

# Seyed M. Marandi: Threat of Seizing Kharg Island & the Use of Nuclear Weapons

Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's Nuclear Negotiation Team. Prof. Marandi argues that it will be extremely difficult for the US to seize Kharg Island, and Iran would then destroy all energy facilities in the region. 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](http://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're joined again by Saeed Mohamed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team.

## #Glenn

It does appear that this will be a long war, and we're also seeing a rush up the escalation ladder. From the American side, there are now growing talks about seizing Iran's Kharg Island, which reportedly handles somewhere between 80 and 90 percent of Iran's oil shipments. If the Americans were to go through with this, it would essentially be the nuclear option in terms of trying to shut down the Iranian economy. That then begs the question: what do you think would be the likely Iranian response if the U.S. went down this path? Because I'm guessing that if there were an easy response, the world would have already either attacked it or attempted to seize it.

## #Seyed M. Marandi

Well, first of all, thank you very much—sorry, thank you for inviting me. I think it's quite clear that it would be a major problem just accessing the island, because the United States would have to use or fly over the territory of the Arab family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf. And that would mean Iran would have to retaliate. So if Iranian territory is occupied, that would take the war to a major escalation. These regimes would then have to pay a very heavy price, far greater than what they're paying now. For the United States, it would be very difficult, because the islands are well protected, and Iranian assets on the shore would be there to support the islanders, the people on the island, and the defense capabilities there.

And it's far from the U.S. Navy and closer to the Iranian shore. But most importantly, I think, is the futility of such an aggression. This move would not change the status of the Persian Gulf region or the situation in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz, and nothing can leave or enter without its permission. The strait isn't formally closed, but ships that want to pass through have to get permission. So an aggressive act by the United States against an island, a part of the Islamic Republic of Iran, would mean fierce combat. It would also mean that the countries used to enable such an aggression would be severely punished.

And we have to remember that Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar are largely deserts. All they have is oil or gas. They don't even have water—they rely on desalination plants. They're completely vulnerable to Iranian retaliation. And again, as I said, it's not going to change much. Let's say the Americans carry out such an operation and succeed in taking the island, hypothetically—it's not going to improve the global energy market. It will make it worse, because Iran's retaliation would include the destruction of assets belonging to those countries cooperating in the invasion of Iranian territory. That would mean long-term damage, because we have two issues here: one is that the Strait of Hormuz is more or less closed.

So every day, 20 million barrels of oil aren't reaching global markets—along with gas, fertilizer, and everything else connected to that. This is happening daily. But if there's a war in the Persian Gulf, those installations will be destroyed. That means even if they reopen the Strait of Hormuz later, after some sort of agreement, there will be no oil, no gas to transport, and no tankers to do the transporting. It would be a ridiculous move—logistically very difficult, if not almost impossible. And Iranian defenses, of course, would destroy a lot of U.S. military capabilities. It would be futile—actually, more than futile. It would be very detrimental because of the long-term effects it would have on global markets.

## **#Glenn**

What should we make, though, of the reports that Iran is mining the Strait of Hormuz? Because that would also prevent Iranian ships, I would assume, at least to some extent, as well as friendly nations' ships, from transiting through the strait. Do you know anything about this operation?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Iran hasn't mined the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf, or the Indian Ocean. That's all nonsense. Most of the Iranian Navy that would be used in wartime is kept in underground tunnels. They're speedboats—very powerful weapons for asymmetrical warfare. Iran has even released some footage of these tunnels. They're similar to the underground missile and drone bases. So you have speedboats both inside and outside the Persian Gulf, in very large numbers, equipped with surface

and sea-to-sea missiles that can destroy anything in the region. All of these are underground and well protected. The Americans can't touch them. Iran's capability to mine the Persian Gulf is also based underground.

