

Seyed M. Marandi: US-Iran War Inevitable: Kuwait and Bahrain May Fall

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#Glenn

Andy, a professor at Tehran University and also a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Thank you for coming back on. It's great to see you again.

#Seyed M. Marandi

It's great seeing you. Thank you very much for having me. It's always a great pleasure being with you and your excellent audience.

#Glenn

Well, there's a lot happening in your part of the world. That is, the tensions between Iran and the United States, but also the war which spurred from it. That is, the war between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. I wanted to visit both of them, but perhaps a good place to start would be, yeah, the war between Iran and the United States. You're quite pessimistic at this point now. Do you see any possibility of reaching an agreement, or do you think simply war is coming?

#Seyed M. Marandi

I wouldn't say I'm pessimistic. I hate war, but I think that with Trump, that is the only way in which we can achieve some sort of change where Trump would be severely weakened, and perhaps the war will end sooner. The Iranians have, as we all know, stated that they will continue to demand the United States abide by the MOU that Trump agreed upon and that he signed in public, and nothing less will be acceptable. And the Americans, they've been doing everything possible to escape the MOU. But I think ultimately, now that it is beginning to dawn on the Americans that they cannot defeat Iran, whether through barbaric starvation sanctions or through barbaric airstrikes or the threat to wipe out the nation, I think that since Trump is incapable of using an off-ramp, for reasons

that mystify everyone as far as I know, we're going to have to go back to war. And the Iranians, they're preparing themselves for a very, very heavy and severe exchange with U.S. forces and quite possibly Israeli forces.

#Glenn

Do you see this being something the Israelis would join right away, or just come in later? I mean, it is unclear if the U.S. is going to do some incrementalism or come in very hard this time, because I've been reading reports about them building up a lot of capabilities in the region. Again, I have heard from some that this is, you know, not out of the ordinary, but if you couple it with the new rhetoric from Trump, it becomes quite concerning.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Here, the belief is that war is almost inevitable, and the Iranians are going to keep the pressure on the United States until it gets results. And therefore, the United States either will have to change course, or the United States is going to have to go to war. The Iranians, they're in control of the Strait of Hormuz. I think that's becoming increasingly clear. For a while, the Americans were claiming that they've opened the strait, which was never the case. The Iranians have always allowed a certain amount of oil to get through. And we're now hearing from mainstream media, months after we've been discussing this together, that they're claiming Iran is taking money and fees from the ships that go through the strait.

And that's something that we were speculating on a long time ago. On the other hand, the Iranians, during President Pezeshkian's trip to New York, they decreased the pressure in the Strait because they did not want escalation at a time when the president was going to New York, or at a time when President Xi was going to Washington, because the two countries, Iran and China, had coordinated their positions well. So Iran didn't want to rock the boat during those two weeks. So during those two weeks, the amount of oil that would get through was, I think, roughly 11 million barrels or so a day.

But then afterwards, we've seen during the last 11 days or so, I think, that go down very fast because the Iranians are hitting ships in much larger numbers. And now the Iranians are hitting ships far away from the Strait of Hormuz. And this is something that we discussed before. I've always been saying that Iran can stop the flow of oil through multiple means. The Strait of Hormuz is to regulate ships. But if Iran wants to stop ships from going through, they can hit them anywhere. So when Iran hit a ship off the coast of Qatar, that showed how far Iranian missiles can go and strike ships. It's not difficult for Iran.

So anywhere in the Persian Gulf region or in the Gulf of Oman, it's easy for Iran to take out ships. And Iran is now sending that message. And it should have been clear all along. But for whatever reasons, the Americans tried to convince others that it was otherwise. And, of course, Western

media will always follow what the government says on these issues. And then, of course, if push comes to shove, if there's an attack on Iran's infrastructure, then I think Saudi infrastructure, Qatari infrastructure, Emirati and Kuwaiti infrastructure, that'll be destroyed. Of course, if anything is left for Iran, the way things are going with Yemen, and Yemen is striking Saudi targets repeatedly. But in any case, now the amount of oil that's getting through is much less.

