

Seyed M. Marandi: U.S. Strike Imminent - Toward Total War in the Middle East

Prof. Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Marandi argues we could be days or hour away from a major war between the US and Iran, which could engulf the entire region. Glenn Diesen clip channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@Prof.GlennDiesenClips> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Buy merchandise: <https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back, everyone. Today is September 20th, 2026, and we have the pleasure of being joined by Professor Seyed Mohammad Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and also a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Thank you for coming on. How are you?

#Seyed M. Marandi

I'm good. How are you, Glenn? It's always a great pleasure being on your show, especially, I think, nowadays. Things are going to get more tense, and the situation is going to become more dangerous in the coming perhaps hours and days, so these are interesting times to have a conversation.

#Glenn

Well, that's essentially what my first question is about. I see now these reports coming out that all U.S. embassies in the Middle East, at least in 13 countries now, have issued security warnings to their citizens, which raises some suspicion that something big could be about to happen. We see at the same time, of course, that Saudi Arabia and Yemen are increasing strikes on each other. We see the Americans approving, I think it's 60,000, the sale or donation of 60,000 heavy bombs to Israel. Again, will they use it against Gaza, Lebanon, Iran? There's more countries possibly on this list. We don't know. And at the same time, you have these statements by Trump that he's going to have to make a decision soon whether or not to destroy Iran. So again, as you said, it starts to look as if we might be heading somewhere very dangerous over the next few days. What exactly is happening now? How are you assessing the developments?

#Seyed M. Marandi

I think it's quite possible that in the coming hours or coming days, the United States will launch heavy strikes, whether it's on Yemen or on Iran or against both. I don't know. But both Yemen and Iran are prepared. You recall a couple of days ago, Trump said that he doesn't want to do anything against Yemen. No one believed him then, just as no one believes him on Iran when he changes his tone and starts speaking in a more polite and respectable manner with regards to Iran. So nothing that he says is important. And I personally have said on your show before that I don't even follow his statements. So the only thing that matters really is what's happening on the ground.

Troop movements, the state of the United States Air Force, where their airplanes are based, where their tankers are—the aircraft that refuel fighter jets from their base. And that's basically what's important for the Iranians, for Yemen, and for the resistance in general in Iraq, too. What seems to be the case, what seems to be happening, is that the global markets are getting very problematic. They're becoming very dangerous for Trump's midterm election, and it's becoming a dangerous situation for the global economy in general. And we're seeing the impact already, unfortunately, in weaker countries and countries that have a lot of vulnerability when it comes to the price of diesel and gasoline and other products.

And this is spreading. And in Europe, of course, you know better than I what the situation is. So it could be right now a desperate attempt by Trump to reverse this situation before the election. But all that it's going to do is that it's going to make things worse. The Saudis have sold all of their oil that's on the high seas. So that's another indication that the shortages are continuing to grow. And the United States has failed to damage Iran's military capabilities. Iran and Yemen, both of them, are fighting a type of warfare which decreases their vulnerability a great deal. So there is really nothing for the Americans to bomb which would achieve positive results.

They would be costly for the Americans, but military-wise it would achieve nothing, or at best very little. Yemen and Iran have spread their assets around. They're protected deep underground. That which isn't underground is spread out in different places, which makes them less vulnerable to the United States. And protection against drones has improved a great deal, both in Yemen and Iraq. So if the United States attacks, which I think is quite possible—and right now the Iranian military is on full alert, and I'm assuming the same is true in Yemen—they are probably on full alert. The Yemeni armed forces, just like the Iranian forces, are waiting for something to happen. If that happens, then if the United States strikes, then the war intensifies, obviously.

And the Iranians will shut—the Strait of Hormuz will be shut down. And one thing that people don't understand often is that the Strait of Hormuz is not... Iran has not shut the Strait of Hormuz. I mean, I know your viewers know this, but ordinary people, or people across the world who just turn on, I don't know, the television and watch Fox News or CNN or one of these other media outlets, which I haven't watched for years, they think that there's a battle going on in the Strait of Hormuz and that the United States has the upper hand and that it's getting millions of barrels of oil through.

That's not at all what's happening. The Iranians are allowing oil to get through. Some oil is going through the Iranian corridor.

Some oil is going through small ships that hug the Omani shore, and some ships go through this American-designated corridor. But even in the American-designated corridor, there are ships that seek Iran's permission to go through. And some of that oil is actually Iranian oil. And these ships pay Iran to allow them to get through. So it is a complicated affair. And Iran doesn't want the Strait to be shut, because Iran's friends across the world, they need oil too. We saw in the recent summits, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and then BRICS, that everyone supported the Iranian position and the Palestinian position, including the Indian government, whose position in the past was different from what it is now.

So Iran wants to help friends in BRICS, in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and in other countries to prevent them from suffering. But at the same time, Iran wants to keep up the pressure against the United States. So the amount of oil that gets through is limited. And of course, the amount of other goods, refined goods like oil, gasoline, and diesel, that get through is much less, if anything. First of all, it's much more dangerous. If any of their ships are hit, they'll explode. But also, that hasn't been the focus for those who are trying to get goods through the Strait of Hormuz.