So they're all safe. But Iran has not moved in that direction. Iran does not want escalation. I'm sure your audience knows this, but from the very beginning, the Iranians were negotiating. Even if the negotiations had failed, the United States had no right to attack Iran and kill Iranians. But Iran was negotiating, and the United States attacked Iran, even though the Omani foreign minister said that progress had been made. Basically, the claims that Trump made—he said that U.S. negotiators, meaning his son-in-law and his best friend, quoted the Iranians at the negotiating table as saying they wanted to build nuclear weapons—are ridiculous.

For two reasons. One is that, fortunately, the negotiations were indirect, so Iran has witnesses. And one witness is the Omani foreign minister. When he went to the United States and did interviews, he said nothing of the sort. So obviously, either Trump is lying or his real estate buddies are lying. The second reason is that Iran has always said, "We're not developing nuclear weapons, our program is peaceful, and we have a fatwa." The IAEA has always been consistent, at least in saying there's no evidence that Iran has ever, at any point, tried to make a nuclear weapon. And even the CIA admits—U.S. intelligence admits—that at least after 2003, Iran's nuclear program has always been peaceful.

So why in the world would the Iranian negotiators go and tell their enemy—the one that wants to bomb and kill them, that threatens them—that they want to make nuclear weapons at the negotiating table? It's obviously a foolish lie, and only the most naive supporters of the MAGA cult would believe otherwise. I think it's clear as day that the Iranians did not want escalation, and they still don't. As we speak, for example, the gas facilities in Doha and in Qatar are all prepared to restart if there is peace. The oil can flow again if there is peace.

And most of the tankers—the ones that did not violate Iran's directions—can move and take oil and gas out of the Persian Gulf region once there is peace. So there's not a chance in the world that, under these circumstances, Iran will collapse. However, if the United States escalates—if they start trying to destroy key infrastructure, gas installations, oil installations, electricity—then all bets are off, and Iran will retaliate. Iran can hurt them far more than they can hurt Iran, because U.S. assets and the assets of its proxies on the other side of the Persian Gulf are enormous, and they will be destroyed. So this is a kind of mutual assured destruction.

A type of MAD—if they go after us, we'll go after them. But we don't want to do this, though we are prepared to. Another thing, Glenn, that I wanted to point out, even though it's not directly linked to your question, is something I think is very important. We all remember the U.S. and Israeli assessments, and what we've been told in the media—that Iran has a certain number of missiles.

Well, we're seeing that Iran has been firing missiles 24 hours a day at multiple locations. Both Israeli regime assets and U.S. regime assets are being targeted. What this shows is that Mossad, the CIA, and MI6 intelligence are very poor—that they actually know much less about Iran than they pretend.

So they're constantly telling the world how they know everything, how they're the best at gathering information, and that these are the most competent intelligence-gathering organizations in the world. But Iran's military offensive capability is the most important thing it has in this conflict, and they're clueless about it. Iran keeps firing. They keep saying the launchers are running out, the missiles are running out, the drones are running out—they've been saying that for almost two weeks now. But Iran continues to strike, and Iran says it's willing and prepared to take this war beyond the midterm elections.

## **#Glenn**

That's quite interesting, and that's one of Trump's weak points as well—not just running out of weapons, or the economic and energy problems, but also, of course, the politics at home. Regarding the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. Energy Secretary said that the U.S. Navy, after receiving many requests, is still not ready to escort tankers through the Strait. We were also told they're currently studying options for how to get tankers through. What's the main challenge? Is it even feasible at this point? My first thought was that Trump made a big deal about sinking ships from the Iranian Navy, but it doesn't seem like Iran needs a large navy to close the Strait of Hormuz. So what do you see as the main challenges? As they're now sitting—the U.S. Energy Secretary and others—around the table studying options for how to get these tankers through, what problems are they running into?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

It will be impossible for them to do that. First of all, there's the Iranian Navy—the bulk of the Navy, the important part that would be used in time of war. It's all, uh, the speedboats are all kept in huge tunnels underground. Then there are the mines that can be used, the surface-to-sea missiles, the short-range missiles, and also the medium-range missiles and drones, and then the long-range missiles, drones, and cruise missiles. Iran can target the Strait of Hormuz from anywhere in Iran. How is the United States going to open it?

