

# Trump Begs No More Oil Strikes, Larijani Dead | Prof. Marandi

Update March 19 with Professor Seyed M. Marandi from Tehran: As the war drags on and the US /Israelis keep killing Iranian leaders and civilians, Iran's military strategy is not changing and actually producing first results. Donald Trump just put out a tweet that his coalition will not attack Iranian oil fields anymore and that they want Iran to do the same. The symmetrical strikes are driving home the point that the US cannot bomb anymore with impunity. Real hurt will come to the US and its economy if Iran retaliates as it just did toward the Gulf monarchies. This is a big development, although, of course, it could just be another ruse or deception. In any case, the Iranians are adamant about keeping to their strategy, and, according to S. Marandi, they have not even touched their most powerful weapons yet. Support us on substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Shop and Donations: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> The book recommendation by Prof. Marandi: "Going to Tehran: Why America Must Accept the Islamic Republic of Iran" <https://www.amazon.com/Going-Tehran-America-Islamic-Republic/dp/1250043530>

## #Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. This is an update for today, March 19th. It's 4 p.m. in Japan and 10:30 a.m. in Tehran. I've got with me Professor Marandi from the University of Tehran. Professor Marandi, welcome back.

## #Marandi

Thank you very much for inviting me. I'm always glad to see you.

## #Pascal

I'm very glad we can still get a connection. I mean, the war with Iran—the U.S. illegal attack on Iran—is now in its third week, soon to be four. We have about two more days to go for that. We've seen quite dramatic pictures coming out of the entire region. And of course, yesterday, Iran confirmed the death of Mr. Ali Larijani. Could you maybe say a few words about that? My condolences on his death, and please give me your interpretation of what happened.

## #Marandi

Yes, it's yet another crime committed by the Israeli regime and the Trump regime—attacking Iranian civilians, attacking Iranian leaders, attacking Iranian infrastructure. And of course, the West doesn't, Western media don't put it that way. They don't remind viewers that this was a war of aggression

that was unprovoked. We just saw a high-ranking U.S. intelligence official step down and resign—Trump-appointed—because he was basically saying what we were saying: that this is unprovoked, that the Iranians were not a threat, and that this was done because the Israeli regime and the Zionists wanted it to happen. But having said that, Dr. Larijani is actually someone I knew.

I cooperated with him for a while. During the Rouhani administration, he invited me to his office once for lunch and a discussion—me and another academic. At the end, I told him about my concerns regarding Iran–China relations, because the Rouhani administration wasn't, I think, performing adequately in strengthening them. He asked me to accompany the delegation, which is something I usually don't do. I'm not involved in government; I never have been. During the nuclear talks, I was only a media advisor for Dr. Zarif and Dr. Bagheri. But because I liked him and thought he was a wise man, I accompanied him.

After we returned, he had met the Chinese president. It was a very good meeting. And after that, he asked me to take care of the Iran–China file because he had become the person in charge of it as Speaker of Parliament. So I met with him regularly—every week or every couple of weeks—for half an hour, an hour. He was very wise, very smart, very well educated, very moderate in the proper sense. Everyone pretends they're moderate in this madhouse of a world we live in, but he truly was. He wouldn't let emotions get involved when he was thinking about making a decision.

He had all sorts of positive qualities. It was an honor working with him, and it was a great loss. But his martyrdom—and the martyrdom of all those children, and of course the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei, and all those innocent people who were either just sitting at home and were bombed, or defending the country and were murdered by this so-called Epstein coalition—only strengthen Iran. And this is something that the United States, the regime in Washington, the Israeli regime, and their regional proxies encouraged, because we're increasingly discovering that the Saudis, from the very beginning, were pushing for this war.

But they don't comprehend that what this is doing is only making people more determined to see the war through. Every night—not every other night, every night—we have millions of people on the streets across the country, in Tehran, demanding revenge. The clips are online, but the Western media doesn't show them. Sometimes I post bits and pieces, but if anyone goes to Fars News Agency, their Telegram channel, they can see the gatherings every night in all the different cities and neighborhoods of Tehran. People gather in solidarity with the armed forces, with the leader, and to condemn the United States.