And then there's sulfur and there's helium and there's all the other petrochemical and refined products that are not getting through. And of course, fertilizer. Iran is allowing stuff to get through, but it's also limiting it, limiting it because these countries, as we all know—the Saudis, the Emiratis, the Kuwaitis, the Bahrainis, the Qataris—they supported the United States and are the ones that continue to assist the United States. So Iran is creating limitations. But if there is war, then the strait will be closed, and the crisis will intensify. And the Americans don't have the ability to destroy Iran's military capability. And I would assume the same is true in Yemen. So let's make a crisis, a growing crisis, much worse.

#Glenn

Well, I can't really disagree with your statement pointing out that whatever Trump says, or even the diplomatic initiatives by the U.S. at the moment, they always appear to be a deception. You can compare it to what is happening in Russia now. That is, a few days ago, Trump criticized Zelensky for attacking Russian refineries, saying this is not good for oil prices, which for me sounds as if they're planning a strike on Russian refineries and he will keep a distance to it. Then again, you saw this overnight, this huge attack on Moscow.

And there's no way this was done by Zelensky without the support of the United States and NATO. Again, it's, you know, after a while, we have to learn to read the statements of Trump in terms of the message he wants to sell, as opposed to what the actual words mean. But if the U.S. now goes

all in, launches this powerful strike to, you know, in his words, to destroy Iran or destroy Yemen, what could be their strategy? What could they go after? I see, you know, the U.S., I mean, what cards do they have to play?

I see now that the U.S. lifted its sanctions on Eritrea, at least, you know, on the other side of the Red Sea, which is, you know, what you would do if you want to start to strike Yemen from the other side of the Red Sea, or if you want to do a ground invasion. Again, I'm not speculating what they want to do. It just seems—I guess I'm trying to open the box of the possible cards the United States has to play here, because if they simply bomb more buildings, kill more people, you know, this doesn't translate into a political success or achieving U.S. objectives. So what do you think the U.S. might do differently, you know, in such a round? Or will they just go into total war? Well, I hope your viewers don't get me wrong. I don't like war. I hate war. But if war is to happen, now is the best time for Iran.

#Sayed M. Marandi

So this works to Iran's advantage. It works to Yemen's advantage because the United States is imposing maximum pressure on Iran. It's imposed a siege, and it is weeks away from the midterm elections. And therefore, the United States is in a vulnerable situation. And the United States may strike Iran; it may strike Yemen simultaneously. But the United States has already waged war against Iran separately and Yemen separately. And neither of those wars ended well for Trump. I mean, Trump has waged both wars. And Yemen has learned a lot about U.S. capabilities since they defeated the United States. They've learned from Iran's experience, and they've learned from their own experience. The same is true with Iran.

So when you look at how Iran fought during the 12-day war, even though Iran succeeded in forcing the Israeli regime to ceasefire, and it effectively won that battle or that war. But Iran's capabilities and Iran's military effectiveness in the 40-day war and since then has been much better and has continuously been evolving. So, if the United States wants to go after both Yemen and Iran now, under these circumstances, it's very difficult. And I think it's an impossible task for the Americans. But there are one or two things that I think, at least in the Persian Gulf, that the Americans could be seeking to do. One is to assault Iran's civil government and the military again, like they did during the 40-day war.

Not succeed. It'll be a failure. It'll be worse than the 40-day war for the United States because Iran is more capable now, and the United States has been weak. Or the United States may go for a different option, and that is to destroy Iran's critical infrastructure. In other words, to assault Iran's oil and energy installations. Then that would mean Iran would immediately go and destroy everything that exists, critical infrastructure, similar infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and Israel, in the Israeli regime, in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the Emirates, and so on. And Iran will just destroy them because they're part of the war. That will be Iran's retaliation.

And it will be legitimate because these countries are participating in this aggression. If that happens, then I think the global economy collapses. And it will be pretty swift. It will be almost immediate. I mean, as soon as it comes out that there will be no more energy or any petrochemicals or any refined goods coming from the Persian Gulf region or the Arabian Peninsula, I think the reaction in the global markets and the bond market and everywhere will be pretty swift and devastating. So, the first—but it will not succeed either. Iran won't collapse. Iran will be severely damaged, but everyone across the world will be devastated.

You don't have to bomb a factory to shut it down. All you have to do is make it impossible to manage. If there's no oil, if the energy prices go through the roof, then factories across the world are effectively bombed and destroyed. But if Trump just focuses on, let's say, military targets, like the 40-day war, even though he and the Israeli regime did target Iran's industry, and Iran retaliated in a heavy-handed way, and it will do probably much more this time around. But let's assume that he doesn't strike industry and energy, the energy sector, and he just goes after the military and the government, he will fail catastrophically.

And the price of oil and the price of energy will go through the roof because the Strait of Hormuz will be shut. Then everyone will see that, no, Iran does have the capability to bring an end to trade. And if that happens, I think we still go into some sort of depression, or a very deep, deep depression. So it's all bad for the world, whatever he does. In the case of Yemen, it's the same. He does not have the ability to destroy Yemen, and all that he's doing is exposing those governments that have aligned themselves with the Saudis during the past few weeks, even though the Saudis started this war, even though the Saudis are strangling the Yemeni people through their siege.

