

Seyed M. Marandi: Iran Warns of Overwhelming Retaliation to ANY U.S. Strike

Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's Nuclear Negotiation Team. Prof. Marandi argues that the US likely plans for a limited "bloody nose" attack on Iran with the expectation that Iran will not retaliate. Iran has warned that it will retaliate with overwhelming force. Trump has seemingly boxed himself in, and a disastrous war is in the making, unless 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: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng> Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined today by Saeed Mohammed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Thank you very much for coming on. I know the situation there must be very tense, as the U.S. appears to be possibly moments away from actually attacking Iran. I was hoping you could clarify or explain how you see this situation, because, well, to me, it seems that Trump wants to deliver a so-called "bloody nose" attack on Iran — meaning a limited strike to bomb Iran and then, by the end of the day, offer to stop on the condition that Iran doesn't retaliate. However, it also seems very difficult for Iran not to retaliate; otherwise, its deterrent means nothing, and the Americans will likely be back for more bombing.

And indeed, this is what your foreign minister indicated. He wrote on Twitter that Iran's armed forces are prepared, quote, "with their fingers on the trigger," and that they would respond to any aggression. He even put "any" in bold, which—again, maybe I'm reading too much into it—but to me it was essentially a caution against any such ambitions or a so-called bloody nose attack. But this nonetheless means that Trump is more boxed in. He was beating his chest, assembling this very powerful military force in the region. However, given that this would likely be a major strategic mistake, if not a disaster in the making, there could still be some hope for reversal. Again, I'm not sure if that will be the case, but I was wondering if you could share your thoughts on what you see happening now, or what you expect. Do you see things in a similar light?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, thank you very much for inviting me, Glenn. It's always a great pleasure. It's pretty clear for the Iranians that what we're seeing today is an extension of the 12-day war. In that war, the Israeli regime and the Trump administration collaborated to undermine Iran, and they failed. The riots and

terror attacks we saw a couple of weeks ago, on January 8th and 9th, were an extension of that. We even saw how the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury admitted this in Davos—he gloated about it. He said this was statecraft, that he was able to manipulate the Iranian currency and bring people into the streets. Now, when people came to the streets, it was peaceful.

Nothing happened. Then, on the third day, we saw these very highly trained groups—terrorists and rioters—in different cities and in different parts of big cities come into the streets and cause destruction. On the 8th and 9th of January, they were killing large numbers of people, especially on the 8th. They killed many police officers, and that's why on the 9th the armed police and security forces came down very hard on them and ended it. So this was a project that killed around 350 police officers. They also killed many ordinary people because they wanted the casualty numbers to rise, to make the case for war. And after that, we saw—of course—the Israelis took responsibility.

They proudly took responsibility. Western media pretends they didn't. They call them peaceful protesters, even though the footage clearly shows them shooting and killing police officers, beating them to death, and so on. But the Israelis—I mean, Pompeo, the former head of the CIA—said the Israelis were there. Mossad issued a statement saying they were involved. And Channel 14 of Israel, which is close to Netanyahu, said very clearly that the weapons taken into Iran caused the deaths of hundreds of Iranian police officers. So imagine if something like that happened in your country, in the United States—what the state would do in response.

So, this media campaign we saw afterwards—from conservative to liberal, from The Guardian to Fox News, from the worst of the neocons like Levin to the supposed progressives like AOC—they're all talking about "helping Iran," and of course we know what that means. So this was obviously a project, an extension of that war which failed. But what it did succeed in doing was encouraging Trump, or pushing Trump, depending on how you view it, toward confrontation with Iran. And of course, the intentions keep changing, because one day it's about the protesters, and Trump himself admits that both sides were shooting.

Then it's about the nuclear program, which was apparently destroyed a few months ago by Trump—"obliterated," I think, was the word. And so it's constant; they keep talking. Then the United States sends messages to Iran, saying you have to put aside your missile program, you have to put aside your support for regional organizations and allies, and you have to, of course, end your peaceful nuclear program. We have conflicting messages coming from the United States, but the Iranian response has been clear: any attack on Iran will be seen as an all-out war, and the Iranian response will be overwhelming. I think Trump has boxed himself in, as you said—that's a very good way of putting it.