And of course, the other commodities, their situation is much worse: LNG, gasoline, sulfur, fertilizers, helium, and so on. So the Iranians will continue to keep up the pressure, and that, I think, will force the United States to attack because the United States will have no choice: either continue with the status quo and the U.S. economy just goes further downhill and the United States accepts the economic catastrophe, or the United States accepts the MOU, which I don't see happening for the time being, at least, or the United States wages war.

So I think that, and I think this is the general belief here, that it will be the last—that ultimately the United States will begin or move towards an assault on Iran. It could be with or without the Israeli regime. Either way, the Iranians are prepared. And Iran, for a period of time, refrained from striking the Israeli regime because they wanted the internal dynamics in the regime to play itself out. The tensions that exist in Israel are leading to a situation where some believe that there could be civil war in Israel. And so Iran does not want to block the way for the different forces, the different factions in Israel, to strike at, to antagonize one another for the time being.

#Glenn

Well, you mentioned, well, we heard in the past a lot about this specific date when the war would start again. At least the United States has been making the point that they prefer starting the war after the midterms. This is, you know, in Trump's words, when he would decide whether or not Iran should be obliterated or annihilated, or if they will make a deal that will make Iran prosperous. So, this all-or-nothing way that Trump likes to frame his deals. But now it seems as if the war can come much sooner, before the midterms. So what do you think changed? Or is it because the Iranians will not let Trump dictate the timetable? Or is it the U.S. plans that have changed?

#Seyed M. Marandi

I don't think that Trump should be taken seriously when he says that there will be no strikes until the midterms, nor should he be taken seriously if he says strikes will be carried out before the midterms. Nothing that he says is worth a government to use in order to prepare itself. The only thing that's important for Iran is what's happening on the ground. U.S. forces are in place, and the United States is using all the countries in the region as platforms to strike Iran. Refueling jets are all over the Persian Gulf region, and the United States could swiftly move to attack Iran. Schools in areas near the Persian Gulf, their classes are now online. So that's how prepared Iran is. The Iranians believe that at any time an attack could begin on the country.

What is important, I think what Trump wanted, of course, was to have the next three, four—the next four weeks—quiet so that he could perhaps have a better chance at the midterms. But I don't think that necessarily is going to work. It seems from what we're hearing that, according to polls, things are getting very bad. And so perhaps Trump's policy could be to carry out strikes before Iran and declare some sort of victory. Some sort of heavy airstrikes, air campaign against Iran could be carried out, and then he could declare victory right before the midterms or on election day or something like that. I mean, there are different ways of looking at this. But I've spoken to people with knowledge about Iran's plans. I don't know Iran's plans, but I've been told that this time around, Iran is going to hit very hard. And Iran is going to teach Trump and Netanyahu and the Trump regime a lesson.

And this is probably going to be the most decisive moment, or the decisive chapter, in the confrontation. This is speculation. I'm just making things up. It could be a shock-and-awe attack where they assassinate people, or they attempt to do so, and then declare some sort of victory. That's not going to work because Iran is immediately going to strike back. They could start targeted attacks, Pickaxe Mountain, but that would be a strike on Iran's infrastructure, and Iran has already said what it will do in response. So the global economic crisis will get far worse, and Iran will strike back very hard. Anything that the United States does—I mean, any scenario that I can think of—is going to have a very deadly response, and a very heavy-handed one as well. So I do not see a scenario where Trump emerges with anything but failure.

#Glenn

Well, such a war now—and that is another round of war, being the same war, of course—would be much more complicated, though, because now we have another war going on between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. And, well, in this war, we also see targets being different. That is, Yemen is hitting the airports, the civilian airports as well, in Saudi Arabia. So it's intensifying very quickly. I was wondering, how do you see this? Because the Saudis, of course, as you and I discussed before, they painted themselves in a bit of a corner. There's no good way to get out of this.

