

Mohammad Marandi: Iran JUST Closed the Strait of Hormuz - Iran Plans to Sink the US Navy

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Tuesday, February 17, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Professor Mohammad Marandi, is here with us. Welcome back, Professor Marandi.

#Mohammad

Thank you very much for inviting me, Nima. It's a great pleasure to be with you.

#Nima

Yeah. Please hit the like button to help us reach more people. And let me start, Professor Marandi, with what we learned before coming to this live — that Iran will partially close the Strait of Hormuz. What is the action, what is the strategy on the part of the Iranian army when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz?

#Mohammad

Well, the Iranian Navy and the Revolutionary Guards are carrying out a maneuver with live ammunition, so they've partially closed the Strait of Hormuz to conduct those operations. They're using some of the weapons that would be used against the United States and against anyone linked to the United States—any entity connected to it in the Persian Gulf region. Because you have to keep in mind, Nima, that all of the Arab family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf are despotic regimes. There's no freedom in Qatar to say anything about the regime, and there's no freedom in the Emirates.

There's no freedom in Bahrain. And these entities, which also host U.S. bases—and those bases, as we speak, are being used against Iran to prepare for war—have no excuse if war starts. They can't pretend they're neutral; they'll be complicit in a war of aggression. They can't have their cake and eat it too. They can't host American bases, have the Americans bomb Iran, and still claim friendship with Iran at the same time. It's not going to happen. So Iranian missile capabilities, which are not just long-range surface-to-surface missiles like the ones we saw used to batter the Israeli regime...

Iran's missile capabilities include surface-to-sea missiles, sea-to-sea missiles, short-range missiles, medium-range missiles, and, of course, hundreds of thousands of drones that have been positioned to strike assets across the Persian Gulf region and in the Indian Ocean. So the Iranian firepower is enormous, it's spread out, and the vulnerability of Iran's potential adversaries is extraordinary. This is not a normal part of the world. This is not an ordinary region. It's full of oil and gas installations, oil and gas wells. It's full of refineries. It's full of ports for exporting oil and gas, importing goods from the West, and all the wealth that's accumulated from different parts of the world. And then you have ships, tankers coming and going. Then you have the Strait of Hormuz.

The Persian Gulf itself is not very wide. Iran controls one side of it and the islands in the middle. And then there's the Indian Ocean. With the missile and drone capabilities that Iran has—whether from the sea or the land—the global economy would be devastated, and the price of energy would go through the roof. In addition to that, Nima, something I usually don't discuss is that these tiny regimes spend a lot of money because they have a lot of wealth. A lot of exports from other countries come to this part of the world disproportionately, and those would come to an end. It would crush the global economy. And with Trump being weak and vulnerable as things are—unpopular, with people opposing war in the United States—you now have a very difficult economic situation. It's getting worse in the United States.

And then, to add to all that, is of course the exposure of the Epstein class to the American people—the cover-up and the continued cover-up. So he's not going to have popular support when he engages in war, and when the pain starts kicking in, Americans are not going to like that. His own 30% or so supporters will be the first to be outraged when they lose their jobs. And then we saw Ayatollah Khamenei today speak about sinking naval ships. This is not a situation any sane person in the United States would want to see turn into a conflict—turn into a military conflict. But then again, Washington is controlled by the Epstein class. This is the Epstein regime. And the people around Trump, in the Senate and the House, they're Israeli-firsters. They don't care about the United States or the global economy or European economies. They care about Israel. You're muted, Nima.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Mohammad

Actually, we are—you're still muted.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Mohammad

Let me...

#Nima

Can you hear me, Professor Marandi? Yes. You're witnessing an unprecedented escalation between the United States and Iran in the Middle East. We haven't seen this kind of escalation before. You see two aircraft carriers, fifteen destroyers in the region, and they're bringing a lot of weapons there. On one hand, Donald Trump—who, you know, previously said he wasn't seeking regime change in Iran—has now changed his rhetoric, suggesting maybe regime change is the best option. What is the response from the Iranians to this shift in rhetoric? From "no regime change" to "let's go after regime change," to "let's prepare for a new war in the Middle East"? What is the Iranian response to that?

#Mohammad

I just want to also add that this is the position of the entire Epstein class in the United States. Those who hate Trump—like the New York Times—when it comes to attacking Iran, they're all for it. The Washington Post, they're all for it too. They'll constantly say how terrible things are in Iran, how evil the so-called regime is, and that they're killing people. That's what this is all about. There's a consensus: they want to demonize Iran for ordinary Americans to justify war. So they may hate Trump, but they love war. It's not as if this is an issue about Trump. This is the Epstein class. This is a regime controlled by this particular class. And I think the most important thing right now to take into consideration is that while the United States is divided and the American people don't want war, they're not happy with this regime.