And then, when there's open war, Iran is going to retaliate and punish those regimes in the region that host U.S. bases—with a higher degree of intensity. So, let's say hypothetically you do open the Strait of Hormuz, which is virtually impossible. It's just like the issue of Khark Island. So, hypothetically, you open it—but if there's no more oil, no more petrochemicals, no more gas, and no more ships, then what's the purpose? You lose hundreds, if not thousands, of men. You lose significant parts of your navy. And then you drive up the price of energy permanently. In other words, there's no solution. Any agreement that ultimately comes will not save the global economy then.

If the United States is forced to accept—and it will be forced to accept—Iran's terms for peace, then the oil can flow again. But if ISIS intensifies the war, what would be the long-term effects? It would be catastrophic for the world. It's already becoming catastrophic. People don't yet understand what's coming. Hopefully, countries across the world—the international community, public opinion in the West—will act. The British government is helping the U.S. use heavy bombers to slaughter Iranians. People in Europe have to force their governments to change, and the United States has to do the same. People across the world have to put pressure on the United States. That's how the war will end. Otherwise, things will be as I said they would be.

## **#Glenn**

I see that Trump already gave something of a victory speech, saying the war has already been won. On the other hand, he can't really deliver a convincing victory and pull back with his head held high unless the Strait of Hormuz is opened. Because if it's closed, any declaration of victory as the U.S. pulls back doesn't really make much sense. Trump, for this reason, also warned of much more destruction—I think he said twenty times more—if the strait is not opened. However, he also said that the U.S. has run out of targets to strike. So it kind of begs the question: what do you think, or what do you expect, from the American side now? Because it seems there are no good military targets left to hit, but they still have to escalate—to go up the ladder—in order to try to compel Iran to do as America demands. What do you think is the action plan on the American side?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, they're already doing it. They're already striking non-military targets. They did it from the first hour, when they slaughtered those girls and those children in the elementary school. And only after a week did the New York Times, under pressure, begin to expose the truth. Not because the New York Times has any morality or any shame. No, we all knew what had happened on day one. The world knew by day three. But, you know, when people in the United States are seeing it on social media, someone has to do something. And, of course, an opponent of Trump would obviously begin that. So they've been slaughtering people very regularly, and it's premeditated. They know exactly what they're doing. The targets they struck in Tehran today, yesterday, the day before, last night—these were civilian targets.

These are ordinary families. They bomb homes. They slaughter kids and women. It's intentional. But what Trump could do is take it further—he could start trying to destroy key Iranian infrastructure like oil, gas, electricity, and so on. But that would mean Iran would do the same. That would mean there'd be no more electricity on the other side of the Persian Gulf, and that would definitely lead to the collapse of those regimes. Iran would not collapse. We've seen how united the people are. Anyone who's been looking at Iranian social media accounts inside Iran knows that people are on the streets every day and every night in huge numbers, under fire. As missiles strike close by, they don't budge.

There's ample evidence of this. Anyone can go and see it on Iranian accounts, Press TV, or wherever. I don't do that myself because it's just too difficult to constantly download footage of people in different neighborhoods in Tehran or other cities. And then, as the bombs explode nearby, they keep chanting—women, men—they don't budge. So Iran is going to stay put, and it will rebuild itself. But those proxies on the other side of the Persian Gulf, they'll be swept away. Those regimes have no legitimacy in the eyes of the people under their thumb. And it would end the global economy. The U.S. economy would collapse. So if they destroy Iran's infrastructure... The infrastructure in the United States may not be bombed, but when the energy crisis hits, it doesn't matter whether it's bombed or not.