But governments like the Turkish government, by standing with the Saudis who've done such damage and destruction, when they are seen as aligned with the United States in the same camp, it doesn't look good for them in the region, across the region. Public opinion knows what's happening. And public opinion across the region knows what Yemen stands for and what's happening with Iran and who's supporting the Palestinians and who isn't. We saw celebrations in the region when Ansarullah struck, when they defeated the Saudi-backed troops alongside the shore of the Red Sea. So it doesn't help those governments that are associating themselves with Saudi Arabia. At this moment in time, I think public opinion across the region and across the world matters more than before.

#Glenn

But of all the different—well, I'm trying to, I guess, assess the Iranian strategy here, because one of the things which has caused most pain for the United States, obviously, is blocking its energy, which is a sensitive point for the United States. I saw Iran making some statements about going after the U.S. financial system early on, already back in February. But also, another area of pain the Iranians have been able to give the United States has been, of course, the bases in the region, which also fits the wider objective of expelling the U.S. from the region.

But also the logistics—that is, all of this, well, not just the war fighting, but the naval blockade—all of this is becoming very difficult and expensive for the United States, given that it doesn't have the logistics systems it used to have. And again, the fact that it has to go down to Diego Garcia to do the maintenance or whatever it needs, supplies—this is becoming very difficult. So I'm not sure if this will be a target. Can the Iranians reach Diego Garcia? Would they aim to hit U.S. warships if there's no concerns anymore about escalation? And, well, just making the question even bigger, I just assumed that if the U.S. would go now for yet another round of massive escalation, again something that looks like total war, that the Israelis would join in. I was just wondering your perspectives on this.

#Seyed M. Marandi

I think that the chances that the Israeli regime and the United States will join in some sort of assault on Iran are quite possible. Netanyahu, because of his situation in the approaching election, he may feel the need for some crisis. I mean, that's how he's worked for the last three years, almost. He's expanded the wars and he's expanded the violence and the slaughter and the genocide in order to keep the Israeli public on board with his policies and with his rule. So the feeling here is that there is a very good chance that the Israeli regime will strike before the elections if Netanyahu feels desperate enough to initiate a conflict in order to salvage his election campaign. So that's how it works in Israel.

If you want to get votes, you have to kill people. You have to slaughter women and children. That's their style, right? But in the case of the broader picture, the real force is the United States. It's not the Israeli regime. The United States is the real power. And if the Israelis, on their own, want to attack Iran, it will end very, very poorly for the Israeli regime, very swiftly. But with the United States, it's going to be a tough war for the world, because Iran is going to go all out. The United States will attempt to do whatever damage it can. After all, Trump has always spoken about taking the Iranian people back to the Stone Age or wiping out the civilization. It's a war. He speaks of extermination.

Just like the Israelis speak of extermination in Palestine and elsewhere. So it will be a decisive war. I don't think the Israelis on their own can do much against Iran, and Iran will hit them back hard. But if the Israelis join the Americans, then I think the real force is still the United States by far, and Iran will therefore focus on destroying U.S. assets. That's more important. They will strike the Israeli regime. But then I think the issue about U.S. naval ships, whether they... I think that would be a good question. I think that Iran will probably strike U.S. bases beyond the region. That could include Europe. That could include the Mediterranean region in general and Diego Garcia. But the real vulnerability of the United States is in the region.

So Iran has literally infinite targets to strike. They can strike, of course, depending on how the United States carries out its campaign, they can strike oil and gas facilities, energy facilities. It can

destroy the desalination plants. It can destroy the banks, the AI assets of the Persian Gulf region. There is so much that Iran can do. I mean, when you look at the images coming out of U.S. bases in the region and the sheer devastation, and it is now said—someone said—that it will take—we're not talking about years, we're talking about decades—if we want to rebuild them to what they were before, that shows how severe the damage was. Well, if Iran can do that to U.S. military bases, then it can do it to anything.

#Glenn

I'm glad you mentioned Europe, because one of the dangerous things is not just the escalation of the war, but also the way it's spreading. Indeed, as you see, it's taking on a life of its own. So that is Yemen, Saudi Arabia, for example. This could exist independently of Iran, but it's nonetheless fueled by the war against Iran. But to what extent do you see the involvement of the European states, and how would they become involved? Would this be U.S. bases involved in Europe, or would it be European bases which help to supply the United States? Or how do you see the possibility of Europe being pulled into this war? And just to expand on that, what would be the considerations of Iran?

Because I see, based on their statements, I think Hegseth made a point two days ago or something that Iran—this Strait of Hormuz is more important for the Europeans, yet they should, instead of just sitting there making statements, they should get on their boats and sail into the Strait of Hormuz. Again, there's a lot to be said about this rhetoric, but... But my point was, for Iran, on one hand, it wants to, I guess, push back, deter, punish those who attack it. At the same time, I assume the calculations would be not to bring more countries against it. So again, it's a difficult balance to be reached. I agree. I mean, if one does nothing, one would embolden its adversaries. Now, Europe has immunity on the attacks on Iran, a bit like they seem to have against Russia. So that's a danger of doing nothing. But if Iran does too much, the Europeans might join in on the war against Iran. So how are you seeing the role of Europe here?