They're not happy with the Epstein class—any part of it. They despise all of them, whether Democrat or Republican; they're all the same. Whether it's the New York Times or the Washington Post, Fox News or MSNBC, they're all the same. On the Iranian side, we've seen two massive gatherings across the country—on January 12th and February 11th. On January 12th, after the riots on the 9th and 10th, where 3,117 people died, including hundreds of police officers, this was a conspiracy launched and carried out by U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies, probably along with MI6 and perhaps the French. We know this from the U.S. Treasury Secretary, who said, "We plan to bring down the currency to bring people to the streets."

And then we saw Pompeo, Mossad, and Channels 13, 14, and 15 in Israel—all of them claimed that Mossad was involved, the CIA was involved, and that weapons were brought in by foreign intelligence agencies to kill hundreds of police officers and security officials. So this was a conspiracy. And back then, Trump was talking about attacking Iran. On January 12th, millions came

into the streets—roughly three million in Tehran. And then the same Western media, this Epstein media, tried to say that it was AI, that it was fabricated. But there was helicopter footage over the rally in Tehran, which was unbelievably huge.

They said it was AI, which of course was a lie. But then on February 11th, on the anniversary of the revolution, we had even larger rallies. It's as if Iranians— even those who didn't come before—said, "Well, this time we'll come too, just to show these people they can't erase us, these Westerners, Musk, and the Western media." Fortunately, a larger number of Western, regional, and Asian journalists were there, so they couldn't hide it. The numbers in Tehran were about 25% higher than on January 12th. So while the West, the United States, is fragmented, Iran is united. And as we've discussed before, this isn't just about Iran. This is the entire axis of resistance. Yemen is prepared for war and has upgraded its capabilities. The resistance in Iraq is enormous and hasn't engaged yet. They'll be fighting an existential war.

And then the axis across the region will be active. So this isn't something the United States can manage with air power. There are just too many actors, and on the ground they have the numbers by far. There's nothing a country like Qatar, with a passport-holding population of 350,000, can do—nor the Emirates and their corrupted elites. The first people to flee will be the leaders of these tiny Arab family dictatorships. They'll fly off to their mansions in Europe and the United States. So for Iran, this will be an existential war. For the actors of resistance, it will be an existential war. The people in Iran are united, and we can see what the situation is in the United States. No matter how you look at it, this will not end well for the United States, and it will definitely not end well for Trump. I don't know if I answered your question, though.

#Nima

The question was focused, Professor Marandi, on the Iranian response to the United States. But you mentioned that—yeah, you responded to that.

#Mohammad

But let me explain what the objective is, because we had Iran at the head of the—just before you ask your next question. What I can say, Nima, is that since the 12-day war, Iran has been preparing. And while I can't go into details—because I don't know many things, and I don't pretend to know many things—I can say that Iran and nations close to Iran have been cooperating more than before, with high-tech capabilities and with military hardware that Iran doesn't produce, or doesn't produce at that level. For example—and this may not be, you know, I mean, there are many different things coming in—but one thing that's more or less open knowledge now is the helicopters that have been imported from Russia.

And those are apparently very effective against drones. So Iran has been building its capability to battle drones for the last 11 or 12 months. Any war carried out by the U.S. Air Force will be very

expensive, and they'll be very vulnerable. But a big part of that will be drones, and the Iranians are working on their capabilities to deal with them. And of course, during the four years of war in Ukraine, a lot of experience has been gathered by the Russians. So many of those capabilities—and others that the Russians and the Chinese have—have been added to Iran's own. Iran has purchased the weapons, systems, and equipment it needs.

And, of course, Iran is upgrading its own technology. Its missile capabilities are probably among the top three in the world, and it's working on precision, payloads, and maneuverability. So it's going to be more difficult for Iran's adversaries, and Iran now has the capability to fire missiles from many more places than before. It will have a lot more room for maneuver than in the past, increasing its capability. So while the Americans are bringing in their own capabilities, the Iranians are upgrading theirs. But at the end of the day, Nima, as I told you, this is a region that's very sensitive—like a shop full of very delicate hardware.

