

“US Failed in Vietnam & Afghanistan” – Vijay Prasad on Iran War Escalation

In this explosive interview, historian and political analyst Vijay Prasad breaks down the real global implications of the US-Israel war against Iran. Support Independent media to remain bold: <https://patreon.com/IndiaGlobalLeft> Link for donation: <https://paypal.me/sankymudiar> Key insights from the discussion: Iran’s capacity to escalate and why the war may spiral Why the United States failed in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan — and what that means now The fragile balance of power in West Asia Are Gulf countries rethinking US security dependence? The impact of war on Iraq’s internal stability Israel fighting on multiple fronts — Lebanon, Gaza, and beyond Growing military strain inside Israel and political uncertainty How the war is reshaping the Global South’s view of US imperialism India’s foreign policy contradictions — oil, Iran, and strategic interests Why China and Russia could benefit, especially in the shift toward alternative energy Could the US expand conflict further? What about Cuba? This conversation places the Iran war in a larger historical and geopolitical context, connecting it to empire decline, energy politics, and global realignments. Topics Covered: Iran War | US Foreign Policy | Israel Military | Global South | India Foreign Policy | China & Russia | Energy Politics | Iraq War | Middle East Geopolitics | Empire Decline Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis and interviews. Follow us on Substack: <https://substack.com/@indiagloballeft> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Indiagloballeft> Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/indiagloballeft/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559411353392> Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/69Y9iCWUv8ha3ATsPWtWk0?si=ee1f0de3de094f17> Telegram: <https://t.me/+WNIqoiv1Rhg5NjEx>

#Mudiar

Hello, and welcome to another episode of *India and the Global Left.* If you’re new to the show, please hit that subscribe button. Also, consider becoming a YouTube member, a Patreon, or donating a small amount using the link in the description box. Without further ado, let me welcome our guest tonight, Dr. Vijay Prasad. Dr. Vijay Prasad is a historian and the author of several books. Vijay, welcome back to *India and the Global Left.* It’s great to be with you. Yeah, well, I wanted to discuss, of course, the war between the United States and Israel on one hand, and Iran on the other. Maybe you could start by sharing your comments on the 28 days of war so far and the broader significance of the conflict.

#Vijay

Well, I mean, if you look at it from the standpoint of where we are after three weeks, it looks like the United States and Israel are a little bit stuck. They started out with this theory of rapid

domination—where you come in, try to decapitate a leader, destroy infrastructure, terrorize the country, and then eventually the country will sue for peace. The recent test case for this was Venezuela: decapitate the leadership, threaten to destroy the country, demonstrate your power, and then the country surrenders. Well, the thing is, the Iranians have been prepared for decades for just this scenario. It's not like they haven't experienced major strikes before.

Just last year, during the 12-day war in July 2025, the United States and Israel pummeled Iran's nuclear research facilities, its nuclear energy sites, and so on. So it's not like they haven't had experience. And it's not like they haven't had experience with assassinations. You know, they've faced assassinations of nuclear scientists and senior leaders. Qasem Soleimani was killed in Baghdad in another attack, and so on. So it's not like they haven't withstood attacks. They've prepared. And what they've prepared, I'm told, is several levels—maybe up to eight levels—of leadership. So a decapitation strike doesn't work. You can kill a whole bunch of leaders, but they'll still have leaders because they've built institutions. I think that's something that isn't being understood—that their leaders are, in a sense, not completely expendable.

You know, when they lose somebody, they can fill the seat again. So that's important. It's a hundred-million population, an educated public. They can handle a decapitation strike. When it comes to civilian casualties, again, they're prepared. The population has been made aware of this. They fought a terrible eight-year war with Iraq, where there were large numbers of civilian casualties. So they're prepared to withstand this. And they've also built an escalation ladder. They understand military conflict. So, initially, they fired missiles that were pretty ordinary. Then they fired missiles with cluster warheads. And they're keeping in reserve their two thousand or so small boats that are in inlets and undersea caverns.