#Sayed M. Marandi

I think that what could possibly be targeted are those bases or those air bases which host U.S. jets that are used to bomb Iran. Just like Diego Garcia, anywhere where the United States uses to bomb Iran, I think should be considered a potential target if we go far up the escalation ladder. And that could happen quite quickly. So, no, Iran would not target European assets or installations, but those air bases that the United States use, I think Iran would consider them to be valid targets. And depending on their importance or significance, the Iranians would manage or they would prepare for potential strikes at different degrees or in different ways. Again, this is all hypothetical. I don't even know what the Europeans will do before it restarts.

But what I do, what I am quite confident about, is that Iran has more than enough power to make sure that the United States does not succeed and that the United States fails. So whether the Iranians add a couple of air bases in Eastern Europe or Southern Europe or in the Mediterranean to

their list, where drones strike their planes or anything like that, that would, of course, have—may be useful to Iran. But what Iran can do in the region right now is, I think, more than enough. I mean, the 40-day war was evidence enough that the United States can't defeat Iran. So either Trump is being forced to attack Iran again because he's desperate before the midterm elections.

That's not going to work, whether he targets the military or whether he targets Iran's critical infrastructure. Because if he targets Iran's critical infrastructure, then Iran destroys the critical infrastructure of U.S. proxies on the other side of the Persian Gulf. European economies, like all economies, like the global economy, will collapse. I think we'll be living in a different world after that. If the United States focuses on just the Iranian military, let's say, then the Iranians will shut down the Strait of Hormuz, and the damage done to the global economy as a result of the U.S. assault would devastate European economies anyway.

So I don't think it would be a major issue whether Iran seriously contemplates striking Diego Garcia or a couple of bases in Europe that are being used by the United States. They may or may not do it, but the real issue is the Strait of Hormuz, the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen, the Red Sea, and there's nothing that anyone can do about it. The decision is going to be Trump's: whether he decides to destroy the global economy, severely wreck the global economy, continue to make the global economy further deteriorate as he's doing now, or walk away or accept the MOU, which he signed himself. These are the sort of five scenarios.

But even if he walks away, we're not going to have normalization in the Strait of Hormuz because Iran's demands have to be met. So none of these scenarios, at least the first three—war, continuation, escalation—these are all terrible news for Europe. It'll all be terrible. And the consequences, I think, on the fabric of different societies in Europe will be devastating. So if they think that it's Iran that will be destroyed and that they will be safe from the consequences, no, they won't. And the issue will not be whether Iran fires a couple of drones and a couple of U.S. jets at an airbase. The issue will go far beyond that.

#Glenn

Well, you see the consequences for Europe already, though. That is, Saudi Arabia now has cut Europe off from exports of crude oil from October. I mean, this is quite significant. Again, this is not directly from Iran. This is the Saudi-Yemen war. But nonetheless, you can see that the problems they've had from what happened in the Middle East are intensifying. And there are no good plans anymore. And I saw the Slovakian prime minister just made the point that as things get worse in Europe, they seem to compensate by increasing the war rhetoric more against Russia. But nonetheless, you can see how one conflict, when it begins to spread, the global situation intensifies.

It's kind of shocking that we're on the brink of something massive here, and no one's talking about peace, only war. It's, um, yeah, it's sad. But I wanted to ask you about one of the consequences now of the United States bombing Iran. Because, again, a key problem has been the whole, I guess,

the whole logic of bombing Iran under the guise of preventing it from acquiring a nuclear weapon. This was always—well, first of all, I know the U.S. intelligence agencies themselves said that Iran had no intentions of developing a nuclear weapon. But there's a contradiction behind this as well. That is that, you know, why would Iran need a nuclear weapon? Well, as a deterrent.

So let's bomb Iran so it won't get a deterrent. I mean, you can kind of explain to a five-year-old why this would be ridiculous. But on the wider, you know, over the past decades, you've seen, like, a very dangerous message being sent to the world. That is, if you're a country like Iraq or Libya and give up your country's nuclear programs, then you're destroyed. If you just build one, like Pakistan or North Korea, you're safe. So I was wondering, I mean, one concern here is that the U.S. and Israelis have given Iran a very good reason for acquiring nuclear weapons. There's still plenty of reasons not to. That is, it would spread nuclear weapons across the region, as Iran's adversaries might acquire them.

Also, Iranian friends and allies, also large ones such as Russia and China, probably wouldn't care for this. But what do you see being possible options being considered in Iran? Would it be to be a threshold state, that is, have all the material and know-how but not cross that line, while being able to cross that line essentially within the end of the week if it would be required, or get a nuclear weapon, or just stay clear of this issue altogether? I'd just like to point out, I know you don't speak on behalf of the Iranian government, but I would like to get your view, though, how you see this.