A fight in that shop could destroy everything there and cause huge damage. That damage wouldn't be contained to the shop—it would create a worldwide crisis, from the south of Latin America to the north of Europe, from the southern tip of Africa to New Zealand. Everywhere would be affected. And everyone would know that it's Trump who brought about this crisis. One reason the Iranians are negotiating is that, if Trump behaves in a sane and reasonable manner, there could be a deal. I'm not saying it's likely, because the Iranians have said they're not going to make any concessions on missiles or their alliances, and they're not going to give up their right to enrich uranium.

But the second reason is that the Iranians want the international community to know that if and when this catastrophe happens, you'll know who to blame. You'll know which senators in the United States were calling for war. You'll know which journalists were calling for war. Look them up. Keep their names. You'll know which political leaders were calling for war. When you lose your jobs, when you lose your homes, when you're no longer able to find the materials you need to sustain yourself, then you'll start thinking about who brought this upon you. So the Iranians are negotiating to make sure that everyone knows who's to blame for whatever happens.

#Nima

So, when it comes to the Iranian response—Professor Marandi, correct me if I'm mistaken—my understanding is that Iran would respond in a different manner. You know, compared to what it was during the 12-day war, the strategy on the part of the Iranians has somehow drastically changed. What are those changes, and how would Iran react if the United States started attacking? Are they going to hold back and think about a measured sort of response, or are they going to attack each and every target in the region?

#Mohammad

Well, it's going to be an all-out war, that's for sure. But what we were discussing a few weeks ago is that by carrying out this maneuver in the Strait of Hormuz, they're effectively saying the same thing we've been saying for weeks: this is not going to be just about Iran and the United States. Iran is not just going to strike military bases or bomb their assets or ships. Iran is going to make sure that all those entities in the Persian Gulf that collaborated with the United States pay a price. They are all complicit; they cannot pretend they're not. And these regimes, as I've said on multiple occasions, will not last. Bahrain will not last. None of them will last. They're unpopular—they are the minority in their own countries.

There are millions of foreign workers who are often treated as slaves or indentured servants, and with impunity. This will not end well for the United States. It will be an all-out war for Iran. Iran will strike very hard from the beginning, and all options are on the table for Iran. It's not just going to be about the military—anything that is in the U.S. interest will be fair game. Anything. It doesn't even have to be owned by the United States; anything that's of interest to the United States, whether in the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, or the Red Sea. And we have to keep in mind that Yemen fought a seven-week war with the United States. How did that end? Did the United States win that war, or did they have to walk away? Iran's capabilities are far greater than those of Yemen, and this time around, Yemen is also going to be part of the war.

And Yemen today is not the Yemen of a year ago. They've been preparing—everyone has been preparing. It's not just the Americans who are bringing weapons. Our assets are already here, because this is our home turf. It doesn't cost us much to hold our ground, to stand up against the United States in our own neighborhood. But for them, everything has to be brought across the ocean. They'll have daily costs, and, you know, as we speak, they're the ones paying an enormous price to get their assets here. They'll have to pay an enormous price to keep their assets here, and they'll have to pay an enormous price to take them out, ultimately. But if there's war, I don't even think those costs will compare to the economic costs that will be incurred. There will be no comparison at all.

#Nima

Just to mention, when you talk about Yemen and Iran working together, that would involve about 20% of global oil use passing through the Strait of Hormuz, and 25% of LNG through the same strait. Then, combined with Bab al-Mandab in the Red Sea, that's about 12% of seaborne oil. These are huge numbers. You know, when it comes to all the calculations, I know you've mentioned that the head of Iran's National Security Council, Ali Larijani, went to the Arab states in the region and spoke with them. What was the outcome? Do they understand the scale and the gravity of such a war in the Middle East against Iran—and how they themselves could be affected, even destroyed, by such a war?

#Mohammad

They're very worried—and so is Turkey, so is the Turkish government. But they're all too weak and vulnerable. I was just recently in Moscow, and representatives from the region and from Turkey were also there. They were all very worried. But they're not like Iran; they can't take a stand against the United States. They're obedient. Some may show a bit more, let's say, independence—a tiny bit more, like Turkey. The others, they can't do much. But yes, the Iranian foreign minister, the head of the Supreme National Security Council, and others have warned them about the situation. And another thing, Nima, that I always forget to mention, is Iran's cruise missile capabilities.

Iran's cruise missiles are very precise, and they can hit targets across the region. They were not used against Israel—against the Israeli regime—because Israel is far off. But all of Iran's potential targets and key assets in this region can be destroyed with these cruise missiles. So it's not just about long-range, medium-range, or short-range missiles, or drones. It's not just about surface-to-ship missiles; it's also about the huge cruise missile capability that the Iranians have and will deploy. The arsenal is massive. I'm not discounting or ignoring the firepower of the United States. The United States is a monstrous regime and is willing to commit any crime.

