

# Seyed M. Marandi: "War for Survival" - Iran's Strategy as War Is Imminent

Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's Nuclear Negotiation Team. Prof. Marandi argues that an existential war is likely imminent, and it will set the entire region on fire. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X /Twitter: [https://x.com/Glenn\\_Diesen](https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen) Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: [buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng](https://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 again by Saeed Mohamed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Thank you for coming on the program. We see the situation keeps getting more and more—well, let's say tense—around Iran. The Strait of Hormuz was temporarily closed for military exercises or fire drills by Iran. This seems quite unprecedented, something many thought would be a last resort, which now instead, of course, serves as a little warning perhaps. At the same time, the United States continues to accumulate more assets, especially with the USS Gerald Ford, which just entered the Mediterranean Sea yesterday, I think. With so many assets, it's hard to see this being reversed, as it's very difficult for Trump to find an off-ramp. I was wondering how you're seeing the situation now. How severe is this?

## #Seyed M. Marandi

From the very beginning, it was clear that we were heading toward a major confrontation. Although we don't know if it's actually going to be military aggression or not—because it's Trump—it was clear that the Israeli regime, the Zionist lobby, and the Epstein class that rules over the West would do, or want to do, anything possible to help the Zionist regime. We saw how the U.S. ambassador to Israel basically said that if the regime takes the whole region, it's fine. And that, I think, is something we Iranians have been saying all along, for many, many years, while others have been trying to hide it, both in the region and beyond.

And, of course, the reason there's so much antagonism toward Iran, toward Hezbollah, toward Ansarullah, toward the resistance in Iraq, and of course toward the Palestinian people, is that they're the only ones standing in the way of the Greater Israel project. All the other countries—whether it's Erdogan, the Emirates, the Egyptian government, Qatar, Jordan, and others—are part of the American empire. And therefore, they won't make any move to prevent the Israeli regime from making progress until, possibly, it's far too late.

But Iran is not going to back down. And I don't see a scenario where the Americans win any potential war. The Iranians have said they will shut down the Strait of Hormuz. It wouldn't be a last-resort measure. In the twelve-day war, there was no need for Iran to shut down oil and gas trade in the region, because the war was largely between Iran and the Israeli regime. The Americans carried out a token strike—they didn't, obviously, obliterate the nuclear program—but it wasn't enough to justify destroying the global economy. Iran does not want the global economy to suffer.

Iran has friends across the world. And ordinary people in all countries want to live in peace, make a living, raise kids, have families, and build decent communities. So Iran— even though the regimes in the Persian Gulf region all host U.S. bases and were helping the Israeli regime during the twelve-day war by allowing the Americans to use those bases—saw that it could easily manage the war and defeat the Israeli regime. Ultimately, the regime had to seek a ceasefire to end the war, so Iran didn't even contemplate moving in that direction.

However, if the United States carries out an attack on Iran, that would be a completely different thing. It would be an existential threat—a war for survival. For the Americans, it would be a war of choice, done for the Israeli regime, obviously. But in this scenario, Iran would do everything to protect itself. And since all these countries—these tiny Arab family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf region—are hosting U.S. bases, and as you and I speak, those bases are being used to plan against Iran, then Iran has every right to shut down the oil and gas trade. And that will not be a measure of last resort; it will happen at the very beginning.

## **#Glenn**

Well, this is a good point. If this is an existential threat—a war of survival, as you say—it makes sense that Iran would play its cards very differently. And all the Gulf states obviously seem like it's unavoidable that they'll be pulled in. But how else do you see the United States coming in? Because the whole element of surprise will be difficult now that they're building up in these numbers. The rhetoric has clearly indicated that this is the intention. I mean, when assessing threats, you're looking at intentions and capabilities—they're all pointing toward an attack, which, you know, could happen even over the next few days.