And, you know, they haven't yet given, as it were, the order for different militia groups across the region, particularly in Iraq, to strike U.S. targets. So the Iranians have the capacity to escalate. The United States and Israel have fired their gun. What do you do next? Go nuclear? I mean, how do you escalate if you're the United States? Do you kill more civilians? That would be terrible for world opinion. So in that sense, it's understandable that Donald Trump is asking for a ceasefire, because the United States doesn't have any options left. The Iranians are not interested. They want much more than a ceasefire. They want a real peace deal, which includes Lebanon and Iraq. I don't think the United States and the Israelis are going to do that. And so this is not 28 days; this is the beginning of a very long period.

#Mudiar

I wanted to quickly ask you about your thoughts on the balance of power. I mean, I know you're not a military expert, but you're a historian. And I think about Marc Bloch's caution in his book **The Historian's Craft** about sources. While he was writing about why historians should be skeptical of sources, he was talking about war because he lived through the Second World War. One of the things he said was, don't believe the press, particularly during a war, because almost everything

coming out is a lie. So I wanted to ask you, or get your perspective, on how you look at the balance of power, given that the mainstream media is caricaturing a picture as if Iran is on the verge of collapsing.

It hasn't happened, of course, and they're exposed. On the Iranian side, Press TV and others are citing reports by Roussi, which say that the United States is running out of interceptor systems, radar systems, and so on. They're very costly, very expensive, and given the deindustrialization of the United States, it's extremely difficult to sustain a long-term war. Industrial capacity and the ability to secure supply chains now determine the outcome of war. What are your thoughts on the balance of power in this conflict?

#Vijay

I mean, you know, obviously one has to be cautious because it's difficult to say. But yeah, let's go back historically—from the war in Korea onward. The United States has always said that it triumphed, but in fact it hasn't. I mean, it had to accept that Korea is partitioned; they didn't prevail over the northern part of Korea. In Vietnam, the United States was defeated. In Afghanistan, they had to withdraw several times, not able to prevail. And when it comes to Iraq—I mean, I was in Iraq just after the United States entered—and initially it just looked like a bloodbath. The United States went in, and there was no sign of any possibility of the Iraqis being able to push back.

You know, the military seemed to have dissolved and so on. But by 2004, Muqtada al-Sadr, who was then a very young man, emerged as a guerrilla leader. And the areas near Ramadi, Fallujah, Tikrit—Saddam Hussein's hometown—suddenly rose up in a big rebellion. The military that had disappeared took off their uniforms and came back fighting with guerrilla tactics, pinning the U.S. down. The U.S. eventually had to leave the country. So victory and defeat militarily don't come only from your military strength or your hardware—although I'll accept that there are signs the U.S. is having a hard time rearming itself. But let's put the hardware aside. Wars are won through politics, not through brute force alone.

You know, I mean, yeah, it's true—you can kill everybody, but you can't necessarily subdue them. And it's subjugation that's really the endgame in a war. The U.S. is not going to be able to subdue 100 million Iranians. I mean, this isn't 22 million Iraqis, which the U.S. had a hard time with anyway. It's 100 million Iranians. And, you know, the Israelis are also miscalculating, because there are about 7 million people in Israel—roughly 7 million. I mean, what are you talking about? Even with the most sophisticated hardware, how are you going to fight a land war? You're going to send Israeli soldiers into Iran? Are you crazy? The United States is mobilizing Marines and so on to come near Iran.

There are 160 to 200 thousand people just in the IRGC—the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Just in the IRGC alone, there are about 200 thousand people, separate from the Iranian military. You know, there's an enormous military infrastructure there that isn't just going to go to sleep. So I don't know what the planning was from the United States. I mean, if I said the Iranians have been

planning for decades, I hope the U.S. has been planning too. What have they been doing—sleeping on their side, thinking these “barbarians” will get scared when we light a firecracker in the sky? No, the Iranians don’t seem to care. They’re ready to defend their sovereignty.