But now we see talk about the Pakistanis and the Turks, through this agreement, well, joining in, either sending troops to Saudi Arabia or, indeed, as some have suggested, Pakistan could get engaged in the air war against Yemen. Yes. Some have suggested that Syria as well might send troops, but there's been some— you know, the government there has dismissed it. Again, it seems like it's a recipe for disaster. Well, especially Pakistan is— you know, would they, to what extent would they risk their relationship with Iran? I mean, would Iran get deeper involved in Yemen? How do you unpack this? You know, what could be a messy war?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, first of all, we have to go back and remember that this war began when the Saudis bombed the Sana'a International Airport in the capital of Yemen and broke the ceasefire. An Iranian airliner

was taking people to Sana'a from Tehran, and the plane was approaching the airport when it was—the airport was devastated. So that was—and we didn't hear any condemnation from the government in Turkey or the Europeans or anyone else, for that matter, when this happened. And as you and I discussed during the 40-day war, I said that back then. I was saying that Yemen today is far more powerful than it was when the Saudis began the genocidal war against Yemen over a decade ago, and when, ultimately, the Saudis were forced to accept the ceasefire over three years ago.

Yemen had emerged much stronger then, and they began striking Saudi oil infrastructure, and the Saudis accepted a ceasefire. Today, Yemen is far stronger than what it was three, three and a half years ago. But let's look at the Saudis. The Saudis took part in the war against Iran, and it has been catastrophic for them. And this is a very vulnerable and brittle regime. It's a family regime. It's completely dependent on oil. Its expenses are very high. It consumes a lot of money just to sustain itself. And now it's brought about a second war in addition to the first, meaning in addition to the Persian Gulf, the situation there, we have the situation in the Red Sea and, of course, on the Arabian Peninsula. This is not going to end well for Saudi Arabia.

And all the king's horses and all the king's men can't put Mohammed bin Salman's regime back together again. The Americans and the Israelis and the French and the British and Turkey and the government in Pakistan, all of them, they may work together, but Yemen is a very powerful force, and we see them winning across southern Yemen. They're about to take Taiz. They always had a part of Taiz, the city of Taiz, but now they've captured all their areas to the south and to the west, and they will take the city shortly, the second biggest city in the country. So they are much more powerful today. They are firing missiles at Saudi airports because they declared Saudi airports to be shut. Why? Because the Saudis have imposed, for over a decade, they've imposed a siege on Yemen.

So Yemen is saying, "You have to lift the siege." And they're saying, "Until you do so, we impose a siege on you as well." First, they began with the Red Sea. Now they included airports. And Yemen is also striking oil facilities across Saudi Arabia. And Saudi Arabia has nothing else but these oil facilities. So this is not going to end well. And nothing that Pakistan or Turkey could do will save it. Mohammed bin Salman's only solution is to bring an end to the war. This is only going to hurt Saudi Arabia. This is only going to hurt Turkey and Pakistan because they will be seen as aligning themselves against the people of Yemen who've been victims of genocide and who were the only people alongside Hezbollah and Iran who stood up for the people of Gaza.

And it will not look good for them. And it is a very expensive endeavor, bringing troops into Saudi Arabia. The logistical nightmare is extraordinary. And Yemen is a mountainous country. And it's not like Syria. In Syria, the forces that Turkey and Qatar paid for at the behest of the United States, and with the cooperation of others, NATO, Jordan, and the Israeli regime, there were hundreds of groups, the biggest being ISIS and Al-Qaeda. But there are many groups, and they were constantly killing each other. And Syria is mostly flatland. In Yemen, you have a very powerful united force, the armed forces of Yemen and Ansar Allah, which control the country.

Over 80% of the population, I believe, now live in territory controlled by the government. So they have this—they have a united force. It's a mountainous country. They're very powerful, and they have a very developed missile and drone capability, which is indigenous. Iranians helped them create it, but the Iranians are not sending missiles and drones. It's obvious that they're building it themselves. So how are they going to block those missiles and drones? They're firing them every day. There are no interceptors that can block them. So things are going to go downhill.