So, do you see any other possible elements of surprise they could introduce? I mean, would they use foreign fighters coming in from abroad to sabotage? Do they have the same networks within Iran that can disrupt? Can they attack through Azerbaijan? How are you seeing it? Yeah, the element of surprise—because I think this will be very critical for the United States to be successful. And again, with all the power, all the military hardware that's been gathering in the region, if it has the element of surprise as well, that could be important. I wouldn't necessarily say decisive.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Iran's intelligence is quite effective. It knows more or less what goes on in surrounding countries. And inside the country, we saw the United States, the Israeli regime, British intelligence, and possibly the French carry out an armed rebellion—a semi-coup. That's something they admitted, although Western media pretends this was all about peaceful protesters. It was obviously not the case. We've seen endless footage of extreme violence carried out by rioters, terrorists, and trained agitators. We also saw clear admissions by the U.S. Secretary of State, by the Treasury, by Mossad in their Persian-language statement, and by Pompeo—about both Israeli involvement and, later on, he admitted U.S. involvement. And of course, Israeli Channel 14, close to Netanyahu, said that foreign agencies brought in weapons to kill hundreds of Iranian police and security officials.

So it's clear as day: while they're gloating about what they did, Western media pretends none of this happened and just inflates the numbers—even though the West, and the Israeli regime in particular, are responsible for the bloodshed. They inflate the numbers and try to claim that Iranians are killing peaceful protesters, to justify the death, destruction, and massacre they want, to help build the case for war. Whether it's The Guardian or Fox News, it doesn't make a difference. But after that, we saw that after January 9th and 10th, when this armed insurrection took place and immediately collapsed, people came out twice to the streets in defense of the state and the Constitution—on January 12th and again on February 11th, in even bigger numbers.

I think it's clear that the United States, and the Israeli regime as well, have no capability to do anything substantial inside the country. And the neighboring countries are far too vulnerable. Aliyev in Azerbaijan is very vulnerable—he's a dictator, not capable of harming Iran. In fact, the other way around is quite possible. If he pushes too hard in his alliance with the Israeli regime, I think it's quite possible he could be overthrown with the help of Iran. So he's probably very nervous right now, and that's why he's constantly traveling to the United States and taking part in the Peace Forum and all that sort of nonsense with Trump. Actually, I think it's clear that it's really the other way around.

Iran's allies across the region are being prepared. In Iraq, the resistance knows that an attack on Iran—an existential attack on Iran—is also an existential attack on Iraq, for obvious reasons. In Yemen, the same is true. And these are countries with enormous populations. U.S. allies in the region are all family dictatorships, and some of them are quite insignificant and small in their capabilities—like Qatar, which has a passport-holding population of about 350,000 to 400,000. The Emirates' passport-holding population is around 1.4 million, while the number of foreigners, mostly adult males, in the Emirates is about 10 million or so, I suppose.

So they are very vulnerable and weak. Yet Iraq, with a population of 45 to 47 million, for example, can't be compared to Bahrain or Kuwait or anything like that. So if it's going to be a regional war, it's not to the benefit of the United States. It's something that Trump cannot manage. And Iran is also preparing its firepower too. The United States is bringing in everything it has, but Iran is also preparing everything it has too. And the fact that oil and gas go through the Persian Gulf, or through

West Asia and the Caucasus, gives Iran a huge advantage. In addition to all that, I think there's the fact that none of these family dictatorships are very stable. None of them have real popular support. In some of these countries, the overwhelming majority are foreigners.

So a war could actually change the map of the region, and you may see some of these pro-Trump regimes fall. War will be devastating, no doubt. Sitting here in Tehran, I recognize—and people here recognize—what it could mean. But it is not Iran that wants to carry out aggression; it is Trump and Netanyahu, and of course the collective West, which supports all acts of aggression, including the genocide in Gaza. What Iran can and will do is hit as hard as possible, along with its allies. They will bring down the global economy. And I think, ultimately, after great devastation across the region, Trump will fail—he will fall. The Israeli regime will fall, and the regime in Washington will be blamed for the catastrophe that befalls the entire world.