And basically, it's the people who are preserving the Islamic Republic of Iran, because it's being attacked by this huge coalition. The Europeans, though they don't want to send troops to the region, have been cooperating with the United States in every other way possible. And of course, there are the regional proxies—Erdogan, who continues to transport oil to his business partner Netanyahu,

and who allows NATO AWACS jets to gather information from Iran, and allows U.S. bases to collect information through their radar installations, shared with the Emirates, the Saudis, Jordan, Syria, and all those tiny Arab family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf.

They're all working together against Iran. The reason they failed—and for almost three weeks now Iran has been hitting back with enormous success—is because the people are on the streets. These martyrdoms, these unjust murders, have only made Iranians more determined. But this doesn't fit with the narrative we see in the West. They fail to acknowledge it; they fail to even show the crowds. You know, on Friday I went to a gathering. It was International Quds Day, the last Friday of the month of Ramadan, when people go out to support the Palestinians.

## **#Pascal**

And I participated.

## **#Marandi**

People were fasting, as most do during Ramadan. They went there—huge crowds in Tehran and across the country. They fired missiles at the crowd, and one woman was killed. Nothing in the Western media. So this evil coalition fires missiles at demonstrators, but people didn't budge. I posted some of this footage. The bombs would strike—and it wasn't just Tehran. They did the same in Hamadan. There are many instances of people gathering and then airstrikes taking place. People don't budge; they don't run away. Sixteen-year-old girls, eighteen-year-old women, twenty-two-year-old women, twenty-five-year-old boys, eighteen-year-old boys—they stand their ground.

I've never seen anything like it in my life, or footage of anything like it. But that's what they've done to this country. And that's the spirit of the people—deeply influenced by their cultural and religious beliefs, by the grandson of the Prophet who was martyred in Karbala well over a thousand years ago, and by his sister's role in that episode. This religious and cultural background, alongside the huge injustice against the Iranian people and the murders, and of course everything happening across the region, has made Iranians much stronger than I've ever seen in my lifetime.

Even during the first years of the revolution—which I thought was the high point of it—what I see now is more... more determination than I saw even back then. The front lines are now the cities where people are standing by. I think that murdering and killing—whether it's these little girls at their elementary school and then trying to hide it or blame Iran and blame the victim for their crimes, or murdering a highly respected person like Dr. Larijani—don't serve the interests of the United States or the Israeli regime.

## **#Pascal**

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this could happen again at any time. So please consider subscribing not only here but also to my mailing list on Substack—that's [pascallottaz.substack.com](https://pascallottaz.substack.com). The link will be in the description below. And now, back to the video. So, you're saying that currently the resistance of Iran and Iranians is becoming not just resistance but resilience, right? I mean, you're interpreting this as the will to fight back actually getting stronger. And what we're seeing now is that Iran has been able to strike back the entire time. And actually, we see—and you just pointed this out to me before we started talking—an encouraging development out of Washington, because Donald Trump, of all people, posted on Truth Social about wanting to restrain Iran.

Now, whether this is true or not—sorry, wanting to restrain Israel. Israel, that's the point. Whether that's true or not, we of course don't know. It could be another one of those just blatant lies. But let me read part of this post on Truth Social, and then maybe I can get your reaction. He says that Israel, out of anger for what has taken place in the Middle East, has violently lashed out at a major facility known as the South Pars Gas Field in Iran. A relatively small section of the whole has been hit. The United States knew nothing about this particular attack, and the country of Qatar was in no way, shape, or form involved with it, nor did it have any idea that it was going to happen.