Trump has come in beating his chest, and now he either has to back off or he has to attack. If he attacks, the retaliation is going to be massive, and it won't just be directed at American bases—it will be directed at American interests across the region. Those Arab dictatorships, family dictatorships, or even Aliyev's dictatorship in Azerbaijan—all of them have been complicit. They've hosted U.S. bases

or assisted the Israelis in the 12-day war. All of them, therefore, will be punished. Oil and gas from the Persian Gulf region will be disrupted for a very, very long time—the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea.

And that would, of course, bring down the global economy. So war with Iran would be unaffordable for everyone, and it would bring down the U.S. economy. Now, some in the United States say we're energy independent. That's not really relevant, because those companies and corporations that produce oil and gas in the United States may make a lot of money as a result of the price of oil or gas going through the roof. But for consumers, factories, corporations, individuals, families—it would be catastrophic for all of them, because they'd have to pay much more for energy. And that's just not sustainable. So the U.S. economy would collapse.

And this would be at a time when the U.S. economy is already in a very, very difficult situation, as we're seeing with gold and silver and what it seems to me—and what people are saying—about the future of the economy. This would just add much more fuel to the fire. So the smart thing for Trump to do would be to back off and end this peacefully. Maybe like in the case of Yemen—he can capitulate but say he won. Because that's what happened in the war with Yemen, as we recall. He initiated the war—he and his secretary of war, as he likes to call himself—attacked and said, "We're going to destroy the Houthis," as they call them, or Ansar Allah to be more precise. And after a month, he declared victory and walked away, even though he was defeated.

And he gained nothing. So maybe Trump will just say, "Well, I got concessions from Iran, and I won." Which obviously would mean that he was defeated. But it would be the smart thing to do. Or he'll feel that he has to do something. Even a small attack, Glenn—even a small symbolic attack—is going to have a very harsh response. And the reason is clear: the Iranians are not going to allow the United States to create an environment where every six months they can stage an event in Iran. They can make some sort of accusation, cause some sort of armed insurrection in some area or territory, and then use that as an excuse to create another crisis. So the Iranians are saying, "We end it here."

#Glenn

Well, it's no secret that the Israelis have been pushing hard for the United States to strike Iran again. On the other hand, it also seems that Israel would like to stand on the sidelines—in other words, not be the target of any Iranian retaliation. But how do you—again, you're not serving the Iranian government, you're an academic—how do you expect the Iranian government to retaliate, from what you know? Would they strike some U.S. target, all U.S. targets, Israel, or other allied countries? Because I saw that, I think it was Saudi Arabia, announced it would not permit its airspace to be used. So it looks as if some countries are seeing the severity of this and would like to sit this one out.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, increasingly, countries like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar are worried about the Israeli regime. And I think even the Turkish government, deep down, recognizes that what they did to Syria has now made them very vulnerable. But ultimately, Glenn, we have to look at something first and discuss it before I can answer that question. Iran and the Israeli regime had a 12-day war. Although the Americans and Israelis conspired—regional assets in the Persian Gulf and Turkey were used, the radar systems, the entire West was behind the Israeli regime—they supported them. They lost despite the blitzkrieg attack. We all know that. After a few days, the tide turned, and the Israelis were seeking a ceasefire, something that is well known, except in propaganda circles.

But even Steve Bannon has pointed this out. Iran's capabilities against the Israeli regime are much greater than the Israeli regime's capabilities against Iran. That 12-day war showed it. Iran's military capabilities aren't focused on Israel—they're focused on the United States. Why? Because ever since the United States invaded Afghanistan and Iraq during the unipolar moment, surrounding Iran, and ever since U.S. leaders—including Bush, Obama, Clinton, and Hillary—started saying "all options are on the table," and officials were saying "real men go to Tehran," Iran began preparing itself for war with the United States.