We see from the Epstein case documents that have been released—the little bit they've allowed us to see, you know, with all the redactions and all the evidence they've hidden—and overwhelmingly, the documents apparently have not been released. Just a tiny bit of them has come out, and we've seen what sort of people they are, what sort of monsters this class of people is. Now we understand—now we all understand—why they support genocide. Now we understand why Western journalists and Western media support genocide in Gaza. Now we understand why, during the Iran-Iraq war, they gassed Halabche, killing 6,500 people within a couple of minutes—because that's who they are.

That's what this regime is. I'm not trying to downplay the viciousness or the power of the United States. But what I am saying is that Iran's power—and the vulnerability of the United States, because of the oil, gas, and markets in this region, and the despots totally bound to the United States in the Persian Gulf—make the U.S. far more vulnerable than Iran. And with the U.S. being divided, in decline, and despised across the world—they've antagonized so many, they've antagonized everyone, especially during the Trump regime—the advantage lies with Iran. No matter how brutal and cruel the Americans are, the advantage lies with Iran.

#Nima

How about Afghanistan? We've learned that the Taliban is saying if something happens, they're going to support Iran, that they'll go against the United States. And we know that after Russia, Iran is in the process of officially recognizing the Taliban government in Afghanistan. What is the current situation between Iran and Afghanistan? How does Iran see Afghanistan in that kind of scenario—a war between Iran and the United States?

#Mohammad

You know, I always say there are two groups of people that have always shown an irrational hatred toward Iran. I don't mean the elites in the West or people under the influence of Western media. One is the mainstream left in the West. They would support Saddam Hussein, but if it's anything connected to Iran, they'll be against it. So they supported regime change in Syria, along with the Salafists. They were allied together in supporting the CIA operation, right? And the second is the Salafists—those people who've been under the influence of U.S. proxies in the region, whether in the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, or under Erdogan. For decades, they've been trying to antagonize Iran, using sectarianism and trying to create sectarian hatred. They've been doing this for decades.

And of course, the Taliban—the first wave of the Taliban that came to power in the 1990s—were deeply sectarian. What's happening now is that people are waking up to reality. A lot of people are beginning to see through the Qatari media empire's propaganda. It's not just Al Jazeera; they have a huge media apparatus, and others funded by oil and gas and by NATO regimes affiliated with the West. People are seeing through it. They see who's sincere about Palestine, who's sincere about Yemen, who's sincere about Cuba and Venezuela, and elsewhere. So the Taliban—despite the fact that we have major differences, like their policy of not allowing girls to go to school, which for Iran is not acceptable, among other things—are seeing that Iran is the only force in the region that is sincere about Palestine. So they're tilting toward Iran, and so is public opinion elsewhere.

Everyone is looking now to the Axis of Resistance as the hope—not just for the region, but beyond. You see people in Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere tilting toward Iran, despite this huge campaign by the West—Western media, Arab media, media funded by dictatorships and sectarian outlets. All this work they've been doing for 47 years is falling apart because people are seeing who stands with whom. Everyone else is with NATO. I mean, you can't be on the fence here. You're either with the Axis of Resistance or you're with the Americans. There's no middle ground.

None of these countries have helped the Palestinians. They've tried for years—decades—to make Palestinians hate Iran. I've seen it with my own eyes. Palestinians tell me about what Qatari media does, what Turkey does, and what, in the past—especially the Saudis, though they're less into this sort of thing now—did with Wahhabism and so on, and how they've always tried to turn even Palestinians against Iran. But now people are seeing that none of these regimes will raise a finger for the Palestinian cause. The only thing they'll do is give a few scholarships to Palestinians for public diplomacy, to create a good image for themselves—but they won't actually do anything.

And they won't do anything against Israel now, and they won't do anything against the United States, because they're all in the Western camp. So the Taliban—or at least many in the Taliban, influential people in the Taliban—are seeing this reality. And it's not just in Afghanistan; it's elsewhere. I think if you look at how Russia and China have tilted toward Iran, how others have tilted toward Iran, this is something more than just regional. It's global. As I said, you can see the mood changing in parts of the world where, traditionally, Iran has had very little influence, if any.

#Nima

The second round of negotiations after the 12-day war has concluded in Geneva. Again, we had the Omanis mediating indirect talks between the United States and Iran. So far, from what we've heard, it seems they're already talking about a third round of negotiations. What are the main objectives of Iran? We know that Netanyahu is doing everything he can to influence the negotiations between Iran and the United States. He's putting out statements about the Iranian ballistic missile program and Iran's support for the axis of resistance, saying that these are unacceptable. But as far as I know, those are red lines for the Iranian negotiators. What's your take on that?