#Seyed M. Marandi

That's a complicated question. I think the answer is pretty clear. I just want to make sure I say it correctly because there are different parts to it. Iran doesn't want a nuclear weapon, and it's for religious reasons and strategic reasons. The religious reason we saw in the 1980s, when the West gave Germany, in particular, but also other Western countries, with U.S. backing and funding from the Persian Gulf regimes, the Arab family regimes, Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against Iran. Iranian leaders went to the leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, back then and said, "We need to produce chemical weapons," and he said no.

He banned that. And at that time, the West was even trying to prevent Iran from getting gas masks. They were not only helping to gas Iranians, but they were trying to prevent Iranians from protecting themselves. But Iran still didn't do that. And then also there's what you mentioned, which is, I think, a very important argument too, and that is that if you develop a nuclear weapon, then you incentivize many, many other countries to go after nuclear weapons. And we have a lot of family dictatorships in the Caucasus, in the Arabian Peninsula, and elsewhere, which, if one day they grow—today they're stable, tomorrow they're unstable.

There's a fight over the succession of the next leader. There's some instability in the country, and countries in the Persian Gulf are moving increasingly towards instability anyway, these oil- and gas-rich countries. So the Iranians don't want that. They would like to have a nuclear program, and they

do. Iran's nuclear technology is more advanced than some countries that do have a nuclear weapon, just like Iran's missile and drone capabilities are well ahead of all countries in the world except for China and Russia. So it's offensive weapon capabilities. So I think that Iran wants to have a nuclear program, and it wants the United States and others to recognize that it should not mess with Iran. But Iran doesn't want to have the bomb itself.

Now, if the United States pushes, Iran will leave the NPT, because we've already heard that before. But now we're hearing it again by the chair of the Supreme National Security Council. And leaving the NPT means one of two things. Either you leave the NPT and you leave for leverage, like the Iranian enriched uranium right now at 60%. Why did Iran enrich uranium at 60%? Was it to build a bomb? No. Anyone who follows the history of the nuclear program knows that Iran only produced that uranium as leverage. The United States tore up the nuclear deal. The Europeans obeyed the United States and reimposed maximum pressure sanctions. Iran then revived the nuclear program and then, to put counter-pressure on them, it enriched uranium to 60%. So Iran could leave the NPT and use it as leverage. Or Iran could leave the NPT and then move to produce a nuclear weapon.

If it goes down that route, although I don't have any details, I would imagine that Iran could do it very quickly, because Iran has the technological capability, that I'm sure of. And of course, Iran's missile and drone capabilities are known to everyone by now. So that's not the road that Iran wants to go, but the United States, ironically, seems to be hell-bent on pushing Iran towards producing one. And when they say that, when they talk about this mountain or that mountain or what's going on underneath, that's all nonsense. If Iran wants to produce more enriched uranium, it can easily do so. Its enrichment technology is very advanced. It could do it in different parts of the country. It could do it in very small places. This is not 10, 20 years ago. Iran's capabilities have changed, and technology has changed.

So back in the day, when Iran built those installations under the mountains, those civilian installations, it was because of the threat of war. But now, those were big machines back then, and now it's much easier and much simpler, and they can do it without anyone figuring it out. And by the way, Iran can also enrich uranium further as we speak without leaving the NPT or moving towards a nuclear weapon. So who knows how much enriched uranium Iran has and at what percent. And if it does, it's legal. They're not producing a nuclear weapon. So Iran, being a huge country, the Americans will not be able to destroy Iran's capabilities. So the smart thing to do would be for the Americans to back off. They can't defeat Iran militarily. They can't destroy Iran's nuclear program.

I don't even believe that they destroyed the facilities that they bombed during the war, in the three facilities that the United States struck. Why? Because they're all deep underground, and they were built for such circumstances. And obviously, the United States failed in destroying any of Iran's underground missile bases, which are probably less well protected than its civilian nuclear program because, of course, to protect the public from dangerous contamination. Because if, let's say, the United States bombs those facilities and you have radioactive material coming out, that would be catastrophic. So those facilities, which are better protected, I think that they're probably less

damaged, if they're not damaged at all down there. But of course, I don't have information. So the United States has failed on all accounts.

And they're just pushing Iran in the direction of leaving the NPT, whatever that means. On the other hand, I think that the United States is running out of time. Trump may want to continue this war until the end of his presidency. Iran is prepared for that. We know that Iran has shifted to a wartime economy. We already see that Turkey is obeying the United States, shutting down flights and shutting down banks. But Iran's main relationships are with Russia, with China. Central Asia is far more important. Europe and Turkey are increasingly unimportant for Iran. Persian Gulf countries are increasingly unimportant for Iran. Oman even.

The Emirates, of course. So Iran has shifted to a wartime economy. It's focusing on the North and the East, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and so on. And therefore, if Trump wants to go down this road for a long war, it is just going to make things worse for the world. If he wants to intensify the war and engage in a major war, a hot war, in the coming days before the midterms, he's going to, I think, create—he's going to bring about a rout for Republican candidates. And that will have, I think, significant, if not huge, implications for himself. He has no good options. So Iran—he may actually push Iran to develop a nuclear weapon.

