/9/10

[Democrats Unveil a Bizarre Foreign Policy Platform](#): The foreign policy section of the Democratic Party platform is a bizarre mishmash of celebrating (and whitewashing) Biden's record and attacking Trump for being insufficiently hardline and aggressive. [The bit on Iran is particularly bad](#). Daniel Larison, Eunomia, 2024/8/20

[How Trump Should Deal with Iran](#): Iran can make or break Trump's Middle East withdrawals. Trita Parsi, The American Conservative, 2024/8/15

[A Willfully Misguided Plan for Conciliation with Iran](#), Adam Turner, National Review, 2024/8/25

[The Impact of the U.S. Presidential Election on US-Iran Relations](#), Elliott Morton, AIC, 2024/8/12

[For Iran, does de-escalation outweigh the cost of escalation?](#) Trita Parsi, Al-Jazira

[America should make it easier for young people to serve their country](#): National service should be a post-graduation option that all young Americans consider. WAPO, 2024/7/12

[Who gives 'Three Cheers for the Military-Industrial Complex'?](#) Defense industry-funded think tanks like the Hudson Institute, apparently. William Hartung, Responsible Statecraft, 2024/8/22

[Preparing for a Less Arrogant America](#): A close reading of two books by authors who advise Kamala Harris reveals a vision for a humbler approach to foreign policy. Michael Hirsh, Foreign Policy, 2024/8/20

[The war on war at the DNC, RNC confabs](#): The delegates and attendees we spoke with often diverged with the party message on stage, and that means something, Branko Marcetic, Responsible Statecraft, 2024/8/24

[Donald Trump is under the impression that the Iran hacking story makes him look better and Kamala Harris look worse. That's precisely backwards.](#) What Trump should (but doesn't) understand about the Iran hacking story. Steve Benen, MSNBC. 2024/9/19

Legislation

[Swalwell Introduced Bill to Promote Internet Freedom and Access to Information in Iran](#), Press Release, 2024/9/9

[Senator Kennedy's Racist Questioning Denounced](#), Win Without War

[NIAC's post on the Senate hearing](#)

Impressions from Iran Today, by a frequent visitor

The mood of the country is pretty much the same as my previous visit. The economy seems to be doing better than several years ago, when Trump's "maximum pressure sanctions" were biting, but still there are vastly insufficient opportunities for the younger population. Education here is quite advanced and highly valued, but many folks who end up with professional degrees have to take jobs below their training. The economic situation leads many folks to delay marriage, and some to abandon it altogether (social expectations are for economically lavish weddings by Western standards). The regime's popularity remains very low notwithstanding that a 'progressive' was elected President (Mr. Pezeshkian) to replace President Ra'isi, who died in a helicopter crash in the northwest of the country). Strict dress codes for women have been relaxed significantly since the uprisings over the last two years; many young women are without head coverings, and it seems the regime has decided against strict enforcement. Individuals openly criticize the government (something that would never happen during the time of the Shah, more than 50 years ago when I first came to Iran). Last night, for example, I took a Snapp (equivalent to Uber) ride from our apartment in Karaj to my sister-in-law's family's place in central Tehran for dinner and a visit- a ride of more than an hour. The driver was an electrical engineer for the electric power agency in Karaj who lives in Tehran; when he comes to work in the morning he will pick up a passenger going west out of Tehran, and when he returns home to Tehran in the evening he picks up a passenger heading east into Tehran - which is what I was to him last night. Anyway, he asked me to sit in the front with him so we could talk on the way in, which I did. He said that he is from Bandar Abbas (in the south along the Persian Gulf, that he has worked as an electrical engineer for 18 years for the agency, and that in two years he will be entitled to a pension which he will take, move to the Emirates (Dubai), and begin a new career in marketing electronics. He bitterly criticized the economic mismanagement and corruption of the regime. It was interesting, however, that he was driving a new car, made in Iran, of which he has just taken delivery; he stated that it cost about \$75,000 US (which, frankly, startled me). His comment made me pay attention to the newness of the automobiles on the freeway - something that I had not paid attention to before - and

I noticed that there were indeed a remarkable number of newer vehicles on the road, certainly a higher percentage than, say, five or ten years ago.