Because when oil and gas prices go through the roof during such uncertain times—and I know you've discussed this on your show—the global economy, and the U.S. economy in particular, are facing major, major challenges. This would be catastrophic under any circumstances, a war of this nature. But under these circumstances, it would be even more devastating. And I think that people in the United States—the MAGA crowd, which now of course has no problem with endless wars, no problem with shooting white women in the face or shooting white nurses in the back who take care of veterans, the MAGA crowd who don't care about Epstein and all his crimes—when their pockets are badly hit, when they lose their jobs, when factories shut down, when businesses go bankrupt, I think they will be the first to seek out those who are pushing for war.

## **#Glenn**

It's quite extraordinary to see, in such a short time—just one year—how the MAGA crowd has changed. I mean, I was quite sympathetic to Trump's arguments during the campaign about ending the forever wars and reindustrializing, all of those things. But the monstrosity that has evolved out of this is, well, the exact opposite. So it's very strange to see the support continuing, even though the policies have been turned on their head. Israeli media, though—I mean, say what you will about the Israelis—at least their media tends to be a lot more honest than the Western media, I feel, especially in Hebrew. They're quite open about their participation in instigating the insurrection, coordinating it from abroad, supplying the weapons, and also the objectives.

They... while the Americans and Europeans talk about a nuclear deal, they're quite honest: that's not what we want. We want, you know, for Iran to be weakened—ideally destroyed. So you do see a very different... yeah, let's call it honest. But I'm curious—what is the objective here, though, for the Americans attacking Iran? Because they won't commit ground troops, and again, that would be a disaster of its own. They talk about regime change, but there's no replacement government. Some talk about destroying the nuclear program, but that's allegedly already been obliterated. Yeah, I just don't see a story here—how, even in the best case, if they get their objectives, what exactly is achieved? They can deliver, as you said, a lot of death and destruction to Iran.

Of course, Iran can deal a heavy blow against the United States and its allies as well. But I don't see, at the end of this, security being enhanced for the United States. They're not going to walk away from this stronger. So what is the objective here—what should we expect when the strikes come in? Because it seems predictable they'll go after political leadership, military leadership. But how will success be defined? I'm watching our own journalists reporting on Iran, which means they're sitting in Syria, celebrating the former "success," and telling us what they're hearing from Iran. I mean, it's a bit—yeah, it's parody—but I was wondering how you see this, the objectives.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Yes, and of course, Trump also said he was the one who brought Jolani or al-Julani to power. I mean, everything now is—everyone has been exposed. You know, the regional allies of the United States—Turkey, Jordan, Qatar, and others—they've all been exposed. Those who don't want to open their eyes will keep them closed until the end of their days. But everything is clear: who stands with whom, who is actually supporting the Palestinian people, and who is actually opposing genocide—who's actively opposing genocide.

It's those entities that are being punished by the collective West, and those that are always antagonized by Western allies in the region—whether it's Qatar with its immense gas money, or others with their immense oil money, or Erdogan, who gets gas money from Qatar to carry out both his propaganda operations and his military operations, and his support for ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other such terror groups. I think you touched on a key point: the United States has not brought in ground troops. And if it wants to carry out a war with Iran, it would have to bring in maybe a million and a half soldiers, which, I think, on its own would wreck the U.S. economy. It's probably not even doable.

But without that, the United States loses the war, because the Iranians are on the ground—and Iran's allies are on the ground in Iraq, in Yemen, and elsewhere, and of course in these dictatorships in the region. As I said, there are millions of people who are effectively slaves or indentured servants, workers who have very few, if any, rights. And if there's chaos—if these countries' economies go downhill very fast—I can imagine a situation where the ruling families will be overthrown. In fact, I don't think they'll stay. They're probably already leaving—many of the people around them, their families, some of the princes—they're probably already in their palaces in Europe and North America, waiting to see what happens. So without a huge ground presence, how is the United States even going to defeat Iran?

They can kill Iranians, but they can't bring about regime change. Whoever they murder can be replaced. We have a constitution—everything is clear as day. The country will be managed until the war comes to an end, and people will defiantly resist. But once it starts, the United States can't stop it without losing face. So when the price of oil and gas goes through the roof, when the United States starts taking casualties, when its loyal proxies in the region begin to wobble and collapse—how is Trump going to, or how is he going to shift away from conflict and present himself as a

victor? He won't be able to do so. And it's out of time—all this, when the situation is already terribly bad for the United States anyway. We saw what happened with the Supreme Court yesterday.