He may create a global economic depression that would be worse than the 1930s, simply because of the sheer number of people that live in the world today, the technology that exists, the instability that we will have alongside the new technologies. It will be a dystopian world that we will be living in, in my opinion. And if he thinks that he can wear Iran down, no, he is going to wear down the global economy if he goes for the D-Day option, meaning the Treasury Secretary's attempt to strangle the Iranian people and to strangle 90-plus million people. I think what he's going to do is, the first countries that will be strangled are probably those regimes in the Persian Gulf, alongside countries across the world that will be facing severe energy shortages.

It's all going to backfire. This was an idiotic war from the beginning, and its continuation is idiotic. And the options are from horrible to quite bad. And for Trump, all the options are bad, because if he accepts MOU, it's a bad option. If he walks away, it's a bad option. And if he continues with the war, these are all bad options. So he loses. But the only thing that preserves the world and the global economy is if he walks away, or if he goes to a deal, that would help. But if he accepts the MOU and implements it, or if he implements it without accepting it in name, that could spare the global economy. But a huge amount of damage has already been done, and that damage will stay with us for a very, very long time.

#Glenn

Yeah. Well, I think part of the problem for the United States now, though, is not just in the Middle East, but across the world, is this difficult transition from this hegemonic order to a multipolar order, where essentially how it pursues security has changed. And again, it requires a whole shift in

mentality. And I think this is why it's so difficult, because for those three decades, the United States was simply so powerful that everyone just had to fall in line.

So this essentially gave rise to this, you know, warmongering class of the neocons then just arguing that, well, we'll just bomb, bomb, and then we'll get what we want, right? But this is over. And I think it's difficult for the U.S. to adjust to these new realities. And you kind of hear it in the rhetoric of people like Hegseth, which is, oh, well, Yemen isn't falling in line. Iran isn't falling in line. It's always the same answer. That is, well, we will be relentless. We will send a message, bring down all of America's force and power, overwhelm them. So the whole idea is that we will get our security by forcing our opponent to bend to pressure and submit, but it's not working. And this is why the U.S. continues just to double down on something that isn't working.

#Glenn

Again, my whole point is that one transition from security through dominance to starting to sit down and put yourself in the shoes of the other guy, recognize their security concerns, find the compromise. I think it's going to take a long time for the U.S. to change this because the entire political class has kind of been indoctrinated into, well, that's not what we do anymore. We just lay down the law, and others will have to do as they're told. So I don't see any good peaceful outcome of this either. But I did want to just ask my last question about, you know, this wider partnership you mentioned with Russia, China. Of course, they all seem to have a lot of common interests at the moment in this transition towards a multipolar system.

But there's also a history of distrust, though, not just with Iran and towards Russia, China, but also between the Russians and the Chinese. Of course, this has been overcome to a great extent, but we also see Iran is quite reluctant to have excessive dependence on foreign powers for a variety of reasons. And even China, they have an aversion to alliances. They very clearly state they don't do alliances, you know, defined as country A and B against country C. So how do you conceptualize this partnership between, you know, these three great Eurasian powers, Russia, China, and Iran? Is it security, economic, political, a bit of all? Is it trilateral relations? Are they able to counter common enemies? I mean, again, big question, I guess.

#Seyed M. Marandi

You know, the West has this huge Persian-language media apparatus that is unique. There's nothing like it against the Russians or the Chinese. They do have media against the Russians. They do soft-power warfare against the Russians, but what they do to Iran is just unique, and they've been—it started decades ago. And they have many media outlets. They spend billions, literally billions of dollars a year for propaganda inside Iran: different TV channels, online media outlets, cyber armies, trolls. I mean, it's amazing how much money they spend. And a part of the focus of this is, A, to create hatred for Arabs. So there's a lot of racism in it. And B, to create hatred for Arabs and religion.

But also to create hatred for Russia and China, and distrust towards Russia and China. So you're always hearing they're spreading negative information about Russia and China, and they play on the problematic history between Iran and Russia. So, you know, we've had wars with Russia. Russia has occupied parts of Iran, like the British. And so Iran doesn't have a good history with Russia. And this is something that they try to keep reminding Iranians about. But ironically, despite all that, what the Americans have done through years of pressure on Iran and China and Russia simultaneously is that they push the countries closer to each other. And to a degree, not completely, to a degree, this has been able to shift public opinion in Iran towards Russia.

And the North-South Corridor, of course, is a key component of this evolving relationship, which I think in the years ahead is going to become much more important, especially as the Mediterranean becomes less important for Russia permanently, or at least for the years to come. So the Americans have been a catalyst to—despite their own attempts to create hatred and fear towards Russia—they've acted as a powerful catalyst to improve the relationship, on the other hand. With regards to China, it's a bit different. Iran doesn't have a problematic or dark past with China. Iran and China, when you think about the past, you think about the Silk Road and ancient civilizations, trade, doing trade.

There's never been a history of animosity. But still, the media, the Western media, the Persian-language media, is very hostile towards China. But again, the United States has been the greatest catalyst in pushing for closer relationships between Iran and China because the United States threatens Iran. China is fearful that the United States wants control over the entire global energy markets. If Iran is weakened, then China and Russia are next. So China moves closer to Iran, Iran moves closer to China, Russia moves closer to Iran and China, and so on. So the United States has pushed these countries together and has helped them overcome whatever concerns they have.