Unfortunately, Iran did not notice—or any of the pertinent facts—regarding the South Pars attack, and unjustifiably and unfairly attacked a portion of Qatar's LNG gas facility. "No more attacks will be made by Israel." In all caps, he wrote that, referring to this extremely important and valuable South Pars field, unless Iran unwisely decides to attack a very innocent—in this case, Qatar—and then he goes on a bit more, starting to threaten Iran again. But, I mean, this is the first time that Donald Trump signals something like a will to de-escalate, and actually kind of—not really apologizes, but almost gets to apologize to Iran for striking something very, very critical. Of course, knowing that Iran will always, always symmetrically fire back. So he apparently doesn't want the gas war and oil war to continue. But what is your interpretation of this?

## **#Marandi**

Yes, I think this is a very significant post, even though, as you correctly pointed out, we don't know what's really going to happen—because it's Trump. He may say one thing today and something else tomorrow. But obviously, the significance of Iran's retaliation worries him, and so he said that Iran didn't know what happened. In a sense, he's sort of justifying Iran's attack on Qatar, even though Qatar is more than complicit. I mean, they host U.S. bases—Qatar, in fact, hosts CENTCOM. So if there's one country that's more complicit than others, if that's possible in the Persian Gulf region, that would be Qatar, of course. The Saudis host the U.S. jets and refuelers—planes that refuel those jets—and they allow the Americans to fly over their airspace to bomb Iran.

They're all complicit. But the point is, he says Iran didn't know, and he's also lying that the U.S. had no knowledge of the attack. That's not possible. Their airstrikes are all coordinated—the two are

working together. You can't wage a war against a country without coordination among those countries working together against a third party. The fact that he says it will not happen again—I think that's huge. It shows that Iran's retaliation had a massive effect and has put fear into the heart of Trump and the U.S. political establishment. Because, you know, right now, as things stand, Iran has shut the Strait of Hormuz for the most part.

It allows a few ships now and then to go, depending on circumstances, but exports have been largely blocked. Why is Iran doing that? Because it wants to put pressure on the U.S., obviously—to end the war, to end the aggression. But Iran hasn't systematically destroyed the tankers or the oil and gas infrastructure. Why? Because Iran didn't start this war. Iran doesn't want to destroy the global economy. Iran wants peace, to do business and trade, and for the Persian Gulf region to remain a source of energy so the world can thrive. If it wanted anything other than that, it would have destroyed all those oil and gas facilities. It would have destroyed the tankers.

As we saw last night, the Iranians can easily do that. They did significant damage just to tell the Americans to stop. And if Iran did destroy all these assets, then the global economic crisis would be permanent—it would last for years. Because even if the Strait of Hormuz were reopened after some sort of end to hostilities, there would be no oil or gas, or no ships to carry that oil or gas. So Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz to put pressure, but it wanted everything to remain safe. It wanted all the key, vital infrastructure of the region to stay intact. After they attacked Iran and bombed the South Pars gas facility, Iran struck back.

And Trump's response, at least for the time being—again, I go back to what you said earlier—that we don't know what's going to happen in the future, because Trump is completely unreliable. What he says doesn't count for much. But obviously, they're very scared that this could spiral out of control, and that it would permanently damage—or go much further than damage—it would bring about a global economic depression. And that would be the end of Trump's presidency, and the end of many things, most probably. So this is a good sign. This is a good sign. But again, it's not conclusive. We can't say that, okay, the assets in the Persian Gulf region are going to remain untouched. We don't know.

## **#Pascal**

So on the one hand, this could be another ruse, or it could really be the beginning of a signal about where the red lines are—like saying, "We don't bomb your gas and oil infrastructure, you don't bomb ours." And we kind of set limits on where we stop targeting each other, which would, of course, be the first step in the right direction. Do we already have official demands from Iran to wind this whole thing down? I mean, last time we talked, you said Iran wants the U.S. capability to strike Iran gone from the region. Do we now have official statements from your government about what the Gulf states must do, what Israel must do, what the U.S. must do in order to end this? I mean, do we have any published official information?