We've seen the conflict inside the United States over ICE and the killings carried out by ICE. We've seen how the gap between rich and poor in the United States is growing, how the Epstein class, most importantly, has been exposed but also shown to be above the law—and it will remain above the law as things stand. All of this is going to put Trump in a very, very difficult situation. In fact, I'd say it's more than difficult—an impossible position. So this isn't like 2003, when Western media could still mobilize support for a war and the U.S. government could get away with it.

The American people are not as gullible as they were back then. They've seen the genocide in Gaza. They've seen a bit of the Epstein files. But when the economy collapses, I think Trump will be in an impossible position. And as I said, it's the resistance that has troops on the ground, not the United States. Yemen today is much stronger than it was a year ago. Even when the United States carried out its seven-week war against Yemen and failed, that Yemen is different from this Yemen. In Iraq, the resistance is preparing itself. We've already seen them reveal underground bases full of drones and other capabilities.

So it's not as if the United States is the only side preparing for war. The other side is preparing too, but they also have large numbers of ground forces and the ability to destroy everything in the Persian Gulf, on both sides of it, and in the Caucasus. And there's nothing the United States can do about that—absolutely nothing. If anyone looks at the map, they'll see the Persian Gulf isn't very wide. Iran doesn't even need the long-range missiles it used against the Israeli regime to force it to beg for a ceasefire. It has hundreds of thousands of drones that could strike anything in the Persian Gulf.

Oil rigs, ports, petrochemical facilities, refineries, tankers, of course, and other cargo ships, gas wells, oil wells—everything can be destroyed. And it would take many years to restore them. The longer the war lasts—if after three days it'll be far worse than after two days, because it'll be more irreversible. After four, five, six days, it'll just get worse and worse. And even when the war comes to an end, it will take much more time to restore these capabilities. And no doubt the Iranians will be demanding compensation from these regimes anyway for hosting those U.S. bases. So I don't see how the United States could win.

It's not possible. They can slaughter people, and they will. We saw how the Israelis bombed apartment blocks, and Western media pretended these were precision strikes because they have no sense of morality, no sense of humanity. They are tools of the Epstein class. So Trump will bomb and slaughter. We saw last night that Israelis murdered a large number of Lebanese children and an entire family as they were breaking their fasts. No one in the West cares. In Gaza, they're slaughtering people every day. No one cares—I mean, in the ruling class, in the media, the Epstein

class, and those who work for them across the Western world. So they won't care when Trump bombs civilian infrastructure and murders ordinary Iranians. But that won't bring the United States victory. This will all lead to defeat.

And it will just be a matter of time before Trump is forced to declare some fake victory and retreat. But everyone will know that the failure is his. I'm not certain—I'm not even sure there will be a war. And I'm not for war, but this is what I believe will happen. There will be destruction, a lot of destruction in Iran, because the United States, the Israeli regime, and Western regimes in general are all ruthless and inhumane. We've seen that from the Epstein documents—the nature of this crowd. But I think the damage done to the global economy will be far greater. When factories shut down, when businesses shut down, the buildings may still be there, but they'll be empty. And then you'll see, I think, people across the world on the move.

In Latin America, if they're upset about immigration, the movement of people will be far greater than ever before in Africa and Asia. Even though Europe and North America will be in crisis mode themselves, those are still the traditional destinations. So there are so many bad things that can happen to the world, but Iran is going to defend itself. It's not Iran that has brought about this situation. It's not Iran that's engaging in genocide in Gaza. It's not Iran that's pushing for war. In fact, the reason why Iran is negotiating is partly to see if the United States is sane enough to have an acceptable deal—but even more importantly, what Iran is doing is telling the world, “It's not us, it's them.” So when the global economy goes down, everyone knows who to blame.