Most of the underground missile and drone bases in Iran are armed with short- and medium-range drones and missiles directed at the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Oman, and the other side of the Persian Gulf—the Arabian Peninsula. That capacity, that capability, including Iran's underwater capabilities, is much greater than what Iran can use against the Israeli regime. So if there's an attack, Iran can not only shut down the Strait of Hormuz, it can destroy ships on both sides of it.

And it can destroy the energy assets. In addition to that, its allies in Iraq can shut down the oil trade, and they can deal with the United States in Iraq and the surrounding territories. The same is true with Yemen. Yemen today is much stronger than it was a few months ago. They've been preparing themselves. They can shut down the Red Sea and any oil and gas exports through the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean. And Azerbaijan and Aliyev, who helped the Israelis during the 12-day war, think their oil and gas production can be shut down very easily. So Iran's real capabilities are focused on the Persian Gulf region, and they're massive.

The Persian Gulf region is extremely vulnerable. There's nothing the Americans can do to protect their assets there. All the regimes in the Persian Gulf—these family dictatorships—are complicit because they host U.S. bases. So a war, without a doubt, between Iran and the United States would lead to the collapse of the global economy. Now, the Israeli regime, from what we've been hearing, does not want to be involved because it's extremely vulnerable. We saw during the 12-day war that they failed. And not only have Iran's missile capabilities been enhanced significantly, but its air defenses, especially regarding drones, have also been strengthened.

The Israelis have failed to catch up. So the advantage today is much greater for Iran than it was back then. What the Israeli regime and the Zionists want is for the Americans to sacrifice themselves for the Israelis. The people surrounding Trump, people in Congress and in the Senate, they're Israel-firsters. They will sacrifice U.S. interests for Israeli interests. So there's a good chance that, despite the fact this would be catastrophic for the United States, they may actually carry it out because they're doing it for the sake of Israel.

Actually, if we go back to the case of the murder of General Soleimani, this also happened. Initially, General Soleimani was supposed to be killed in a joint operation between the Israelis and the Americans. But at the very last moment, Netanyahu pulled out. And I think that was the intention all along. U.S. drones, of course, flew from Qatar and killed General Soleimani—something the Iranians are not going to forget. So Qatar, the Emirates, and others—Aliyev and Azerbaijan—if the U.S. attacks, they'd better be very, you know, they should have their bags packed.

But this, I think, was the Israeli intention all along with General Soleimani—to push Trump toward confrontation with Iran, but not to get involved. It's quite possible that this is what we're seeing today. I don't know if Trump is going to attack, because even though I don't consider him to be completely sane, I don't think he's totally insane either. But I don't know what sort of information he's being fed. I think maybe he was hoping that if he brought in what he calls an armada, Iran would be intimidated and somehow capitulate—not a chance in the world that that will happen. Then maybe he thought he could get away with it, because he did send messages to Iran saying, "OK, let me strike, and then you can have this token retaliation, and it'll be all over."

Iran said, no, we're not playing that game. Because, as I said, that's a violation of Iranian sovereignty—it's an act of war. But more importantly, it leaves the door open for another round of terrorism in Iran, while pretending that these are peaceful protesters. And the Western media, being obedient to power, will just repeat the nonsense that Trump and the White House want them to repeat. Then we'll have a new round of airstrikes, and we can't have normality that way. So the Iranians are saying, it all stops here: you either back off and go away, or you start something and pay the price. And I think that either way, the United States loses.

But if it initiates a conflict, it loses much more. And I think things will get very bad. Remember, Iranians know the United States very well. The United States does not comprehend Iran—it just doesn't. General Soleimani once said, "We are the nation of Imam Hussain." I don't think the United States even understands what that means. But the Iranians know the United States. They monitor it. They know the economy in the U.S. is doing poorly. They know how badly Trump is doing in the polls. They know the divisions in the country. They know there's a hardcore group called MAGA that will support Trump no matter what.

It doesn't matter, apparently, what Epstein has done, who was his friend, who was with Epstein, or who in that whole Epstein circle was involved. They'll close their eyes. You can shoot white women

in the face. You can murder nurses who were helping war veterans. All the things MAGA used to talk about—the endless wars and all that—all of that has been dropped. MAGA will follow the cult leader wherever he goes. But if the price of gasoline goes through the roof and factories are shut down, the first to chase Trump with their guns will be the same people who were saying, by the way, that the nurse who was murdered shouldn't have been carrying a gun.