And then if the United States launches its attack against Iran in the coming days or weeks, which is, as we discussed earlier, quite possible, and if not probable, then if the Iranians feel Saudi Arabia is targeting Yemeni women and children in a way which needs to be dealt with, then Iran could prioritize Saudi Arabia over the others. Last time around, Saudi Arabia was not Iran's priority. It was Kuwait. It depended on the different periods, but sometimes it was Kuwait and Bahrain. Once Iran struck Qatar very hard and then hit Qatar's gas installations and forced Trump to back off. And of course, it was the Emirates during another period. So the Saudis are very vulnerable to both Yemen and Iran. And the best thing for Saudi Arabia is to end this war.

And that's all that Yemen and Iran were saying from the beginning. Yemen is not Iran's proxy. Yemen did not fight alongside Iran during the 40-day war, nor during the subsequent fighting after the United States refused to implement the MOU. That means they're not a proxy. And then the Saudis started this. And throughout this period, Iran was telling Saudi Arabia, "Do a deal. End the genocidal blockade." And if Saudi Arabia had just, 10, 11 years ago, if they had, instead of spending hundreds of billions of dollars to carry out that genocidal war, if they had spent 5% of that to invest in Yemen, the relationship with Yemen would have been excellent today. But they chose the path of confrontation, and in their arrogance, they refused to recognize that Yemen is far more powerful than they are.

#Glenn

But Saudi Arabia is also quite close to the new authorities in Damascus. Do you think Al-Sharaa or Jolani would enter the war? Because it can't only be fought as an air war. I can see why there would be the appeal to get 10,000, 20,000 fighters and send them in to Yemen. But again, I see mixed messages about this, mixed reports. Do you see this as likely? Or again, how would this play out?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, first of all, Jolani is not in charge of Syria. He is in charge of Damascus. The situation in Syria is worse today than it was during the last couple of years of Assad. And the security is terrible. Different cities and different towns and different areas are controlled by different groups. Some of them are hostile towards Jolani. And people also recognize that Jolani—it's being discussed that he sends troops to Saudi Arabia, whereas the Israelis have taken over huge amounts of land in southern Syria after the fall of former President Assad. And so it would be very embarrassing for him

to send troops to Saudi Arabia when the most important parts of his country, the most strategic parts of his country, are now occupied by the Israeli regime.

Especially when, as I said, those groups that helped bring him to power, they are deeply divided. During the dirty war, they were constantly killing each other. Most of the deaths during the dirty war were between these different groups. So it's going to be very difficult for him to manage. And then there's the issue of logistics. Waging war in another country is very expensive. And the Saudis are not the most efficient people or capable people when it comes to warfare, as we've seen. So I don't think it's doable. And as I said, Ansarullah, the Yemeni armed forces, they are very powerful. And now that they've defeated the Saudi proxies in Yemen, they can better deploy their forces to protect their borders.

Within the country, the enemy is collapsing, and we saw how swiftly it collapsed and how easily they were able to take territory. And we've seen over the last few days, in the rallies that were held in the freed cities, how massive they were in support of Ansarullah. So I don't see this as helping at all. I think it will only destabilize Jolani. Just as Turkish and Pakistani involvement in this war will hurt these two governments, especially in the case of Pakistan, where you have the situation as it is with Imran Khan and his supporters going to the streets and the dissatisfaction that exists, I don't think it would be a smart move to intensify anger at home because Imran Khan, before, when there was talk of Saudi involvement a decade ago, he came out very decisively against it.