Most of it will become useless because the economy will collapse. So hopefully the United States won't do that. It would be stupid to. Well, they're utterly immoral. But hopefully the Trump regime will have enough sense not to do that. But the very fact that he says this, Glenn, tells you a lot—it shows a lot. He's not only talking about Iran; he said this about Cuba, if you recall. When the Supreme Court voted against his tariffs, he got very angry, and then at the press conference he said something like, "I can destroy countries, but I can't put a one-dollar tariff." No one in the Western media called him out and said, "What do you mean you can destroy countries?" I think at that moment he was talking about Cuba.

And then here he says he'll destroy Iran so that it can never recover. And there's no outrage—whether it's the Guardian, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, or any of them—because the media is owned and controlled by the oligarchs, by the Epstein class. Their journalists have no sense of morality, so they can talk about destroying nation after nation, and there's no shock in the media. I think, ever since Gaza, they've revealed themselves. But every day that goes by, it becomes clearer, and even the naive begin to wake up—except for those who, you know, want to stay that way, like cult members of MAGA or whatever. Everyone else is seeing the truth.

## **#Glenn**

Well, I saw a speech by the Israeli foreign minister, Gideon Saar, who was—well, it looked as if... It's been interpreted in different ways, but it looked like he was climbing down from the very high objectives being put forward. So it wasn't going to be an endless war, and they would make a decision when to end it, mutually with the United States. How do you assess the Israeli and American position now—in terms of what they want out of this war, what they can achieve, and when they want to put an end to it?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

You know, Glenn, again—you know this better than I do, and so does your audience—but ever since the genocide in Gaza began, the slaughter in Lebanon, the escalation in the West Bank, and the rise of Al-Qaeda in Syria, with it being openly a regime affiliated with the Trump administration, people are waking up to the reality that Zionism is evil, that Zionism is a problem. Americans have turned

against Zionism. In the United States, the youth have turned against it, and others are turning against it too.

So as the price of oil goes up, as the price of energy goes up, and life becomes more difficult, who are people going to blame for their personal financial problems that are getting worse and worse by the day, in the weeks and months ahead? Who are they going to blame? They're going to blame Trump. They're going to blame Netanyahu. They're going to blame the Zionist lobby. They're going to blame the Israel-firsters. They're going to blame the neocons. So this is a catastrophic, catastrophic miscalculation. All the people who have been sent out over the Sabbath have been warned. And we've discussed this before. I've always said that the biggest defeat the Israeli regime has suffered is the destruction of its image. It has not succeeded on the battlefield, by the way—remember how they always say Hezbollah has been defeated.

Look at what's happening now. Look at how the resistance in Lebanon is hammering the Israeli regime. And we have to remember that the Lebanese resistance has been making these sacrifices for the people of Gaza, to stop the genocide. Their fight has been for another people. Even though we have our own project and everyone... The point of the resistance in Lebanon is extraordinary. But in any case, I always said back then, and I continue to believe, that the greatest defeat of the Israeli regime has been the destruction of its image and credibility, and the fact that it's increasingly being seen across the world as illegitimate. So if you add public misery—and the blame for that public misery being attributed to Zionism—how does that help Israelis? What impact does that have on the influence of the Zionist lobby in the United States?

So ultimately, if I were on the Israeli side—God forbid—or with Trump—God forbid—I'd be saying, "End this war yesterday. End it." This is catastrophic. Not only are you losing the war, but every day that Iran strikes back, people around the world are seeing Iran as heroic. People are increasingly interested in Iran, and they see that the empire is much weaker than they had imagined. They thought the United States was this invincible power; now they see that the United States and this collective coalition against Iran are failing. But, you know, that aside, as the economic crisis hits harder, things are going to get a lot worse for the Israeli regime and its backers in the West. And I think that the destruction—or, how should I phrase it—the decline of the influence of the Zionist lobby will be far more rapid as a result of this war. And the longer this war lasts, the more rapid that decline and fall will be.