#Mudiar

One of the things said about the strength or the response of Iran is the horizontal escalation—its attacks on U.S. bases in the Gulf region. I wanted to tie that to a question about the significance of this war on Iran and U.S. imperialism in the region. In my assessment, this is the first time the Gulf countries have had to rethink the agreements they made maybe 50 years ago, since the 1973 oil crisis, which was basically about buying security by striking an alliance with the United States. And throughout these decades, we’ve seen neighboring countries—from Iraq to Syria—falling apart because of Western intervention, civil war, internal tensions, and so on.

But these Gulf countries that struck an alliance with the U.S. remained, at least apparently, stable, and that allowed them to attract finance capital, tourism, and so on. It’s probably the first time they’ve had to rethink this, now that they’ve realized it’s made them vulnerable to attacks from Iran. And in the face of those attacks, they’re not able to defend themselves the way they did, say, against non-state actors like al-Qaeda or ISIS in Iraq and Syria. How do you see the significance of all this for the existence—or the long-term existence—of U.S. imperialism in the region?

#Vijay

I mean, you know, it’s a fair question. The Gulf Arab states didn’t really see themselves in history. There was a time when Beirut had this role of being the banker of the Middle East. It was the place where people went and bought property along the Corniche, and there were very large, beautiful buildings—just as there are now in Dubai and so on. For that period, you know, there were skyscrapers—not Burj Dubai-type buildings in Beirut, but buildings for that time. Then the civil war came in 1975, and Beirut ceased to be that hub. The civil war in Beirut came around the same time as the oil boom, and so the role of Beirut was then moved to Dubai and eventually to Doha—but first to Dubai, and so on. Well, you know, these things have a half-life.

You’ve had a good run from 1975 to 2025—that’s 50 years of a very good run. And now, having decided to throw yourselves into the arms of the United States and into a kind of U.S. security alliance... you know, it was always going to be the case that, as the Iranians have shown, the base is less a protection and more—it makes you a target. And that was always going to be the case. I think it was a matter of time. In Doha, for instance, the Qataris actually have decent relations with the Iranians. I remember talking to senior Qatari officials who mentioned how Qatar was eager to build an undersea freshwater pipeline to get fresh water from Iran into Qatar. This was sometime before desalination plants became available.

You know, viable economically. And so they had decent relations. But because of their allegiance to the U.S. base, those relations frayed—for good reason, you know. I mean, when Saudi Arabia and Qatar had their own tussle, it was easy for the Qataris to open up a dialogue with Iran at the time. So it's not like these countries have some permanent animosity. There's an opening there—a political, social, economic opening. But the military bases actually put pressure on that relationship. And I don't know what's going to happen. Will the United Arab Emirates say, "Let's double down," as they say, on this strategy with the United States, and let's increase our military spending, and so on?

I mean, look, there is no conceivable reality in which the UAE could go to war against Iran—no conceivable reality. I mean, you know, the UAE is already in a very bloody conflict in Sudan. Yeah, it's backing one of the most vicious forces there for the benefits of gold and so on. It's a ghastly episode in the UAE's history. But I don't think the UAE is stupid enough to get into a direct conflict with Iran. I mean, Iran just has to send two or three missiles into the UAE—particularly into the Emirate of Dubai—and it could crush the UAE politically. It could create enormous chaos there, you know. The same in Qatar. I mean, it's just inconceivable that they would go in that direction. So they're going to have to look for an alternative security paradigm. The GCC is not functioning.

Yeah, I mean, what has the GCC done—the Gulf Cooperation Council? What has it done in response to this? Nothing. You know, what has Saudi Arabia, as the largest country, done? Nothing, really. They're sitting it out. They're also terrified of the knock-on effect. I mean, Bahrain—if Ali Sistani, who's the number one marja, the Iraqi leader, the top marja-e-taqlid of Shia Islam—if he blows the whistle and says, you know, "We're going to defend Iran," there's a revolution in Bahrain tomorrow that's unstoppable. Yeah, I mean, you know, the majority Shia population with a Sunni monarch—it's curtains. It almost was curtains during the Arab Spring. And then the Saudis invaded Bahrain to put the uprising down. Yeah, the Saudis had to invade. And the Saudi military has been sitting on its hands.