#Glenn

Well, I agree. It wouldn't be a very good look for Jolani, given all the problems at home, if he would send troops to fight in Yemen, which would be a very unpopular war as well. But, you know, we've seen similar things. That is, in Lebanon, when the government there made a deal with the Israelis, so they pulled their troops out of the south, you know, causing protests in other parts of Lebanon, and they used those troops which were supposed to guard the border against Israel to instead go after their own protesters. So, you know, none of this is a good look, but we see it being done nonetheless. So again, it's hard to predict if you only assume there's going to be smart moves here. But another variable, though, because again, the whole region there now, everything is shifting and changing quite fast. And as we know, the U.S. occupation of Iraq after 23 years just came to an end as well. How do you see that shifting the power in the region, or the dynamic at least? Can we expect to see a different role from the Iraqis now?

#Seyed M. Marandi

It is a very good thing. It is a sign of Iraq's strength. The resistance in Iraq was adamant that the United States has to leave. And it is also very good for Iranian security. In Iraq, there were celebrations across the country for days because the United States was finally forced to withdraw. But that doesn't mean the United States doesn't have influence in Iraq. All Iraqi oil exports, the money goes to the United States, and they decide what to give to Iraq and when to give it. And so

they basically have a stranglehold over the Iraqi economy. And that's why they are able to, when after the parliamentary elections in Iraq, which Iran's friends won decisively, they wanted to choose a prime minister, and the United States threatened the country, so they had to choose a compromised prime minister.

That's how the United States is able to influence politics in Iraq, by threatening to strangle the country. So when Trump says he'll destroy Iran, he actually does that sort of thing with other countries. He strangles the Iraqi economy and says, "Okay, I'll hold you by the neck until you do what I will," you know, destroy the lives of people across the country until you do what I say. Now, it's not that easy. And that's why the Iraqis, for example, the Americans forced Iraq to shut down all flights to and from Iran, and then there were mass protests across Iraq, and the Americans were forced to back down. And now the airport in the holy city of Najaf is open to Iranian flights. Not in Baghdad, but Najaf is good enough. So Iraq is still complicated.

The United States has a lot of influence, and of course the Israelis and the Americans have a lot of influence with these Kurdish groups. So there are two forces in this region which are very close to the Americans. One is the Kurdish groups, as we saw in Syria, as we saw in Iraq, as we saw the groups that carry out attacks in Iran, the terrorist organizations in northern Iraq. And then there are the Salafi and the Wahhabi Takfiris that are always in the American camp, the ISIS groups, the Al-Qaeda groups, and their affiliates. So the United States still has these people with them, whether it's the Kurdish terrorist groups that are in northern Iraq. They have recently received new weapons for a potential assault on Iran from northern Iraq.

So that shows how deeply influenced the local Kurdish government in Erbil is by the United States and the Israeli regime. And that could, of course, bring an end to the Kurdish government in the north of Iraq. Because if there is an assault from Iraq on Iran, then ultimately the resistance in Iraq will take northern Iraq, and Iran will do it with them. So what the Americans are doing is not in the interest of Iraq or the Kurds in northern Iraq. But the Americans do all sorts of foolish things without thinking things through. So in any case, the United States does have influence in Iraq, but its military withdrawal strengthens Iran's hand, and it strengthens the hand of the resistance in Iraq.

#Glenn

Well, my key problem, I think, which the US is recognizing now, and you and I discussed in the past as well, is that how it measures success, or battlefield success, it doesn't translate into any political victory. That is, Trump often goes off explaining, you know, how much—or at least claiming how much—he has destroyed: the Navy, the Army, the Air Force, you know, the infrastructure and ruins, and, you know, all the people in the leadership he killed. So, you know, we won. But the problem is, of course, how does this translate into a political victory if the Iranians do not capitulate? And, well, there's an assumption now—or not assumption, but I guess becoming more recognized—that this

can't simply be won as an air war. But what would be the alternatives then? I mean, do you think the Americans could go for a ground invasion? Or would they, as you suggested before with the Kurds, use regional proxies? Or you don't think a land war is in the cards this time?