## **#Glenn**

Well, I was wondering, what do you see as the risks of Iran being too successful? I was watching some comments by Professor John Mearsheimer, and he was making the point that if the Israelis believe they're facing a massive strategic defeat, it's quite possible they might contemplate using a nuclear weapon to pressure or force Iran into capitulation. Do you think this is part of Iran's

calculation—that this could be a possible direction? I mean, this is one of the challenges with nuclear powers: if you defeat a nuclear state too severely, that's the risk you're running. Do you see that challenge as well?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Let me break this down into a couple of parts. First of all, if the Israeli regime uses a nuclear weapon, the very fact that this is even contemplated shows how immoral, brutal, genocidal, and evil the regime is. The fact that anyone could consider using such a weapon tells us everything about the regime itself. Second, if the regime actually used a nuclear weapon against anyone, I think that would be the end of the regime. And third, if they did use a nuclear weapon, that would basically be telling everyone, "Build your own nuclear weapons." That's what they'd be telling the Iranians to do.

And the Israeli regime is very small. But ultimately, Glenn, this war for Iran is a defensive war—a fight for survival. We are not going to accept any threat. We're not going to submit to any threat or accept the destruction of our country because someone is threatening us. That is why we're fighting today. Trump has already said that he will destroy Iran and that it'll never recover. He can do that? So what—do we capitulate? No, because we are an independent nation. We have dignity. We have honor. Why do we fight? Because we are on the right side of history. Our sin for the last 47 years has been that we've been saying, "Stop killing Palestinians."

Stop the ethnic cleansing. As human beings, as Muslims, as Shias, we have to support the oppressed. We are willing to face martyrdom for that. We cherish life more than anyone else. That's why we support the Palestinians. That's why we support victims across the world—because their lives are valuable to us. But we are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to retain our dignity and honor. That is our obligation. So we are not going to be intimidated by the United States or the Israeli regime. But the use of nuclear weapons will change the planet, and it will, one way or another, lead to the swift destruction of the Israeli regime.

## **#Glenn**

Last question. You mentioned before that there aren't many pathways to peace, but of course, peace is the ultimate goal.

## **#Glenn**

Where do you see your overall assessment of this war? Where is it heading? And under what conditions do you think it's possible to put an end to it? Because, as I said, it looks like this is going to be a long war. And again, the U.S. feels it has to come out looking victorious. Iran seemingly can't afford to allow the United States to come back every six months and bomb it until it finally gets it right. So it seems very difficult for both sides to bring it to an end. What do you see as the possible conditions for peace?

## #Seyed M. Marandi

Well, again, I'm just speaking in general terms, and I don't have any details about what the Iranian position is. But first of all, it will go beyond just Iran. There will have to be a change in the way the Palestinians in Gaza are being treated. Lebanon's sovereignty will have to be respected. The so-called ceasefires will have to be respected in full. The Israeli regime will have to leave Lebanon. They'll have to abide by the agreements in Gaza completely. No more murders and assassinations, no more killing kids on a daily basis in Gaza and Lebanon. So it's not just about Iran. The threat of war against Iran will have to be addressed. No piece of paper that the U.S. president signs is of any value to us, because we've already negotiated twice, and he's already betrayed those negotiations.

So the facts on the ground will have to change, and part of that will be in the Persian Gulf region. U.S. bases will no longer be these centers of threat against Iran—that won't be tolerated anymore. And so the regimes in the Persian Gulf region, their policies will have to change. They will also have to pay compensation for everything that has happened. That will happen without a doubt. It doesn't matter who pays that compensation—someone will pay. These regimes are already being severely harmed, but they will pay. They will pay that compensation. So this is not just about Iran's long-term security. We will not accept a situation where the American, the Trump regime, goes and rearms and attacks again.

And by the way, this was discussed many times before, and I didn't speak about it earlier in the previous months because I didn't think it was appropriate. But after the 12-day war, many were asking, why did Iran accept a ceasefire? It could have just continued. The reason Iran accepted the ceasefire, even though it was winning the war—and it didn't accept it on day one; it kept striking for three or four days, I don't know exactly how long—was that during the 12-day war, even though Iran gradually gained the upper hand and was winning, it knew that if the war continued, the United States would have an incentive to enter the war and bring in all those weapons systems they had.