#Mohammad

Well, I think all of your viewers should go to the leader's website, and when the full speech is translated into English, Arabic, and other languages, they should read it. I think some of the key points have already been shared on social media. Of course, his accounts are heavily shadow-banned, so people have to check them themselves. But he was very clear that Iran is not going to give up its nuclear program, that Iran is not going to give up its military capabilities, and that Iran is not going to give up its regional alliances.

And he actually spoke about Epstein and the corruption of the political elites in the West, which, to my knowledge, you know, in Iran they're not really talking about. The Persian-language media in the West—BBC Persian, Iran International, all these outlets that spend huge amounts of money to cover news—they're not touching the Epstein files. It's as if nothing has happened. BBC Persian pretends it doesn't exist. But he raised it, so hopefully it'll get a higher profile inside Iran, because I don't think the Iranian media has been covering it as much as they really should. Another thing he said in his speech was that Imam Hussain did not give allegiance to—would not give allegiance—someone like Imam Hussain would not give allegiance to Yazid.

And he's making reference to Karbala and the grandson of the Prophet, who stood for the oppressed and stood up against the despots of his time. Basically, he's saying that the United States is like the Yazid of our era. And as you know better than I do, in Iranian culture and Shia beliefs, Karbala and the story of Imam Hussain and his sister are very central. In Iran, there's no day like the day of Ashura. Even those who, you know, may drink and party—when it comes to Ashura, at least for a day or two, they show religiosity, for the most part. Because it's such a... If you walk in Tehran on any day of the year, you may see different things, but when it's Ashura, you know it's Ashura.

You can see it on the streets, in the homes, in the flags on people's houses, and so on. So he's speaking about that and basically saying, "We are never going to submit to you. It's not going to happen." And so, that culture of Ashura—that culture of resistance—as General Soleimani once famously said, "We are the nation of Imam Hussain." This is something the Americans fail to grasp. And why would the Epstein class understand it? They have no notion of spirituality. The journalists

at the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, or the Washington Post—they're employees of the Epstein class. And they too either have no notion of it or no ability to express or pursue this line of thought.

This is something that makes Iran and the entire axis of resistance resilient in a way that, I think, will be catastrophic for the Americans. And he's alluding to all of this—he's warning the Americans about what can happen. At the same time, he told his audience, "Carry on with business as usual. Get on with your lives, your work." People should continue as they did in the past. The military, the armed forces, are prepared and ready. And the Iranians, as you know, are strengthening their forces every day. We keep hearing about new American jets coming into the region, but the Iranians are doing their own thing. They don't make a lot of noise about it. But when the day comes, the West will figure it out—they'll understand what a catastrophe has befallen them.

#Nima

Professor Marandi, do you think that when you talk about the Epstein class, you're basically talking about Netanyahu being capable of having a lot of leverage over Donald Trump—not just because of Epstein, but because of the whole culture that exists there and the whole force that Epstein is part of? The big picture is far greater than what we're talking about. But how do you see the leverage that Netanyahu has on Donald Trump in these negotiations?

#Mohammad

Well, you know, there's a lot of talk about Netanyahu probably having a lot of dirt on Trump. We don't know. But what we can assume from the Epstein files is that, since most of the files are being hidden, much of the key material is redacted, and the little we do see is horrific, I think it's punched a major hole in the power of the elites in the West. Those elites that are above politics—the real power, the oligarchs—they're the ones who make the decisions. And they're Zionists. To enter the club, you have to be like them, you have to, I guess, do as they do. But they're the ones with the real power. The political parties—Labour and Conservative, Democrat and Republican—all of that is just a joke. MSNBC and Fox News, when you look at them, they're all in it.

They're all in the club. And those who work for them are just employees—whether they're presidents, prime ministers, or parliamentarians—it doesn't matter. The very fact that everyone is quiet about it, that they're not telling the full story, that they're trying to pretend the Russians are involved—you know, the media collectively saying Epstein is a Russian spy—and no one believes it, but it just shows how powerful this Epstein class is. All the media are coordinated, just like they're coordinated with one another to create a particular image of Iran, to encourage war and to justify war. The same is true with regard to Russia. The same is true when it comes to distracting attention away from Israel, from Epstein, or from Russia.