## **#Glenn**

I guess the source of my pessimism, though, is that with all this military hardware moving in and all this chest-beating, it's almost impossible to step down to, as I said at the beginning, finding an off-ramp. Of course, as Trump suggests, all of this is to push Iran into a deal. But, you know, as you said, Iran is negotiating. The whole question is, what kind of deal can actually be made here? At this point, some critics would say the negotiations appear to be a fraud—they're so far apart. Even what's on the table to be negotiated isn't agreed on yet. Do you see the same problem with the negotiations there? Are they too far apart, or do you think a deal could be made if Trump wants a victory to pull this whole thing back? I mean, take the JCPOA, for example.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, the thing is that the United States isn't far from its public comments. It's not talking about the JCPOA; it's talking about Iran's regional allies—that's off the table, Iran won't discuss them. It's talking about Iran's military capabilities—that's off the table, Iran won't discuss them. It's talking about, at least in public, Iran giving up its nuclear program and its right to enrichment—all of that is off the table. But a sign of Iran's strength and position was what we saw during that show in Turkey, when the United States was calling for the negotiations to be held there, and Turkey, of course, being a NATO entity.

And then we saw, from Al Jazeera, a Turkish-Egyptian-Qatari proposal that was quite disgusting—where Iran would stop supporting its regional allies, including Hamas—which shows that none of these three entities are supportive of the Palestinian resistance. In reality, they're in the U.S. camp, and the proposal also called for reducing Iran's military defense capabilities and its nuclear program. But Iran said no. Iran said it would only negotiate with the Americans, not in some group setting with multiple countries, and that it would only negotiate in Oman. Ultimately, the Americans were forced to accept that. The indirect talks that were held in Oman and later in Europe, still with Omani mediation, showed how firm Iran is in its position. But then again, we also have to remember that this is highly symbolic for Iran too.

Iran is trying to remind everyone, by restarting the indirect talks in Oman, that this already happened once. Before the 12-day war, Iran and the United States had indirect talks. After the first round, as you recall, the United States accepted Iran's right to enrichment. Wyckoff went on Fox News and admitted as much. Then in round two, they moved the goalposts. In rounds three and four, the U.S. kept moving the goalposts—at the insistence of the Zionist lobby, obviously. Ultimately, it turned out the United States was conspiring with the Israeli regime all along, being deceitful, and it carried out an attack. So the negotiations now taking place are of the same nature. The Iranians are not going to be fooled by the Americans, and they're telling the world that, basically, they've done this before—and we all remember what happened back then.

Again, I can't say what will happen. Iran, though, is preparing for war—and every day it's preparing further. Iran's capabilities today are significantly greater than they were during the 12-day war. The 12-day war was very helpful for Iran to discover its weaknesses and improve its strengths. Since then, Iran has been working very hard on high-tech capabilities, air defenses, drone defenses, and, of course, improving its offensive capabilities. But again, I'd like to stress that the difference between the 12-day war and this war is on two fronts. One is that this will be a regional war—this will be a game-changer. The second is that, overwhelmingly, Iran's capabilities are directed toward the United States, not toward Israel.

The long-range missiles directed toward occupied Palestine and the Mediterranean are necessary for targets that are far away. But Iran has far larger numbers of medium-range and short-range missiles and drones that can strike anywhere across the Persian Gulf region and the Indian Ocean. Those missiles are far more numerous and much easier to move around—you don't need those big launchers. The same is true for the drones. And those underground bases spread across the southern and central parts of Iran have been built since the United States invaded Iraq and Afghanistan.

When Iran was declared part of the "axis of evil," and Bush—and later Obama—started saying that all options were on the table, Iran's firepower directed toward the United States, its proxies, and its

assets in the region became far greater than what it used against the Israeli regime. And of course, Iran can still use those long-range missiles, which are now much more numerous, more precise, and carry larger payloads.

## **#Glenn**

It's a good point to make about this changing the goalposts, because the negotiation tactic from Washington now is quite strange—especially given that Trump has sold himself as the ultimate dealmaker. You'll see some similarities with the negotiations with the Russians. They met in Anchorage, made a basic deal, recognized that the Russians made some painful concessions, and then, once that was in place, they started to move the goalposts. "Well, how about a little bit more?" And after a while, the foundation of that original deal is all but gone.