## **#Marandi**

Not in any specific detail, but one thing has been made clearer, and they've stressed this. First of all, as we've discussed before, the Iranians are saying that U.S. promises are worthless. The U.S. president's signature means nothing to Iran, because he'll do something else the next day—just as we discussed regarding that Truth Social post. So the Iranians are saying the facts on the ground have to change. And that would mean the U.S. loses the ability to strike Iran or wage war on Iran the way it's doing now. That would, of course, mean its bases in the region would no longer have that capability—it would no longer exist in the region as it does today through those bases. So I would imagine that means the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf will no longer be allowed by Iran to give the U.S. a foothold to attack Iran.

Second would be, of course, that a situation has to be created where the Iranians feel they will never be attacked again. Because this is the second war launched against Iran in less than a year. After they were defeated the first time, they simply regrouped, added more forces, and attacked again. So Iran wants to make sure that this never happens again. The second point is compensation, and Iran is very serious about that. I would imagine that will have to come from these Arab family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf—Qatar, the Saudis, the Emirates. They've been part of this war. They encouraged it in some instances, they facilitated it, they killed many Iranians. And actually, it goes back to before this war.

During the 12-day war, their bases were used by the Americans to help the Israelis and for the Americans to launch their own attacks. And even before that, when General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Mohandis were murdered in Baghdad a few years back, those drones flew from Doha, from Qatar. So their complicity goes back a long way. Iran will be demanding compensation. Iran has also said that the Strait of Hormuz—its status—will be different after the war. It will no longer be just a route to pass through. I would expect that Iran will probably demand concessions from these oil- and gas-rich regimes to allow their goods to pass through the Strait. And finally, the Iranians are also saying that their regional allies have to be part of any agreement. In other words, the Israeli regime can't just bomb Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, or Yemen—or the Americans do that—at will. They will have to be part of this, just as Iranian citizens have to be part of this.

## **#Pascal**

So the fate of Lebanon and the other allies around the region would be, I mean, part and parcel of any kind of negotiation and agreement. Can you imagine that Iran would call on China or Russia, or both, to help with these peace negotiations—or any other third party, like, say, the OSCE or the United Nations—to somehow facilitate a structured discussion on how to wind this down? What do you think the way forward will be? Because at some point, some form of written agreement needs to be reached, I suppose.

## **#Marandi**

You know, that's a very good point you raise—very interesting point. I don't know, but I would imagine... I mean, the UN is a useless body, and so is anything that comes from Europe or the West. But that could be something where, for example, the Russians and the Chinese, or others who are sort of neutral parties here, act as guarantors. Because in Lebanon, after the ceasefire we had over a year ago, the Western countries were guarantors, but every day the Israelis were murdering Lebanese, assassinating people, bombing homes and apartment blocks—and those guarantors did nothing.

True. The same is true in Gaza—they murder people every day. Every day, as we speak, people are being killed, many in Lebanon and, of course, in Gaza as well. But I think it would have to go even further than that. The facts on the ground would have to change. I think that's the most important thing: that the Americans would no longer have the ability to mobilize forces in this region or to use Saudi Arabia as a base to refuel jets, or, you know...

## **#Marandi**

Countries in the Persian Gulf are being used to carry out attacks, because they're actually allowing missiles to be fired from their territory. And the interesting thing is, the Americans have said this themselves. The U.S. military has posted images of, I think, HIMARS missiles that were fired from these territories. So all that will have to change in the future. Iran will not accept that. The future of the Persian Gulf will be very different from before the war. And these regimes in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain—they only have themselves to blame. They are very much a part of this war, and that's the price they'll be paying.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, but the question to me is what can actually work, and how to get there as quickly as possible. One thing we've learned—and we know—is that security guarantees don't work. They're useless. But one thing that does work is independent third-party monitoring. So the question is whether the Chinese, or maybe others—the Chinese would probably be quite good to enlist to start monitoring operations, because they're actually quite close to the Gulf region states as well, right? And they want good relations with them, and they want a good relationship with Iran too. So they could function as a third-party monitor, or together with others, or the UN—something that's not under the control of the U.S. or the West, but acts as a monitoring body to report back to all sides what they're seeing. That way, Iran or the other side could say, "Okay, if you don't comply, then we start shooting again," right? In order to create, you know, the right incentive structure. So, can you imagine something like that being acceptable to Iran?