#Mudiar

They've been trying to recover or unpack from the civil war they fought indirectly in Yemen. I mean, that's what many experts on Yemen are saying. I wanted to quickly ask you about Iraq, given how tense, how unstable, or how much of a destabilizing effect this war is having there. We have reports this morning about a U.S. airstrike on the Habbaniya base in Iraq, killing five soldiers. Iraq has been recovering from decades of resistance and internal strife. There are also reports that Iraqi oil exports have dropped by 70% because of the blockade in the Strait of Hormuz. And the U.S. has had very complicated relationships with different factions in Iraq. How do you see the impact of this war on Iraq?

#Vijay

You see, it's really interesting. In the last few days—not just immediately, but over the last few days—the United States has been striking various military bases where they claim the Popular Mobilization Forces are based. These are typically thought to be pro-Iranian, and they've been hitting them. They even hit a medical clinic a few days ago, and so on. I would say these are largely unprovoked so far. These are preemptive hits because, as I said, these groups haven't yet started to strike U.S. bases. They're waiting. This is the escalation ladder. When the whistle is blown and these groups move, the U.S. bases are extremely vulnerable—not just in Anbar province, where this strike took place, but also in the north, in Erbil and places like that.

There's already been some sort of mysterious fire in Erbil, and I don't exactly know what happened. I don't think anybody knows what happened. But the point is, the U.S. is conducting preemptive strikes on these bases because they know that the escalation is very, very dangerous for them. And it's not just in Iraq. Iraq is the epicenter. When Iraq moves, it's going to be a big problem for the United States. Yeah, Iraq is the epicenter. But you can't underestimate the fact that there are all kinds of groups sitting in Syria waiting to move. These groups have been there; they're hardened. They've been fighting in Qalamoun—I've seen them. Some of them trained in Iraq. Yeah, they came to Iraq to train and then crossed into Syria.

You know, these were groups that were defending the Assad government. And then, after the collapse of the Assad government, they went to sleep. They're sleeper groups. I don't know when they'll move. We don't know. Ansar Allah, or the so-called Houthis in Yemen, have been pretty silent. Somehow the word has gone around to these groups: wait. Don't fire now. This is not the moment. We're waiting for something. And I find that silence pretty chilling, if you see what I mean. If you're sitting in a U.S. base, surrounded and nobody's firing at you, you can't sleep at night—because they could come at you at any point. They're waiting for a whistle to blow.

And this is the reason why, despite the killing of Qasem Soleimani, despite the real erosion of Hezbollah's power, and despite the overthrow of the government in Syria and so on, it doesn't mean that these so-called resistance circuits have been completely vanquished. They exist. You don't need that many people to create chaos—rocket launchers here and there, fired into bases. The United States cannot tolerate enormous numbers of casualties. It's a fact. Iran can take some casualties because they're fighting for their lives—fighting to defend their homeland. What about some kid from Iowa? He's not defending Iowa. He's out there sitting in Iraq, wondering, "What am I doing in Erbil? Yeah, send me home." The morale is not going to be as high as the Iranian morale. That's another part of the calculation.

#Mudiar

Particularly in this war, the opinion polls within the United States are showing very, very negative numbers. I mean, this is probably one of those rare wars that's been unpopular right from the beginning. Usually, Americans start to think negatively about a war once it starts hurting them, but

this is going the other way around. Even in a Fox News poll—I think it was yesterday or the day before—roughly two-thirds of Fox News viewers said this war has been conducted in a terrible way. I wanted to bring up Israel because that's a giant outpost of the U.S. empire in the region.

And no matter how much we talk about the dilemma of the GCC countries, no matter how much we talk about the conditions in Iraq and Syria, the main epicenter of all this is Israel. And it's very hard to know exactly what's going on, given the censorship in Israel about the impact of this war. Before the war—of course, last year in June—we learned later that the war with Iran was very destabilizing for them internally: economically and politically. What is your sense of what's going on within Israel as an impact of this, given that they've also opened a front in Lebanon, and now we're seeing a ground invasion of southern Lebanon and casualties among Israeli soldiers there? What is your sense of the impact of all this in Israel?