These same people will be seeking out Trump, and they may be carrying their guns with them. So everyone will turn against Trump when the economy falls, because they'll see him as responsible for it. Iranians understand that. And that's why their priority will not be a few U.S. military bases. They will strike them—they will strike military targets. But when they say that U.S. interests across the region are targets, they're sending a message to Trump that his presidency will come to an end if he starts a war.

#Glenn

I think a lot of America's regional allies recognize they're a bit exposed. But part of the problem, I think, is this shift in the world order—or at least in the distribution of power. During the unipolar moment, in the 1990s, America was the only game in town, and everyone more or less recognized that if you were allied with the United States, that was essentially your only source of security. Yes, it was the one central power. However, as global power shifts toward a multipolar system, we see things very differently. Instead of an alliance with the U.S. being a source of stability, we now see the U.S. becoming more reckless.

I'm not sure how many countries Trump has bombed now. But also, the U.S. is becoming less capable of defending its allies—sometimes even turning, quite often recently, against them. And this leaves allies very exposed. So for countries like Qatar or others that have tied their security this closely to the United States, they now find themselves in a very awkward position. There's not much time for them to shift their stance. However, in terms of trying to assess the possible Iranian response here—to what extent would Iran treat this as an existential threat, as an indicator of how it would fight?

Because Professor John Mearsheimer just recently said that the objective of the United States in Iran would be regime change, he also made the point that there's no replacement regime—no unifying opposition they could actually hand power over to. Which means that what they're after, then, is regime change followed by the destruction of the country—breaking it up, essentially creating chaos, and then ruling over that chaos. Are these kinds of ideas informing Iran's intentions, and to what extent would it actually respond to an attack?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Yes, I think for Iranians it's clear that the objective is to balkanize Iran, and that the Israeli regime wants this more than anyone else. Just like what they've done to Syria over the past decade and a

half—they've succeeded in wrecking and balkanizing the country. And now there's no real center left. In fact, one of the interesting things about Syria, Glenn, is that Hezbollah today has an easier time rearming than it did under Assad, because under Assad he was becoming less and less cooperative. But now you can just pay a bit of money and do anything in Syria. That's how bad the situation is.

So that is the objective. And the United States is not going to do anything that goes against Israeli interests. And the riots—and these rioters in Iran—were like ISIS. They were horrific. They were just gunning down people in the streets. They burned fifteen people alive. They beheaded people. They smashed people's faces. They burned down hospital clinics. They burned down hundreds of ambulances, fire engines, public buses, and private vehicles. I mean, it's extraordinary what they did in such a short period of time. But the groups behind it—the monarchists—have no popular support. When they left the country, they stole billions of dollars.

And now they're calling on the United States and the Israelis to bomb their own country. Does anyone in their right mind think they're going to have popular support? Or the MEK terror cult? They fought for Saddam Hussein as foot soldiers against their own country in the 1980s. Does anyone think those traitors are going to be popular? Or the Kurdish terror groups, the separatists. Or the ISIS and the Takfiri Wahhabis in Balochistan—the remnants of ISIS. These were the groups that were involved. Does anyone think that any of these groups can rule, govern, or have any popular support? The point is to bring down Iran, which is not going to happen. But the Iranians recognize that.

But in addition to that, what I alluded to earlier is the fact that the United States wants to have this sword hanging over Iran. So if they can bomb Iran—even a symbolic strike—it would give them the opportunity to use that sword again six months from now. That would always prevent the Iranian economy from normalizing and keep pressure on ordinary Iranians. We saw how the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury in Davos was gloating about hurting ordinary Iranians, making them suffer. So the Iranians said, you know, enough is enough. If Trump strikes, we'll take this as an existential fight, and we'll fight the war as a war for our existence and survival.