#Seyed M. Marandi

It's possible. But, you know, I've read somewhere that a former four-star general of the United States did a study, and he said that in order just to take the Strait of Hormuz, they'll need 150,000 troops. And it'll take months, and, you know, lots of dead U.S. soldiers, and, of course, lots of dead Iranian civilians at the hands of the U.S. forces. But as I was saying earlier, Iran can shut the trade through the Strait of Hormuz anyway, even if the United States used such large numbers of troops, which it doesn't have, and it had that capability, which it doesn't have.

Iran can destroy the oil and gas installations and the ships, so there will be no need for the Strait of Hormuz. But in any case, the United States just doesn't have that sort of firepower. So they may try something, take a couple of islands or take some territory, but it won't change anything. If they think they take a couple of islands and destroy a couple of installations there, that it will stop Iran, it won't. The entire coast is mountainous. In fact, in this respect, Iran and Yemen are pretty similar. The terrain is ideal for Iran across the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. And, of course, if the United States uses its proxies, which is also possible, it will not end well for those proxies, nor for the people who've allowed those proxies to get into position. In addition to that, Iran then could use its own ground troops.

There is talk of going into Kuwait or Bahrain. Neither of these are difficult for Iran, neither of these options. So if the United States moves on the ground, then Iran can also move on the ground. And this is Iran's home turf. And these proxies of the United States on the other side of the Persian Gulf, they're not capable of fighting. They're capable of facilitating war, but they can't fight against Iran or the resistance. So it won't end well. It'll be very messy, but the United States would definitely lose. It would be catastrophic. I mean, we're talking about catastrophic scenarios, Glenn. Yeah, I'm sure that most of your audience knows this and they're very politically aware, but just in case there are a few new people watching, this would bring catastrophe to the global economy.

That would bring an end to life as we know it today in this world. The world will change, and the economies will collapse. There will be a global economic disaster that would make the 1930s look somewhat mild. But it's possible because the Zionists are pushing, and Trump is incapable of, for whatever reason, of using an off-ramp. So he may go and escalate. But ultimately, Glenn, if there is a major escalation and then the oil and gas assets are destroyed, and then meanwhile you have the Iraqi resistance that's ready, and then you have Yemen that's going to have a field day under those circumstances, then is war even sustainable for the United States when their economy crashes at home? Can they continue fighting all the way here with all the costs? I don't think so.

#Glenn

Yeah, I think people often forget how disastrous this war can turn very quickly. But that's also a weakness in human nature and a danger of fighting long wars. That is, you normalize the insanity. You see the same with the war against Russia. That is, in the beginning, there was, well, we sure should be careful. I mean, we can trigger a nuclear war. Now we casually talk about nuclear war with Russia. Yeah, we could take Kaliningrad. Yeah, we should arm ourselves. We should prepare for war. I mean, this kind of stuff that would discredit any politician and make them sound like a lunatic, this is becoming everyday normal talk. And you see this with Iran.

I remember when Iran and Israel exchanged fire, you know, in the initial war of last year, and, you know, how people were glued to the screen. I mean, this is, you know, this can break the world. Well, the world is breaking, and, you know, it's become an everyday thing. Well, I guess the U.S. and Israel will attack Iran. Iran might retaliate against all the Gulf states. I mean, this is the new normal. It's quite frightening that people don't see the insanity. Just because it's been going on for a while now doesn't mean that it's any less insane. But again, one lesson from the Iran war now, though, is the unpredictability and also how it can very quickly spread. Again, the Americans didn't expect that Iran attacked this base. They didn't expect, apparently, according to Trump, that Iran would shut down the Strait of Hormuz.