## **#Marandi**

Again, since I'm not privy to any of this, I'm very cautious about saying too much, because some people—no matter how much I stress that I'm not involved in decision-making—still think that I am. So I don't want to mislead them. I think that could be part of the solution, because at the end of the day, no one trusts the Americans, and obviously not the Israelis. But there would have to be infrastructure changes—the potential for aggression would have to be removed. And I think that would mean the United States would no longer have the kind of assets in the Persian Gulf region that it has had in the past. Iran will no longer tolerate that.

And Iran, since it controls the Strait of Hormuz, can force that on these regional countries to make sure the infrastructure no longer exists. So it will probably be difficult. Of course, as we speak, the aggression continues. They bomb Tehran. They bomb kids. They bomb families. They bomb apartment blocks. They've damaged or destroyed twenty hospitals so far in the country. I just read a post by someone—I think it was someone from Yemen, though I'm not sure. But Iran has been waging war for three weeks and striking targets in multiple countries. Yet we haven't heard of a single school being hit by the Iranians, while we're seeing school after school, hospital after hospital in Iran being struck by the Trump regime or the Netanyahu regime.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, no, it's absolutely clear that Iran actually restrains itself and keeps extreme discipline. I just finished a talk with a Swiss colleague, Colonel Jacques Beau, who pointed that out. The discipline of the Iranians is probably one of the most admirable things, because even civilian targets are not taken into consideration, right? Iran fights this not with the gloves on, but actually trying to comply with international humanitarian law, whereas the other side—well, I mean—is ignoring it, not only ignoring it but actively working against it. But this, again, works in favor of Iran.

## **#Marandi**

Yeah, sorry for interrupting you. But also, in addition to that, even the strikes on the oil and gas facilities we saw last night in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates—Iran stated beforehand that it would do so. But the attacks on the Iranian gas installations were quite sudden. And people worked there. You know what these installations are—the fires are enormous. I don't know if anyone died or... But the Iranians had the decency to say, "Okay, we're going to retaliate to prevent this from happening again to us, but we want everyone to leave these areas as quickly as possible." And they waited for many hours before they struck. So the difference between Iran and the United States, the Israeli regime, and their proxies is enormous, which of course completely contradicts the 47-year-old anti-Iranian narrative we've all been hearing from Western media and the media owned by these oil- and gas-rich dictatorships.

Iran does not strike civilian targets. When it hits these facilities, it announces it beforehand. Yet the other side has zero red lines. They murder leaders, they murder children. The United States, when it

killed those kids—those 168 kids and a couple dozen teachers and school staff—tried to blame Iran. They tried to say the Iranians did it to themselves, and the Western media went along with it until they just couldn't hide it anymore. It was so widespread online that after a week the New York Times had to cover it—mostly because they wanted to hit back at Trump, but also because everyone had already figured out the story. It took them a full week, even though within hours everyone knew exactly what had happened.

## **#Pascal**

No, it's quite sick. It's really quite sick. But this brings me to another point. We have these rumors about, you know, Mr. Netanyahu not showing up in public anymore. Do you have any information on whether he was targeted, whether he might be injured or dead? Is there any information in Iran about this?

## **#Marandi**

I don't know anything about that. But of course, if he's alive, he's a coward. If he's dead, who cares? Because most Israelis support genocide. We've seen multiple polls throughout this ongoing genocide in Gaza. So the problem isn't just Netanyahu—it's the strong majority of those who call themselves Israelis. But what's interesting is that Hegseth, the U.S. Secretary of War, as they now call it, was calling Iranian leaders cowards. He called them rats in hiding. And literally a day—or maybe just hours—later, during the Quds demonstrations, the pro-Palestinian demonstrations on Friday, they fired missiles at Iran.