#Glenn

Well, I've been watching all day on the screens here—the different kinds of American military hardware moving into the region, ranging from warships to transport flights, refuelers, all of that. So again, Trump is building up big momentum, which makes it very difficult to walk away without doing something. He's put forward some demands that Iran could negotiate, but the Iranian government has said it's always willing to sit down and talk, just not while the U.S. military is there aiming their guns at Iran.

But also, from American media, it seems the deal the U.S. wants would require halting nuclear enrichment—which would be a big economic hit for Iran—while also limiting long-range ballistic missiles and cutting off its ties with regional allies. That could leave Iran very exposed to a future

attack. Do you think there's anything at all to negotiate here, or is this essentially seen as a stepping stone to regime change anyway? I mean, how does the Iranian government view the possibility of reaching an agreement with the United States?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, giving up nuclear enrichment, missile capabilities, or alliances is just out of the question. As for a deal, we had one—the JCPOA. Actually, we weren't satisfied with it. And if there's going to be another deal at some point in the future, it's not going to be like that; it will have to be something better for Iran. Now, how Trump escapes from the position he's boxed himself into, I have no idea. Either he strikes and we have an all-out war, as I said—it doesn't matter what kind of strike, it will be an existential war for the Iranians—or he declares victory, like he did with Yemen, and backs away.

There could be a deal to discuss a deal about the nuclear program, but not a deal where the Iranians give up sovereignty or the right to enrich uranium. There are creative ways of doing things. And Trump, of course—he can easily lie and convince MAGA that, you know, he won, even though he gained really nothing. That's a possibility. But the Iranians are not counting on it. The Iranians are ready for war—ready for all-out war. And if there is war, I think some of the countries in the Persian Gulf region will cease to exist, at least under their current management. But it is possible for Trump to walk away, because that's what he did in Yemen.

He always declares victory, even when it's clear he had to back down—in the case of, let's say, the trade war with China, or even with Greenland. In many instances, he said one thing and then did something quite different. In the case of Yemen, as I mentioned, this could also be something like that. I'm sure the Iranians would be willing to let him get himself out of this box in a way that lets him pretend he got something. But the Iranians are not going to give him anything that would violate their sovereignty. Iran is not that sort of country. Iran is not, you know, Turkey or Saudi Arabia or Egypt. It's a different kind of country—fiercely independent—and it's resisted the United States for almost five decades now.

So it will continue to do so. This time around, though, Glenn, I think it's going to be decisive. If the United States backs down for whatever reason and declares victory, they can do that. If it backs down, it's a major defeat after all these threats. But if it engages in war, it's a tragedy for the world. The United States will be defeated, and by default, Iran will win the war. But it will change your life, it will change my life, it will change the lives of people in the southern tip of Latin America, in the southern parts of Africa, and in the eastern and western parts of Asia. It will change everyone's lives, because if there is an energy crisis, the world will change.

#Glenn

So if there are any calls from Washington to Tehran today with a proposal like, "Listen, we'll walk away from this, but we have to drop a few bombs so we don't lose face," that's not going to be acceptable to the Iranians.

#Seyed M. Marandi

No. Zero. Nothing. Not at all. Iran's counter-strike will be massive—and they've already said that. The only thing that can be done is for the United States to walk away and pretend it got something, when in fact it didn't get anything. But that's the only option left for Trump. The rest is war. And we don't want war. We've been saying that. The foreign minister has said that. Others have said that. We're willing to negotiate—we've always been willing to negotiate—but giving up any part of our sovereignty, or our support for the Palestinian cause, or our defense capabilities is simply out of the question. So Trump has put himself in a very, very dangerous situation. If there is war in this region, Glenn, it will be far more consequential for the world than Ukraine.

#Glenn

Well, if anyone were to reverse position, I guess Trump would be the ideal president. He's an artist in BS, so he could shift focus. I mean, only last week we talked about invading Venezuela, invading Greenland. So he could always shift focus to, you know, annexing Canada or whatever's next on the menu—or destroying Cuba. So... yeah, but it's sad if world peace now depends on the BS skills of President Trump. Anyway, I know you guys must have a lot going on there at the moment. Thank you for taking the time, and stay safe. It's always an honor, Glenn.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Stay safe.