It reminds me a bit—well, less of a political negotiator and more of a real estate deal, you know? Where the real estate agent calls the buyer or the seller and says, "Ah, you just have to move a little bit more, a little bit in this direction." And, you know, essentially the earlier talk was all meaningless. Well, given that they are real estate negotiators, it could be a suitable analogy. But I wanted to ask about Britain allegedly blocking America's use of Diego Garcia for an attack on Iran. Again, this is quite an important piece of the puzzle for the Americans if they can strike Iran from the south.

And I was wondering what you make of this. Is this simply the divisions brewing between the UK and the US over other issues? Is it actually about what the British say—that they're concerned about international law? Is it an effort by the British to stay out of this? Yes, my reaction was the same when I read that official reasoning. Or is it, alternatively, an attempt at deception against Iran—like, "Don't worry about this direction, we're not going to hit you from Diego Garcia"? How are you seeing this? Because it is unusual for the US not to have the unconditional support of the British.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Yes, it would be unusual, and that's why I think the Iranians are basically going to view this as deception. It may be something else, but that's not what the Iranians are going to consider in their planning. There are lots of very strange things happening. If you watch the Iranian foreign minister's interview on an American morning program, he said that at the negotiating table the Americans were not demanding zero enrichment. So this could be one of two things: either the United States is putting on a show, trying to put pressure on Iran but still wants a deal—so at the table it's behaving very differently from what's happening across the region and what it's saying in the media and in public—or this could be deception again, and the talks with the United States were, or are, fake.

And just like they were before the 12-day war, it was clear that the talks were a form of deception. So I think for the Iranians, the safest bet is to treat everything as deception. The British have always been good poodles—the British government, of course—good poodles to the United States. There's no reason to think they'll behave differently this time around. And if they do, it's not something the

Iranians are going to plan for. They're going to plan for the worst. Just like at the negotiating table, if the United States is behaving reasonably, Iran will continue to negotiate. But that's not going to change Iran's plans. It's assuming there will be war, that Diego Garcia will be used, that the United States will carry out—or try to carry out—a sudden attack. It may happen tonight.

It may happen tomorrow night. It may happen next week. It may happen in two weeks. But what's clear is that the window of opportunity for the United States isn't all that long, because the expenses incurred by the Trump regime are huge, and it will be very difficult for them to sustain this for long. For Iran, this is its own home turf, so the costs are much more limited, and Iran can wait the U.S. out. The Iranians are waiting for war, but they'll continue to negotiate, because last time around, even though Western media collectively supported the Israeli aggression—and, you know, I think after Gaza, Western media has been fully exposed—anything they say about Iran, or about Lebanon, or about the Palestinians, it's all nonsense.

I think people have reached that stage where they recognize that—except maybe for 60- or 70-year-old Americans, or Europeans. But I think back then it was quite clear, it was evident across the Global South, and inside Iran too. The fact that Iran was at the negotiating table while the United States chose to attack helped Iran a lot. It helped increase Iran's support around the world and strengthened the resolve of ordinary Iranians at home. So even though some people are saying, "Why are you negotiating? This is just a lie, this is just deception"—quite possibly. But Iran is not going to be fooled. Iran is negotiating because it wants the world to see that it's not Iran that's going to carry out aggression. If there is war and Iran is not negotiating—of course, Iran is still carrying out indirect negotiations.

If there is war, then Western media will say, "Well, if the Iranians had negotiated, this wouldn't have happened." Because Western media—these mainstream journalists—have no sense of dignity, honor, or honesty. We see it in the numbers they write about: "peaceful protesters," tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands killed. They're basically just trying to prepare the ground for war. That's their job. Again, whether it's The Guardian, The Independent, MSNBC, Fox News, Breitbart, or Sky News—they're all the same. They're all the same. One is more subtle, more sophisticated; one is more bombastic. But they're all the same. So they'll go out and say, "Well, this could have been avoided if only Iran had talked." So Iran is not going to give them that opportunity. Iran is going to show the world, and ordinary Iranians, that we tried. If it works, fine. If it doesn't, it hurts the Americans.