The president, the marja, Dr. Larijani, the head of the judiciary, the foreign minister, and other leaders were all at the demonstrations. They were participating, and of course, the footage is out there online—I posted some of it. Actually, the speaker, the head of the judiciary in Iran, was doing an interview with a reporter in the crowd when the missiles struck. He didn't even flinch, nor did anyone in the crowd. So obviously, the cowards and the rats, as Hegseth likes to call them, aren't in Tehran. They're in... well, I don't know where Netanyahu is. So I don't know if he's dead or alive.

It doesn't really make a difference, except for the fact that it just shows he's cowardly if he's alive. But the problem, at the end of the day, is ethno-supremacism. The problem is that—and it's not just about the Palestinians—for these ethno-supremacists, these Zionist ethno-supremacists, everyone is Amalek. Everyone is subordinate to this supposedly superior, chosen people or master race, or whatever it's called. And it's very extraordinary that such a thing in the West is so easily tolerated, especially when, over the last few decades, they've pretended that racism and supremacism are unacceptable and that sort of thing.

## **#Pascal**

I absolutely agree with you. The hypocrisy is mind-boggling. But do you notice now, almost at the end of the third week, any change in how the war is being carried out on either side? Are the strikes increasing or decreasing? Are they changing based on what you're seeing? And also, the weapons that Iran is using—are they changing? Is the war evolving, or is it still more or less what we saw in the first and second weeks?

## **#Marandi**

No, the Iranian strikes are becoming more intense. The weapons they're using are more advanced, and the blows are heavier. This, of course, negates the propaganda we were hearing from Washington after three, four, or five days—that the Iranians were running out of missiles, running out of drones, and so on. What Iran did during the first seven or eight days was fire a lot of 15-year-old missiles and 15- or 20-year-old drones. They did that not only to strike the enemy, which they did, but also to deplete their defense capabilities—their surface-to-air missile systems—which, you know, cost them many billions of dollars. And then they began to use their newer technologies. They're still not using their key assets.

But they're striking very hard now on Tel Aviv, just as we saw in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates last night. Even though the Iranians declared beforehand, "We're going to strike," many were saying, "Why would you do that? That helps them defend themselves." But the Iranians did it for moral reasons, and when they struck, the others couldn't block them. So obviously, the defenses have collapsed in the U.S.–Zionist camp, and the Iranians are hitting hard. All those narratives being pushed by Western media—we see that even those who oppose Trump, with all their hostility and antagonism toward the Iranian people, still repeat the same lies. I mean, whether it's Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, the BBC, Sky News, or the print media and websites, they all demonize Iran.

They won't inform their readers that this was an unprovoked war. Now it's beginning to come out because things are going down—they're going south, going downhill for them. But Western media has been very complicit in all this. The Iranians are hitting harder. It's clear that the Americans and the Israelis have failed to destroy any of the underground bases—whether missile bases or drone bases. They've failed to destroy any of the factories that produce these and other capabilities. They've failed to destroy Iran's navy. The key assets in Iran's navy are speedboats that fire missiles. They're all in tunnels underground, alongside the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, waiting for the order to begin launching attacks if the war escalates.

So the Americans have failed, and the Israelis have failed. As we move forward, the price of energy keeps going up, and the Israeli regime is being hammered. This war is not going well for them. They are losing this war, and I think the attack on Iran's gas installations was an attempt to change the equation. But Iran's counter-strike, which was even heavier—and then Trump's post on social media, I think—at least for the time being, put that to an end. So ultimately, the United States is going to lose this war. The Israeli regime is going to lose. I believe there's no doubt about that. The Iranian

people are determined. But the longer they continue, the worse it's going to be for the global economy and for the American people—and, of course, for the Zionists in Palestine.

## **#Pascal**

I keep wondering how to bring an end to the war sooner—how to bring it about faster. So just... if Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, on their own accord, actually stood in front of the cameras and said, "We hereby declare permanent neutrality, we hereby abrogate all our military basing treaties with the United States, and we hereby forbid the U.S. to use our territory"—even if that would take time, even if it couldn't be implemented overnight—if they said that, would that be acceptable? Do you think this could convince Iran to actually say, "Okay, fine, in that case, we're not firing at you anymore, but the installations need to be out within days"?