They didn't predict that this would also lead to a war between the Saudis and Yemen. But again, the possible next step, as you said, would be that some Gulf states might begin to fall, that is, to have some economic problems, problems with political credibility. And I think the two states you pointed out, it's interesting because they look especially vulnerable. That is Bahrain, which is, well, for a variety of reasons, not a very stable state. It relies on Saudi Arabia to keep it in check, as we've seen in the past, and Kuwait, which could be overrun again. But if Iran would send ground troops to this, I mean, how would it get in? Would it go through Iraq to get into Kuwait or Bahrain? It would have to cross the Persian Gulf, right? Do you see such a scenario as possible or likely, or would it use its own allies?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, Kuwait would be very easy because they would be able to do it with the Iraqi resistance too. They can do it together. And Bahrain is just too easy. And as Saudi Arabia goes downhill, its ability to control events in Bahrain becomes much more problematic. And the United States, with its infinite problems, I don't think it will be able to do much. This is what the Iranians are talking about. This is what serious people in Iran are talking about. And so far they've managed the war very well.

From what I'm hearing, the Iranians are building so many missiles, and they're more advanced than they were before, that they are finding it difficult to find places for them. So even though they're expanding their missile bases, building new underground bases, and they're doing it at an

astonishing pace, their firepower is enormous right now. This is not going to end with, I mean, if the Americans carry out a few strikes against Iran or attack the country for two or three days, I think what Iran will do is they're going to use that as an opportunity to teach its enemies a lesson.

#Glenn

And it will go far beyond what we've seen before.

#Seyed M. Marandi

And Iran is prepared for everything. The Americans, they're waging full war against the people. They're targeting women and children by trying to block the flights, Glenn, to and from Iran. Although they fail, we have direct flights to China, to Russia, and some other countries, and Iraq, of course. The focus is on medicine, because Iranian flights, for the most part, they're not all that important for the economy, except for medicine, because a lot of medicine comes through flights. And so the Americans are targeting—because actually the tourists and the pilgrims that leave Iran, they spend money outside the country. We don't have all that many pilgrims coming to Iran or tourists coming to Iran under these circumstances.

So the real objective of the United States has been to target Iran's health sector, to create a crisis in medicine. That's the objective. So the Iranians know that the United States is waging war against the nation, the regime constantly says, "We're going to wipe out the Iranian people." Then the Secretary of State insults the nation and tries to—I mean, who knows where he's from and what his roots are and who he is. But anyway, this guy goes and tries to belittle the Iranian people. And then they speak about exterminating the Iranian people. The Iranians know that they have to fight. And so this creates an incentive to use that next battle as an opportunity to deal Trump and his henchmen a serious blow, far greater than what we've seen so far.

#Glenn

Just a last question, because while I'm sitting here in Beijing, last week I was in Moscow, and again, what's happening in Iran is being widely discussed in China and Russia as well. How do you see how they might—not participate, that might be the wrong word—but how they would react or support Iran if there's another round of this war? As you said, this round would probably have a new vicious escalation compared to the former rounds.

#Seyed M. Marandi

The relationship with Russia and China is very good. And both countries recognize that Trump and his entourage, that any success that they have on any front is a threat to the rest. So if the United States succeeds in West Asia, that's very bad news for everyone else. And it's not just China and Russia; it's across the world. And that's why Iran has so much support. When I was in Moscow with

you, everyone who I spoke to at the conference that we were at, at the Balkan, from wherever they were, they were saying to me that everyone supports Iran, whatever country, whatever continent they came from. Because everyone recognizes that Trump and the United States, with this political establishment and political order, is a threat to the entire global majority. And I would argue it's a threat to its own people. But, I mean, I have no doubt that it's a threat to its own people. So the Russians and the Chinese recognize that Iran's success is their success.

#Glenn

Yeah, no, it's... I mean, if you wanted an explosive geopolitical situation, it doesn't get worse than this. So, no, it's... I just... I find it hard to understand why they wouldn't have gone with the diplomatic solution. I mean, they had the memorandum of understanding. But, yeah, I guess, you know, I know you don't have a window into Trump's head, but just, well, a final last question. What... do you think the idea then would be: a knockout blow, a decapitation strike against Iran? Will it be to simply weaken it to the point it would have to capitulate? Again, the warfare would support economic sanctions. Would it be conquering Iranian territories? I mean, or just to do some strikes to show up at negotiations with more bargaining power? I mean, how do you read the American position here? Because it doesn't seem—I haven't seen a convincing story, really, in terms of how they could come out of this on top. So I am curious why they're going back to war.