And Iran recognized that while they were doing well, relatively speaking, they still had many shortcomings. So they decided to end the hostilities and prepare themselves for the big war. For the last eight or nine months, Iranians have been working around the clock. And now, even though the combined firepower from the enemy is much greater than it was during the 12-day war, the number of launchers that have been destroyed is much lower. The number of martyrs in the military is also much lower. This time around, Iran was able to move its key assets out of the bases, so most of these strikes hit empty buildings.

Iran had to prepare itself for something much bigger than this Israeli regime. The Israeli regime is not a threat to Iran, and whatever strength it has is given to it by the West, because they support this racism and ethno-supremacism. But the United States is a real threat. So the 12-day war was an excellent opportunity for Iran to figure out what it had to do. They've been preparing themselves,

and now we see the success. Ultimately, there will have to be an end to this, but it will happen in a way that ensures Iran feels, in the years to come, its people are safe—and that its allies across the region also gain security.

Those regimes that host U.S. bases—they're guilty. They have to compensate. I mean, Glenn, let's say—I gave this example last night to George Galloway—let's say France gives bases to the Russians, and the Russians attack the UK. Or let's say the Canadians give bases to the Chinese, and they attack the United States. And then Canada and France say, "We're neutral." Is anyone in the UK or the United States going to accept that argument? Right now, B-2 bombers are being prepared in the UK every day to carry out heavy strikes on Iran, and they target ordinary people. Those underground missile bases, drone bases, and factories are untouchable.

And because the fighter jets are not very effective—since they have to, because of Iran's drone and missile capabilities and its anti-air defenses, but mostly its drone and missile capabilities—they have to be stationed very far from Iran. When they fly, they have to refuel, come back, reach Iran, and then go back again to refuel. Very expensive, not very effective. So now they're increasingly using these long-range bombers, which are also very expensive. But the ammunition they drop is quite a lot, and it devastates people. The British are part of this war. They are murdering children. The British regime is a child-killing regime.

So, that was just a footnote. It wasn't linked to the broader argument. But the point is, all those regimes involved in this war are guilty. They have Iranian blood on their hands. The East Persian Gulf regimes are our neighbors. They betrayed us once in the 1980s—they all supported Saddam Hussein, gave him hundreds of billions of dollars back then, which was worth a lot more than it is now, to kill Iranians. After the war, and after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, Iranians forgave them and tried to build better ties. This time, it's not going to end like that. They will have to compensate.

## **#Glenn**

So, just one last question on this: do you see any possibilities for Iran to retaliate against countries like Britain that participate in this war? Or is that, I guess, a bridge too far?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, I think that in the future, their presence in our region is going to be diminished.

## **#Glenn**

They won't allow it anymore.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Europe and the United States—their presence in our region will be diminished. There's no doubt about that. But one thing I should add here, and I think it's important for your audience to know, is that all this talk about drones in the United States and the Iranians—these are all lies. The same people who carried out 9/11—I used to be one of those who didn't believe it, you know, I thought it was just Al-Qaeda. The same people who used Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, in New York, in Syria, and in Libya—the same people may try to carry out an attack in the United States. That would definitely be a false flag operation.

They're losing the war—the Zionists—and so they need something. The only thing I can think of is that they might carry out, God forbid, a major attack against civilians in the United States to change the mood among ordinary Americans, to convince them that the war against Iran is justified and has to continue. So if anything happens in the West, and particularly in the United States, there's no doubt in my mind that it will have been carried out by the Zionist regime, or someone affiliated with them, or some naive fool—or a group of naive fools—manipulated by them.

## **#Glenn**

Just a quick correction to what you said before. You said Iran had negotiated twice—actually, it was three times. It also signed the JCPOA. I can understand the declining trust in diplomacy, but I know it's not easy over there in Tehran at the moment, so thank you very much for taking the time.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Thank you very much, Glenn. It's always a great pleasure being on your show, and thank you for all the heroic work that you do. God be with you.