## **#Marandi**

I think that would be huge. If these regimes were to make a statement saying, "No more support on our behalf. They can no longer use our territory or our airspace against anyone," that would change everything. I mean, the Saudis provide the jet fuel for the planes to fly and to refuel the jets—they're deeply involved. If all that came to an end, it would be very difficult for the Americans and Israelis to strike Iran, because their assets would have to be much farther away, and they wouldn't be able to use the airspace. It would significantly limit the way they could attack Iran as well.

Yes, that would be a big step in the right direction, but these are proxies. Even a country like Libya—with nine nations that support the people, not the regime—supports the Palestinian people, because the regime is just hypocritical. It only uses the name of Palestine for its own selfish gains. But even Turkey isn't capable of breaking away from this war. They continue to transport oil, they allow NATO and the United States to use their territory. So it's very hard for me to imagine, when Turkey is so weak and the regime so pathetic, that these countries would do that.

But if they did, I think that would be a big step toward bringing an end to this war. Ultimately, though, the decision is Trump's. We saw that in the interview Tucker Carlson had with—Kent, I think his name was—the intelligence chief who resigned, where he basically said that if Trump told the Israelis, "If you attack Iran, we will punish you; we will no longer give you the things you want from us," they couldn't do it. So the truth is, the United States could put an end to all of this immediately. But this is the world we live in—the Epstein class, the Zionist influence, it is what it is.

## **#Pascal**

No, you're absolutely right. But there is a moment when the proxy can be influenced. Had it not been for his assassination, Diem in South Vietnam would have struck an agreement with the North. He was assassinated because he was in the process of making that agreement—with the okay of Kennedy. So there are moments when the proxies will try to deal, to create a deal. And then the

question is, are they strong enough, or will they be killed by their own side? So the question to me is how to get to that point faster, and how to actually save them from their own overlord, right? But we don't know.

## **#Marandi**

You're absolutely correct, especially because Zionism has become so discredited—because of Gaza and all these wars. People around the world are blaming Zionism for this war that's causing an economic crisis, a growing economic crisis across the world. And I would imagine, with the Epstein files—those small bits and pieces that have been released—they're being increasingly discredited. I think that in the future, their influence is going to decline rapidly.

So, hypothetically speaking, this can be done. And therefore, these proxies—like the Israeli regime—their influence in the United States makes them not really a proxy. But what should be a proxy? When we look at the United States and the Israeli regime, what should be a proxy? If their influence in the United States declines, as we're seeing it decline among the general public very rapidly, then in the future I think it will be much more difficult for the Zionists and the Epstein class to do the sort of thing they've been doing with impunity in the past.

## **#Pascal**

Okay. Thank you very much, Professor Marani. I mean, these were very, very important insights for all of us. I usually ask people to tell us where we can follow them, but in your case, we know you're on X—that's the place to go. Is there any other source you'd recommend right now for people who want to follow news on Iran?

## **#Marandi**

Well, I'm only on X because I was removed from Instagram and Facebook many years ago, but... The Fars News Agency, Tasnim News Agency, Mehr News Agency—there are lots of Iranian news agencies that have English websites. Or, with AI, you can translate them. They're on Telegram right now; some of them may be on Twitter, I guess. But also Press TV, of course. There's a good book, actually—it's old—called *\*Going to Tehran\**, written by Flint and Hillary Leverett, who worked in the White House. Flint Leverett was the head of the Middle East at the National Security Council, and Hillary Leverett was the head of the Persian Gulf. They wrote a very decent book on Iran. Usually, books on Iran published in the West are pretty horrible. I don't agree with everything in this book, but if people really want to understand Iran, even though it's a bit old—like seven, eight, nine years old—I think it's a good book to read.

## **#Pascal**

Okay, I'll try to put a link to the book in the description box below. Professor Marandi, thank you very much for your time today. Thank you very much for having me.