The tensions involving Israel are subsiding, but still there are issues. For example, commercial aircraft are prohibited from flying over Iranian airspace after sunset. This is doubtless because of the tragedy several years ago following President Trump's assassination of highly revered General Solimani in Iraq, which put Iran military defense folks on high alert. During the evening several days after the assassination, a Ukraine Airways flight took off from the Tehran airport and a trigger-happy Iranian air defense unit shot it down, causing well over 100 deaths. Iran has admitted the mistake and the current nighttime restrictions are an attempt to prevent another occurrence -- locking the barn door after the livestock have escaped. In any event, the nighttime restrictions are playing havoc with international travel to/from Iran; it is because of this limitation that Qatar Airways is giving a free hotel room in Doha to any traveler who has a connection time of greater than eight hours, which applies to my travel to return home via Doha. As noted, I had a similar situation on the way to Iran, and the hotel was top notch (and frankly getting in a comfortable bed after 18 hours cramped in tiny airplane seats was quite welcome!).

Locally, the population seems to worry more about their economic problems than the nuances of international relations. Which is not to say that Israel is not a source of consternation, what with over 40,000 dead consequent to the Hamas attack of October 7. Iran is a bit of an outlier regarding Israel - it is the only Muslim country that has consistently supported the rights of the Palestinians. In fact, Saudi Arabia granted Israel access to Saudi airspace for any attacks that Israel wanted to make on Iran. Notwithstanding this, the Iranian regime, in order to keep their Islamic Revolution credentials in order will, I think, continue to strenuously oppose Israel.

Iran-Israel

[Trita Parsi on Iran, Hezbollah and Israel](#), Beinart Notebook, 2024/8/30

[Media Guide: Iran-Israel Relations \(July 2024\)](#), Andrew Lumsdem, AIC 2024/7/19

[Iran's electronic confrontation with Israel](#): The two adversaries are engaged in an intense cyber struggle, with Israel still a click ahead, The Economist, 2024/8/15

[Iran signals promised strike on Israel may not be imminent](#): Iran said a response to the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh "must be carefully calibrated" to avoid hurting prospects of a Gaza cease-fire. Susannah George, Karen DeYoung, Leo Sands, WAPO, 2024/8/21

[Diplomacy is Iran's Preferred Response to Haniyeh's Killing](#): Iran weighs two options to retaliate for the killing of a senior Hamas leader - a calculated, calibrated military response or a diplomatic offramp through a Gaza ceasefire, Saeed Azimi, Stimson Center, 2024/8/12

[Israel Wants to DRAG The US Into a Broader War](#), Trita Parsi, Bad Faith, 2024/8/19

Tom Huf Comment: Sad that the National Review and the Zionist writer don't get the simple profound concept that diplomacy is by definition talking among those who disagree. The Iran bashers refusal to grant Iran the courtesy and dignity of mutual

respect is cast from the same mold as the endless tit for tat blaming of Israel and the Palestinians that has worked so well for 75 years.

Region

[Iran slams Lebanon blasts as some say same devices used by Iranian military, Amwaj, 2024/9/18](#)

[Iranian Ambassador Injured in Lebanon Blasts as Tehran Accuses Israel of Terrorist Attack, NIAC, 2024/9/20](#)

[Gaza War Undermines Oman's Role as Bridge in a Conflict-Ridden Middle East:](#)

Significant segments of Omani society appear to be in growing solidarity with Tehran's "axis of resistance" against Israel as anti-U.S. narratives gain popularity, Giorgio Cafiero, Stimson Center, 2024/8//26

[Bahrain, Iran edge closer to normalization despite setbacks, Amwaj, 2024/9/4](#)

[Iran warns Russia against Caucasus geopolitical changes amid corridor dispute: The rare warning highlighted Tehran's deep-seated worries about the Zangezur Corridor, which has put the Iran-Russia alliance to a serious test. AI-Monitor, 2024/9/4](#)

[US 'alarmed' by reports of Iranian missile transfer to Russia, Michael Lipin, VOA, 2024/9/6](#)

Sanctions

[Sanctions Impact on Iranian Airline Industry, Brooke Lowe, AIC, 2024/8/21.](#) One of the more visible impacts of sanctions against Iran are the country's aging and deteriorating fleet of aircraft.