Of course, Iran and China, as you rightly point out, are not countries that go into alliances. But the relationship is, I think, close enough to make these countries able to work together effectively in time of war. That makes, of course, Central Asia key, Afghanistan key, because they lie between these three countries. And so they're going to become increasingly important. The Caucasus too, but I think the Caucasus and, more importantly, Central Asia and Afghanistan are going to become increasingly important for Iran, China, and Russia in the years to come because that helps them collaborate more closely and protect themselves against the United States.

So I think Iran is going to become—Turkey, Europe, the Arabian Peninsula—they're increasingly becoming less important for Iran, and the east is becoming, and the north is becoming more important. But just one point that I wanted to add to what you were saying, which I agree with you completely, is that the problem that the United States has is sort of like the problem that the Israeli regime has, and that is exceptionalism. Eurocentrism, exceptionalism, any form of exceptionalism or supremacism has this problem, and that is that you underestimate your adversaries. And by underestimating your adversaries, you make foolish decisions.

So, for example, the United States considers China to be an adversary, obviously. But for years, they downplayed China's capabilities by saying, well, you know, they're not innovative. Because basically, you have to be American to be innovative. That's what it implies. We are exceptional. We do innovation. Our society is in a way—our people are, you know, they're innovative. They're forward-thinking. They can steal and copy and reproduce what we invent. And they're good at it, but they cannot invent. That's just one element of it. And what does it do? It creates complacency. I mean, the whole concept that they're the enemy and they're sinister, that I reject.

I think that the Western empire is the worst thing on this planet. But if you're going to see them as your adversary and you look down upon them, you're going to miscalculate. And that allows China to more easily progress because they're underestimated. And then when they ban exports for, I don't know, chips or create restrictions, then the Chinese show that they are able to overcome that pretty swiftly. So all that comes from this supremacism, this exceptionalism, that makes them look at their so-called adversary or their designated adversary as incapable. The same is true with Iran. The United States has—and I recall, when Iran was developing its missile capabilities, Western media would always ridicule it.

#Glenn

Their drone capabilities were always ridiculed.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Everything about Iran was ridiculed. And the narrative of mad mullahs, a broken society, incapable of governing themselves, unpopular—that narrative serves a purpose for antagonizing the American and Western populations against Iran, the fake narrative that they produce. But it also helps with this. It helps the Iranians in the sense that they are underestimated and they can do many things under the radar without the other side taking that seriously, just like in the case of China. So if they had acknowledged to themselves that Iran actually has a dynamic constitution, has a popular support base, is a sophisticated country, then perhaps, if it was their designated adversary, they could deal with that adversary more realistically and actually keep it back more effectively.

The same is true with Russia. So, you know, remember Trump—what did he say? Obama—what did he say? Trump: Russia is a country that is a gas station that masquerades as a country. He said something like that. Others have said it, but I remember Obama in particular saying something dismissive like that. Well, when you see a country in that way, and even if you get good intelligence from your intelligence agency, even if in the morning when you get your reports on Iran, Russia, and China that give you the real truth, let's say, still that culture that you are a part of causes you to not see those numbers and the statistics and the objective information in a way which would make you capable of countering it.

And this is the problem that the Israeli regime has. Their supremacism makes them underestimate their adversaries, and thus they underestimated the country. They miscalculated, and now the world despises them. The United States has underestimated the Russians, they underestimated China, and they definitely underestimated Iran and the resistance. And this is contributing to the rapid decline of the United States, and it looks more like a plane that's crashing. So instead of managing this crisis, moving towards a multipolar order where the United States can have a key position in this order and have good relations with everyone, or almost everyone, to benefit, they are isolating themselves.

The situation today is that across the world, people are supporting Iran, even though there have been 47 years of anti-Iranian propaganda that the West has spread, and the rest of the world has absorbed it because that's where we get our information across the world. That's how it's been for centuries. My understanding of China largely comes from the West. It's just now beginning to evolve. But despite that powerful narrative, people support Iran, and that shows, in my opinion, that they've badly miscalculated. They've underestimated, and thus they've pursued policies that have been very destructive to themselves, and that has caused this whole narrative, this whole soft power apparatus, to crash alongside with it.

#Glenn

Yeah, no, I think anyone is familiar with this narrative that China doesn't innovate, it only copies. We don't even talk about China anymore. It's referred to as the Chinese Communist Party. Russia's a gas station. You know, there are soldiers fighting with shovels, and they're stealing chips from washing machines to power their military and everything. You know, we don't call it Russia anymore. We just say Putin. And it's the same with Iran. That is like the Shia version of the Taliban. As you said, the Mad Mullahs. This is the problem. And, you know, I often make the point that, you know, if you say that—well, it's in our own interest to recognize that our opponents, that they can be, that they're rational.