## **#Glenn**

I wish I could disagree about the media, but I find it troubling the way this is reported. Because when they're now building the case for war in the media, they're essentially repeating the same thing: you know, tens of thousands of civilians were slaughtered by the regime, we have to do something. It's the usual "humanitarian intervention" argument being pushed. But the media has a role here, because only today the foreign minister of Iran tweeted that Iran had already released a

list of all the victims during the insurrection—3,117 in total—which included, of course, all the officers and government officials who had been murdered. So if you're a journalist and your job is to inform the public, to look for what is true and of public interest, then what you should do is go through that list.

And then, if there are names among these tens of thousands that aren't on this list, okay—bring them forward. Then you can expose if this isn't truthful. But if you just ignore what's happening on the other side because you fear it could undermine the narrative for selling a war, to justify the war that's coming, you're not a journalist at all—you're a war propagandist. And again, the fact that no one is responding to this, that they're not investigating it, that it's just dismissed—"Well, it's Iran, everything they say is propaganda, there's no point in taking it seriously"—that's very troubling. It's not great for journalistic practice, let's put it that way. Just the last question, though.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Just one point I'd like to add here—and that is, they do the exact opposite. The independent journalists who came to Iran for the February 11th celebrations, marking the 47th anniversary of the victory of the revolution, saw massive demonstrations in support of the Constitution. Four million people came out in Tehran alone, and there were tens of millions across the country. They came to see that after the deadly riots, or the semi-coup attempt—the armed insurrection on January 8th and 9th—there were mass demonstrations across Iran against the rioters, with up to three million people in Tehran. And yet Musk and the West were saying this was AI. They showed helicopter footage of the crowd in Tehran, which was massive.

And they were trying to pretend that this was AI. So on February 11th, we saw independent journalists coming to Tehran. They went and saw the protests, and the people in Tehran came out in even larger numbers—probably because they saw how Elon Musk and Western media were trying to downplay the real turnout. The rally in Tehran, and everywhere else, was bigger. But those independent journalists—Western journalists who went back—are now being attacked and smeared because they went to Iran and exposed that, in fact, people are not with these terrorists, with the Pahlavi group, the MEK terror group, the separatists, and all those people funded by Western intelligence agencies. And people do not believe those fake claims of thousands, tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands.

And yes, if they had any integrity, they would say, "Okay, let's bring in the names, let's compare them, and see what other names we have." But they won't do that, because they don't have such names—and that's not the objective. Again, no one should be fooled. There is no difference between the BBC, The Guardian, Time, The Times, or Breitbart and The New York Times; they're all one and the same. They're owned by the Epstein class, and they exist for propaganda purposes. These are the people who've been whitewashing the ongoing genocide in Gaza—the slaughter of Palestinians and Lebanese. Again, yesterday, Israelis carried out horrific massacres across Lebanon, killing children. But that's not of interest to the Western media. So they have no credibility.

And Iran recognizes that the best way to deal with them is to focus on the global majority—and ordinary people in the West are increasingly seeing the reality. The Western media obviously doesn't have the influence it had a couple of decades ago; it has deteriorated and declined very rapidly. Gaza was a turning point. So Iran has a lot of support across the world, and many people don't believe the propaganda. I think that as U.S. and Western propaganda capabilities decline—along with their military and economic power—it's going to get worse for them and more difficult. And if they go to war with Iran, I think we'll see a very rapid collapse of the Western, or U.S., empire—much more rapid than we were expecting.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, no, I have quite a few problems over here myself for interviewing people like you. I'm accused of assisting regime propaganda for Iran. So it's—no, yeah, it's not—well, you can smell the desperation there when someone loses narrative control. And, yeah, what happens to free speech under those conditions? But the last question I had for you was, you mentioned before that Iran is just now waiting for the war to begin, which, well, it doesn't seem unavoidable, but it does seem like it's coming now. At the same time, I'm also watching all these Chinese satellite pictures showing the concentration of American military hardware there. And, you know, when you mentioned that Iran's waiting, are there any discussions or considerations about preemptive strikes?