Economy

[Iranian Official Raises Alarm Over Exodus of Nurses, Iran Wire, 2024/8/19](#)

[Bread Prices Surge by 25% Across 10 Iranian Provinces Amid Rising Costs, NIAC, 2024/8/23](#)

[The Rising Cost of Bread in Iran: A Growing Concern for the Population, Jazeh Miller, Iran News Update, 2024.838](#)

[Why is Iran Importing Natural Gas from Russia?](#) Sanctions, a lack of investment, and mismanagement have plagued the Iranian energy industry for years while Iran's neighbors have been able to increase their energy production capacity over the last two decades, Mohammad Salami, Stimson Center, 2024//9/5

Media

[Iran pays millions in ransom to end massive cyberattack on banks, IRLeaks, a group with a history of hacking Iranian companies, was said to be responsible. Politico, 2024/9/4](#)

[The VPN Epidemic in Iran: A Digital Plague Amid Global Isolation](#). U.S. sanctions have significantly restricted Iranians' access to safe, paid international VPNs and advanced cybersecurity tools, Ameneh Dehshiri, Stimson Center, 2024/9/9

Human Rights,

[A photo that captures the bravery of Iran's women](#): On the anniversary of Mahsa Amini's killing, we must honor the movement that she sparked. Jason Rezaian, WAPO, 2024/9/17

[Iranian Photographers Captured the Government's Brutality and the Protesters' Bravery](#): *"No one had weapons; our only weapon was our mobile phones, capturing and sharing images."* Center for Human Rights in Iran, 2024/9/16

[Iran: UN experts alarmed by surge in executions, demand moratorium on death penalty](#), UNHR, 2024/9/2

[Iran Executes Four Baluch and Afghan Prisoners](#), Iran Wire, 2024/8/21

[Rising Number Of Iranian Women Sentenced To Death Amid Surge In Executions](#), Kian Sharifi and Diako Alavi, Radio Free Europe, 2024/8/29

[Nurses' Strikes Escalate Across Iran as Authorities Intensify Repression](#), Center for Human Rights in Iran, 2024/8/28

[Pezeshkian Calls for Reinstatement of Dismissed Professors and Students Amid Controversy](#), NIAC, 2024/9/7

[Faezeh Hashemi Released from Evin Prison Amid Wider Amnesty for Iranian Prisoners](#), NIAC, 2024/9/20

[Iran Releases Austrian Citizen Christian Weber After Two Years of Detention](#), NIAC, 2024/9/20

[Social media toolkit on Mahsa Amini](#), NIAC

[NIAC's statement on Mahsa Amini death anniversary](#)

Environment

[Iran's Population Surpasses 91 Million Amidst Unexpected Growth](#), NIAC 2024/8/23

Nuclear News

[Project 2025's stance on nuclear testing: A dangerous step back](#), Tom Armbruster, Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, 2024/9/6

[What if Iran Gets the Bomb?](#) Quincy Institute panel with Barbara Slavin, Steven Simon, Ellen Laipson, and Steven Miller, 2024/9/5

[Iran's uranium enrichment rolls on, key issues stalled, IAEA reports show](#), Francois Murphy, Reuters, 2024/8/29

[There Is Still an Opening for Negotiating with Iran](#): There is nothing inevitable about proliferation in Iran. Daniel Larison, EUNOMIA, 2024/9/2

[Israeli Actions Push Iran Closer to Nuclear Weapons: If Israel and Iran were to engage in a conventional air war, Khamenei could be pressed to reverse his religious edict banning Iran from producing weapons of mass destruction, Amir Handjani, Stimson Center, 2024/9/3](#)

[Biden's 'new' nuclear strategy and the super-fuse that sets it off: The military is already upgrading warheads capable of fighting a war with both China and Russia simultaneously, Theodore Postol, Responsible Statecraft, 2024/8/28](#)

[Forging New Pathways for Disarmament Diplomacy, Daryl Kimball, Arms Control Association, 2024 September](#)

[The Next US President's Nuclear Challenges, Arms Control Association, 2024 September](#)

[As Iran threatens Israel, the danger of Tehran's long-vaunted missile program remains in question, AP, 2024/9/3](#)

History

[Us-Iran Relations: Pre-Islamic Revolution, Irshad Ahmad, December 2012](#)

[Remembering a Democratic Iran under Mosaddegh, which the US Overthrew, Fariba Amini, Informed Comment, 2024/8/20](#)

[Molding the Language of Nationalism in Three Recent Periods in Iran, Sydney Martin, Academia.edu, 2024/12/10](#)

["The Geostrategic Contest between the Gulf Cooperation Council and Iran", Juan Cole, Academia.edu, 2023](#)

[The Nicest Hostage Takers You'll Ever Meet. In "The Siege," Ben Macintyre gives a lesser-known Iranian hostage crisis its due. Azadeh Moaveni, NYT. 2024/9/8](#)

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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.
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