They have their own legitimate security concerns, and they're very capable. If you make this argument, you know, even if you say, you know, even if you want to defeat this opponent, surely you want to recognize that they're rational, with security concerns, and that they're very capable. You know, but then there's only one response: these ad hominem labels. Oh, well, you know, if you think that the opponent is capable, then, you know, you're pro-China, you're a Putinist, you're an Ayatollah apologist. So we essentially banned common sense. Yeah, you know, at our own peril. It's quite extraordinary to watch, but it's become like a sign of loyalty. Because if you're pro-US, then you recognize our superiority.

And that means the opponent does not have legitimate security concerns, don't have legitimate interests. They're weak. And, you know, because you don't want to legitimize them by actually assigning anything that would give them legitimacy. So this kind of way of socially constructing a

new reality, it makes us blind to reality. Well, it's hard to convince me this is in our interest. Yeah, I just want to say regarding this, yeah, the pushing the idea that Iran can never trust the Russians or the Chinese. This is also my own experience with it. Eleven years ago, I wrote a book with the title of Russia's Geoeconomic Strategy for Greater Eurasia. And I was making the point, again, eleven years ago, so you hadn't seen the development you see now.

And I was making the point that primarily Russia and China would begin to integrate and cooperate more on technologies, industries, transportation corridors, banks, trade currencies and all, and that this would form a gravitational pull towards the wider Eurasian region, you know, trying to accommodate the important countries like Iran, but also others, into this Eurasian economic architecture. And my main critics would point out that, well, Russia and China is a marriage of convenience. You know, we have to look at their history, and they will soon fight over Central Asia, who can dominate it. And, you know, the whole idea that neither China nor the Russians would insist on hegemonic control over Central Asia, that was also seen as an apologist argument because surely they have to dominate. So, you know, this is very difficult to make predictions if you can't say anything reasonable about your opponent.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Sorry, any final thoughts? The irony is that many of your critics, I'm sure, are European, and they forget that the whole reason why they created the EU is so that they wouldn't go to war again and there wouldn't be another catastrophic war. And the Europeans have had a history of war. So why wouldn't the Russians and the Chinese or the Iranians be capable of overcoming the historical differences if these critics themselves can believe that European countries can overcome those differences?

I think that too stems from a sort of supremacist worldview, that we are more civilized, so we can overcome our differences, but the Russians and the Chinese, they're just incompatible, and the Iranians and the Russians, you know, these are—it's Putin and the Mullahs and the Communist Party, and, you know, that's how they like to see the world, because it makes them feel like they're the good guys, even as they're helping with genocide, even as they, in the United States—some, I shouldn't put it that way—a rapper says Palestine should be free, and then he's banned from participating in events in stadiums across the country.

So, and they will go and say that this is justified. The genocide is justified, war in Iran is justified, sacrificing the Ukrainian people is justified in support of a corrupt government that has aligned itself with neo-Nazis. Everything becomes justified because they're exceptional, because they are above the rest. So when they invade Iraq and kill a million people and destroy the country, and then it fails, no one says—I mean, no one. Ordinary people do. I mean, protesters and anti-war people, they do. But, I mean, among the elites, you won't see the elites, the media say, "We are war criminals. Our governments, our leaders should be..." They'll say it was a flawed policy. So if someone is killed in Europe, assassinated, they'll immediately say, "Who did it?"

Was it the Iranians? Who is behind it? Let's prepare for some sort of war. But if they go and wipe out a country and it causes inflation to go up, that was a failed policy. It wasn't that we are the war criminals, that our government is evil, that our government has killed. You know, The Lancet, a British, I think, medical journal, not an Iranian journal by any means, said that from 1971 to 2021, Western sanctions have killed 38 million people across the globe. 38 million people. That's World War II-type-like numbers. And if you add the wars, and imagine what they've done in Gaza. Hundreds of thousands in Gaza have died because of the siege and illness and disease and a lack of medicine.

But they will never say that we have murdered hundreds. These will all be failed policies. Sanctions don't work. They'll say sanctions don't work. It's never achieved the desired results. They don't say sanctions are evil. We are criminals. We are trying to kill people. We're preventing kids from getting medicine for their cancer. We're driving up prices so that if the medicine does exist, they don't have the money to buy the medicine to save their infants in hospitals. No, it'll be that sanctions don't work. Air power alone never works. They look at it from that perspective. Why? Because that is... And I'm not saying ordinary people don't see it that way.

I think ordinary people are increasingly detached from the elites in the West. But the elites in the West see themselves, or at least want to see themselves, as morally superior. And therefore, whatever they do against others, they have a right to do that. But the question is whether it was appropriate to do it, whether they are successful in doing it or not. So when someone is morally inferior, no matter what pain and suffering you inflict upon them, since you're morally superior, you can convince yourself that you had the right to do it. You had to do it. You were forced to do it. You had no better option, unfortunately.

#Glenn

Sometimes there's an admission that it was disproportionate, but that's pretty much where it goes. I think, well, at most, we sometimes do the wrong thing, but we did it for the right reason. And our opponents, sometimes they do the right things, but it's for the wrong reason. And I think that's where the end of the admission goes. Anyways, thank you very much for taking the time on a Sunday morning. I always appreciate it.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Thank you, Glenn. It's always a great pleasure. Have a great day.