Epstein's roots—all of that—just increasingly expose the Epstein class for what it is, and that makes them more vulnerable. So while Netanyahu, who has the backing of the Epstein class, has enormous power over Trump, I think the bigger picture is that the Epstein class is in trouble. The American people, you know, already we're beginning to see signs of real dissent, of real anger, of real rage emerging. And we're seeing Trump's popularity plummet. And then, if we have war, everyone will know what this war is about. And when that war hits Americans, then I think the Epstein class is in big trouble. I think this war will not end well for the Israeli regime. Don't get me wrong, Nima—you know me—I don't support war. I don't want war.

I don't want war anywhere. I fought in a war—I volunteered. I've been to Syria many times, to Lebanon many times, to Iraq. I've seen a lot of death and destruction over the years. But at the end of the day, if there is war, we will persevere. We will win that war, and we will make sure that the United States is defeated. I'm quite confident it will mark the end of the U.S. empire—maybe even something worse for them. But there isn't a chance in the world that the Iranians will allow the Americans to gain the upper hand. This is a war for our survival. It's a war between Iran and the Axis of Resistance, and the Epstein class, and the Epstein regime. And there's not a chance in the world that Iran will let them get the upper hand.

#Nima

What were the lessons for the Iranians in confronting the United States when it comes to this conflict? Because we know that the understanding on the part of the Iranians was somewhat different from that of the Russians—since the Russians were involved before the war on Iran, before the attack on Iran. What lessons has Iran taken from the 12-day war and from the war in Ukraine in terms of understanding American behavior and how to respond to the United States?

#Mohammad

Well, first and foremost, as you mentioned earlier, when we were on with Larry, I pointed out that a senior Iranian commander said Iran's doctrine has completely shifted from defensive to offensive. So when war starts, Iran is going all out. It will destroy everything, and swiftly. That's the Iranian doctrine—a big change. Second, unlike the Americans, who are always carrying out wars, murder, and slaughter, and the Israelis who do the same, Iran hasn't engaged in war since Saddam Hussein invaded the country in the 1980s. So during True Promise 1, 2, and 3, Iran learned a great deal.

True Promise 1 made Iran much more effective in True Promise 2. And if it hadn't been for True Promise 2, True Promise 3 wouldn't have pushed the Israeli regime to seek a ceasefire. So, in a sense, our enemies helped us learn how to use our new technologies and Iranian-made equipment. During the 12-day war, Iran learned about all its weaknesses and strengths, and it's been working

on them ever since. And as you know, Iran's true power isn't directed toward the Israeli regime. The Israeli regime isn't a threat to Iran—it's a tiny regime completely dependent on the West for its very existence.

It needs tens of billions of dollars a year just to sustain itself and to carry out the genocide with Western support. It's the United States that is the real threat. The Iranians, ever since the United States took Afghanistan and Iraq, have been preparing for war. Ever since the United States—Bush and Obama—started saying "all options are on the table," and Iran was labeled part of the "axis of evil" in that Bush State of the Union address—written by a Zionist, by the way, that speech by David Frum—these are the people who make the narratives. Whether it's in the White House, the New York Times, or the Washington Post, it's Zionists—it's the Epstein class.

But the Iranians have been preparing themselves with medium-range missiles, underground bases across the Persian Gulf region and the Indian Ocean, short-range missiles, drones, and a navy designed for asymmetrical warfare. Iran has been preparing for war with the United States for at least two and a half decades. So the firepower that Iran can direct toward the United States is infinitely greater. And again, when I say the United States, I'm not talking about a few ships or a few bases. Their real vulnerability is when the economy goes down. Some Americans, when they speak with me, say, "Well, we're self-sufficient in energy." But when prices go through the roof, the consumer will pay. A few billionaires will make some money, but the U.S. economy will collapse.

The price of gasoline, the price of energy, imports, exports—the world will change. No one will be spared. It will be a catastrophic situation, and then you'll see people on the move. If Americans and Europeans are worried about immigration and refugees now, imagine what it will be like when tens of millions of people from Latin America, Africa, and Asia are on the move toward places that are collapsing too. But still, they'll move because they'll feel they have to go somewhere. So where will they go? They'll go to Europe and the United States. The warmongers will be creating a crisis—an unprecedented crisis—that they won't be able to manage.

So this shift from a defensive to an offensive doctrine, and the awareness that's been created about Iran's capabilities, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities, has led to moves to deal with them. And the fact that other countries are now more concerned and wary of the United States means they've moved closer to Iran. You mentioned Afghanistan, but also China, Russia, and Iraq. So it's going to be much more difficult for the United States. Again, war is horrible. And if the United States engages in war, a lot of Iranians will definitely be killed, because the United States is ruthless. The Americans and Israelis are the same, and their journalists have no decency, no morality. When they slaughter people, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and CNN will say these are surgical strikes.