Again, I just want to make it clear, I'm not advocating anything. I'm just very curious about the strategic thinking in Iran. If this is, as you said, an existential threat—a war for survival—there's this unprecedented amount of military hardware being lined up all around Iran. The capabilities are there, the intentions are clear, and there's a strategic benefit in striking first. Is this entering the strategic discourse in Iran? You could say it's better to be attacked first, so Iran doesn't get accused of launching an unprovoked attack on the U.S. But on the other hand, who strikes first can be quite critical. I'm just curious if this is a discussion at all in Iran at the moment.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

This is a key point, actually. Iran, based on its religion—especially in Shia Islam—will not initiate war. Just like Iran never produced chemical weapons when the West was giving Saddam Hussein chemical weapons to use extensively against Iranians. According to the religious views of the Iranian leadership, those weapons are not moral, so they never produced them. The same was true with nuclear weapons. Iran could have had nuclear weapons many, many years ago. It has had that capability for a very long time, but it chose not to have them. Of course, the Iranians have also said that if the fate of the nation is at stake, then they would change their nuclear posture. But in any case, this is all based on their religious belief. What we are seeing now, though, is a situation where the Iranians are saying they will not wait to be hit first.

As soon as we're sure—confident—that an attack is happening, we will strike. And that, of course, creates enormous danger too, because the United States could do something stupid, create a misunderstanding, and start a war through its own stupidity. Because, again, it's not clear that the United States actually wants a war yet. We're assuming they do, but we don't know, because the Zionists want the war. We're assuming that will happen, but we don't really know—it could go either way. So the United States may carry out some sort of foolish provocation or send a large number of planes into the air, and then the Iranians might interpret that as preparation for an attack, and then they'll strike. So Iran is not going to wait until the United States carries out its first wave and then respond.

So Iran is not going to initiate war. It never has. It's always been—I mean, aggression has always been carried out against Iran. We saw that when the West encouraged Saddam to invade and then assisted him with all sorts of weapons and funding, especially from these regimes in the Persian Gulf. They too were part of it. And of course, the Germans were the ones who gave the chemical weapons, which I survived, but many didn't. Then there was the 12-day war, the sanctions regime—which is a brutal regime. I mean, it's quite stunning, Glenn, it's quite stunning. As you and I are speaking, they are starving Cuba. But the Western media is not talking about it. They are starving kids in Cuba.

Women and kids, and imposing a siege. And even this—Trump alluded to it when he was lashing out at the Supreme Court. He alluded to what he's doing in countries like Cuba; I think he was referring to Cuba in particular. Quite a few admissions were made in the last few hours about Jolani, about strangling countries, about all sorts of things. But the point is that, as we speak, Western media is focused on dehumanizing Iran and Iranians, trying to portray them as utterly evil to prepare the ground for war, while their government is strangling the people of Cuba—ten million people—and they won't even talk about it.

So this is where we are right now. This is the world we live in. It's a world where the Epstein class has exposed itself and is now operating out in the open. And Trump is the most important representative of that class. So really, in the world today, it's the axis of resistance against the Epstein class. And I have no doubt that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Axis of Resistance—whose "sin" is opposing genocide, whose "sin" is that they are the only ones, the only states, the only entities actively opposing genocide—are saying, "Don't kill Palestinian kids; they're not Amalek." That's their sin. But I have no doubt they will persevere.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, now, for a class that has this collective identity and legitimizes all action based on humanitarianism, it's quite shocking that one can't even talk about Cuba—that it doesn't even appear in the media. But yeah, there we are. So, well, thank you for taking the time. And yes, please stay safe. It looks like there could be some very dangerous days ahead.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

We do what we have to do, and I'll do what I have to do like everyone else. I'll keep being with you and other colleagues as long as I can find an internet connection. I'm not going to be intimidated.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Come what may.