#Seyed M. Marandi

I think it could be any of these things. If it comes before the midterms, and this is just my speculation, if there is an attack before the midterms, it could be that Trump wants to have a quick war and then declare some sort of victory. So maybe he'll try to target some senior officials. But he's already done that, and it didn't bring any change. It could be, like, to take out Iran's infrastructure, but then Iran will respond immediately and destroy infrastructure.

And if he assassinates people, Iran—the retaliation will be severe. I mean, if they think that by carrying out assassinations and then trying to walk away, that Iran will say, "Well, we can't do anything about it," that's not going to happen. Iranians are going to use this as an opportunity, whatever the intentions are. And I don't have a clear answer to your question because I don't think the Americans know what they're doing. I don't think Trump knows what he's doing, which is, you know, the Iranians know exactly what they're doing. They've prepared themselves for this war for over 30 years. For over 30 years.

And its regional alliances, its missile and drone capabilities, all these underground bases at home and abroad for its allies, these were all prepared for this war. Because Iran believed that ultimately the Israeli regime will force the United States to go to war with Iran. And, you know, back in the day when, as I said before on your show, when Flint and Hillary Leverett were writing that book, *Going to Tehran*, they were hammered because they were saying, "We need rapprochement with Iran." And in the book—it's an excellent book, I still believe people should read it, buy it, read it, especially

under these circumstances with all the propaganda—but they saw the war coming because it was inevitable.

And back then, even in Iran, there were lots of people who were saying, "No, it's not going to happen," especially in Iran—people who are Western-oriented. They believed that the leader, he was obsessed. Now they all see that he was the guy, he was the person who was right. He was the person who had shown wisdom throughout these decades. Even though whenever he was being attacked politically by his opponents in Iran, he never responded. He never, when they attacked him, when they used personal attacks, he never went personal. Whenever they insulted, he never insulted back. And whenever administrations tried to cut—and the Iranian military budget is lower than other countries in this region.

It has always been that way. Whenever they tried to further cut the budget, he would manage to continue to expand the defense capabilities with the limited budget that was given to the military. He kept this project on the table. He kept expanding it, preparing allies, preparing Iran. And now, universally, we saw his funeral. We saw how young students who hated him, they still contact me and say, "What can we do to make up for what we did before, or how we behaved before, what we said before?" So Iran had a plan. It was preparing itself for decades. And the United States doesn't even know what it's going to do tomorrow and why it's going to do it.

#Glenn

Yeah, I keep making a point that the real dangers of our time are, as it always is when you have a massive shift in distribution of power leading to a change in world order, that navigating from one to the other, it's very chaotic. And it doesn't seem like the U.S. is ready to adjust to the fact that its era of global primacy is over and the world has already become multipolar. I mean, the main target they wanted to go after was, you know, roll back Chinese development with all these economic sanctions. And it didn't work. The Chinese showed that they already have the ability to decouple from American supply chains. Then they have the idea, let's knock out the Russians from the ranks of great powers. We can use the Ukrainians.

And as General Keith Kellogg pointed out, then we can, you know, we'll knock out the Russians without our own troops, and then we can focus on China. And then, of course, now with Iran as well. By the way, China seems to be also... They keep referring to China as one of the targets as well. So they failed with China, they failed with the Russians, and failing with Iran. I keep waiting for the course correction that, you know, okay... If you love Iran or hate it, it doesn't matter. The difference is what you can do and what you can't do. And if we can't do this, let's do some course correction. And I'm not seeing it, though. I mean, yeah, maybe political maturity is absent. I'm not sure. Anyways, Professor Morandi, it's always a great pleasure to speak with you. And yeah, thank you for sharing your insights.

#Seyed M. Marandi

It's an honor, Glenn. Thank you very much for having me. And I hope you enjoy your stay in China and have a very safe journey home.