And, you know, they'll pretend—just like during the 12-day war, when the Israelis were slaughtering families and bringing down apartment blocks. They were saying these were fantastic airstrikes and that they had gathered intelligence, as if the homes of ordinary people were some kind of secret. But they didn't care about the kids, because this is the Epstein-class media. They're owned by the

Epsteins of the world. So I'm sure many will be killed if there's a war. And I'm sure the Western media will pretend these are all surgical strikes, whereas they'll mostly be innocent people—because it's a war of aggression. But the vulnerability of the United States in our region is such that the damage done to the United States, and to the entire West, simply cannot be calculated.

#Nima

I think many in our audience would be amazed. I know most of them don't know Persian or don't follow the Iranian media inside Iran. They'd be surprised, because in the Iranian media they're not really talking much about Israel or how powerful Israel is. Nobody's focused on Israel in military terms or anything like that. But everything you hear from the Israeli media is all about Iran and its capabilities.

#Mohammad

No, you're absolutely correct. Ordinary Iranians do not consider the Israeli regime to be a threat. They consider it an enemy, but not a threat that can undermine Iran. It's just not doable. And people don't believe that the United States can win a war against Iran either. We'll see. But again, as I said, the Iranians have carefully prepared themselves. The maneuvers in the Strait of Hormuz are a message to everyone: don't count on any more oil coming from this region. That will mean the price goes up fourfold, threefold, fivefold—I don't know. And LNG. And again, it's not just that. As I said, this will disrupt trade.

And a lot of the ships will be destroyed. Imports and exports—this region is a consumer economy, especially in these Arab dictatorships. They consume way more than most countries; they waste tons of money every day. So it will be overwhelming. And these regimes will most probably fall. I mean, if there's a war, I don't see how they'll last. The thing is, Nima, in the West they simply do not comprehend Iran. I would advise all senators in the United States, all members of Congress, and people in the White House to read about Ashura, Imam Hussein, and the Iranian worldview—the worldview of the axis of resistance—to get a grasp of what they're up against.

Maybe if they did that, there would be more sanity. But again, the Epstein class rules over them, so we'll have to see. As I said, everything is crumbling in the West—you can see it happening right before your eyes. The whole world is talking about it. People in the West are waking up. I've been reading online how people's views of the United States, even within the United States, have changed. Many ordinary Americans feel as if they are victims just like everyone else—and they are. They're waking up to that reality. So if Trump pushes, he's just going to widen those cracks very quickly.

#Nima

The importance of these negotiations today, compared to before, is the presence of the Europeans. What I learned from the Iranian foreign minister a few days ago is that trade between Iran and Europe is less than what Iran has with Afghanistan. What is that? What do they want? I don't understand these Europeans. What's the understanding, the perception, on the part of the Iranians regarding the European countries?

#Mohammad

Well, you know, I've heard that the foreign minister is even tougher than Dr. Bulgari was when he was in charge of the negotiations. And the Europeans—they have no status. They've burned all their bridges with Iran, with Russia, with China. The Americans don't respect them. They've lost their place at the negotiating table. We don't care about them anymore. They're not important to us, as you pointed out correctly. The aid we provide to Afghanistan, and the trade we carry out with Afghanistan, is far more extensive than with the Europeans. And a couple of weeks ago, I'm sure you remember, the Iranian foreign minister slapped down the German chancellor when he posted an anti-Iranian tweet—he tweeted back at him, hit him very hard, and basically brushed him off.

The Europeans, you know, Europe is going to become less important. Every day that goes by—every single day—the Europeans are growing weaker. And this will continue in the years ahead unless there's some sort of upheaval in Europe, some kind of revolution, or a drastic change among the current leaders. Otherwise, they're destined for greater misery. If there's a war between Iran and the United States, the Europeans will suffer immensely. They're already in crisis, already moving toward deindustrialization because of the energy costs they've imposed on themselves. And, you know, if they're worried about their little garden, wait until refugees from across the world start pouring in when war starts. So they're in a very bad place, and the Iranians have no interest in speaking with them.

#Nima

Yeah. The other part, Professor Marandi, which was mentioned by the Iranian foreign minister in Doha, is that the core—the center—of the conflict between Iran and the United States is what's going on in Palestine and Gaza. We know that Israel is bombing Lebanon, not just Gaza and the West Bank—they're bombing Lebanon as well. And the situation in Lebanon is not good; it's not improving in any sense, given the way Israel is attacking. What is happening with Hezbollah, and what is Hezbollah's policy toward this kind of escalation by the Israelis?

#Mohammad

Yes, the real issue between Iran and the United States and the Israeli regime is Palestine. It's always been about Palestine. It's never been about the nuclear program. It's never been about, I don't know, terrorism or human rights. I mean, come on—the Israeli establishment and human rights?

You know, it's a joke. It's never been about any of these things. It's always been about Iran's support for liberation movements, Iran's independence, and the most important liberation movement of them all: Palestine, the Palestinian people. And it's only Iran that cares about Palestine—it's only the axis of resistance.

No one else cares. People care—people on the streets, you know, across the world care—from Australia to Istanbul to Caracas to, you know, St. Louis in the United States. People care, people are waking up, people have woken up. But the governments don't care. I mean, we just saw that when the Americans were trying to dictate terms to Iran a couple of weeks ago. Al Jazeera put out a piece of news saying that Turkey, Qatar, and Egypt had proposed that Iran cut off its assistance to its regional allies—meaning Hamas, meaning Islamic Jihad—and that Iran limit its missile capabilities and its nuclear program. I mean, how pathetic can these three governments be, if we take the Al Jazeera report seriously?

They pretend to support the Palestinian people—Al Jazeera. They don't. I mean, the staff does, but the policy of the state doesn't. The state is with the United States; it's a proxy. Or most of the staff—the ordinary staff—but the people higher up, they don't care. Yet they're putting forward a proposal for Iran to stop supporting the Palestinians? The resistance? Really? And so, are these people who've been brainwashed for 47 years by Salafi and Wahhabi propaganda, or those leftists in Europe who've always shown this irrational hatred toward Iran—are they going to wake up like everyone else has? Or are they going to keep their heads in the sand and pretend that their anti-Iranian, anti-resistance propaganda has any validity whatsoever? So... the Iranians at the negotiating table are going to be tough.

The Iranians are not going to give the Americans any concessions that violate Iran's sovereignty. The foreign minister isn't going to make any unnecessary concessions. Any deal with the United States—any potential deal—is going to be about the nuclear program and giving assurances. I don't think they really believe they need assurances, but they'll give them, because this isn't really about the nuclear program at the end of the day. It's about giving assurances that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful. There's a possibility for a deal because Trump may want one—he may need an off-ramp.

So, it's Trump. He'll say, you know, just like with Yemen—he said, "We won," and they capitulated. Then he walks away, and his MAGA supporters—they're a cult. I mean, he could shoot a woman, you know, a woman in the face—a white woman, a young white woman—and nothing would happen. They could shoot a medic in the back, a medic who was working with veterans. They can do anything. Whatever Trump does, that base will excuse it. Epstein doesn't matter to them. But Trump knows that if there's a war, things could unravel.

But if he does decide to walk away—if he's sane enough not to engage in war—then he can just, you know, say, "I won," like with Yemen, and his base will be satisfied. The Epstein class won't be happy, but in any case, the Iranians are not going to give anything to the Americans that violates Iran's sovereignty. By the way, when Iran insisted that the negotiations take place in Oman—and

right now, as you rightly pointed out, the negotiations today are being held in the Omani embassy—the reason they go back and forth is because the distance for the Americans is far greater than for the Iranians. Oman is very close to Iran.

So they allowed it, but still, it's going to be Oman who mediates. The point is, the Americans put preconditions on first. They said, you know, all these things have to be on the table. Iran said no, and the Americans were forced to accept Iran's terms. Iran said, in Oman, indirect talks—just like when? Just like before the 12-day war. What symbolism is there in this? First of all, the Iranians are showing that they have strength. The Americans were forced to accept Iran's conditions. But second, the Iranians are telling the international community, look, remember last time we were here, when we were negotiating between the fifth round and the sixth round—they conspired to attack us.

#Nima

We don't trust them.

#Mohammad

And you recall, during the first round, things went well. Wyckoff went on Fox News and said, "Yes, enrichment is okay—around 3.6 percent—for nuclear civilian purposes." Then he moved the goalposts, and again he kept moving them, until they actually carried out war against Iran. So by doing this, Iran is reminding the world where we were last time around, and that we simply don't trust the United States.

#Nima

Thank you so much, Professor Marandi, for being with us today. A great pleasure, as always.

#Mohammad

It's a great honor, Nima.

#Nima

Thank you very much for having me.