#Vijay

Yeah, so, I mean, this is very interesting because just about a day ago, the Israeli military chief was making a public statement. I mean, it's unusual to have a military chief out there talking about how the military is not really able to deal with three fronts. General Zamir said, look, if you're continuing to try to hold the line in Gaza, then you're in a full-scale war in Lebanon. And then there's this war with Iran. Again, no clue what could happen if militias in Syria start to fire at Israeli posts and so on. So the military chief, General Yael Zamir, said, you know, we have a problem. Then, right after that, interestingly, the opposition leader, Yael Lapid, said that the military is, as he put it, stretched to the limit and beyond.

I thought that was an interesting line—"stretched to the limit and beyond." I mean, we haven't heard from Netanyahu with his normal bravado in a while. You know, at one point there was a long period when people thought he'd been killed. Well, whether he's been killed or not is irrelevant—the Netanyahu of bravado is dead. You don't see him strutting the stage, doing daily press conferences, talking about how well the war is going. He's been absent. The front pages show the opposition leader, not Benjamin Netanyahu. It's Yair Lapid who's saying, "We're not winning the situation." And I'm not just talking about the war; I'm talking about the whole situation. He's basically saying, "We're stretched to the limit. We can't win this whole situation."

Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran now—and I'm adding to that weight. Yemen is silent. Iraq is silent. Syria is silent. So Yair Lapid says, following the military chief, "We are in trouble." Where is Netanyahu? His silence, the bravado put on mute, shows that the Israelis—even this section of Israelis—have recognized this has been a miscalculation. It's a serious miscalculation. They are losing the war to Iran. I don't think this is something they anticipated. Yeah, they thought: decapitation strike, this, that—they'd plop the crown prince on Tehran and all's well. They miscalculated the protests of December last year. They thought the protests were against the government. In fact, they were against the government, but they were also against government policies.

They were against inflation. You know, people are angry about inflation. They were against the financial policies. But were they saying, "Let's tear up the constitution of Iran and bring the Shah back, and have an Israeli embassy inside the presidential palace"? Is that what the people wanted? The Israelis and the United States exaggerated what was going on in December. The Iranian diaspora outside the country—and their bots. You see, this is the problem: when you start taking instructions from your own bots, from your own troll farms, when you start believing your own propaganda, you run up against reality. And they have run up against reality. You asked a good question: what about Israel? Well, let me ask you—where has Netanyahu been?

#Mudiar

I want to broaden this conversation a little bit and place it within the discussion of the Global South and its relationship to the West. There have always been divisions within the Global South regarding attitudes toward the West—a segment of the Global South is mostly right-wing, and that becomes more prominent wherever there are right-wing governments. India is a case in point. They have been pro-West, or at least ambivalent, when it comes to things that are clear-cut. For instance, the Indian government never condemned the genocide that happened in Gaza. Its record so far in this war has been very, very shameful. And we can think about other countries.

And given that this has come after the tariff war imposed on much of the Global South—whose economies have had to bear the huge toll of those harsh and unjustified tariffs, from small to big countries—and also the attempted kidnapping of Nicolás Maduro, the Venezuelan president, ideally the Global South countries should now see, if they haven't already, the naked face of U.S. imperialism. They should move closer and closer to BRICS and other non-Western alternatives. What's your sense of how the Global South is responding to this, given the tremendous economic impact of it all? I mean, as I'm in India, I've seen the impact on the energy sector.

I mean, you don't get LPG cylinders in my province of Assam now. The commercial cylinders are out, and I know this because I recently started a small bakery. There are huge queues at petrol pumps—you don't get diesel, you don't get petrol. But the government is silent. And there are enormous overtures, I would say, from the Iranian side about what India can do, how it can negotiate, and so on. So my larger question to you is: how do these developments—the recent ones, including this war—affect the future of the Global South, insofar as its attitude toward Western imperialism is concerned?

#Vijay

I mean, look, frankly, the point on the table should be what is necessary for your people. Any foreign policy should start there. And India has actually done a really bad job on this. I'm very disappointed with the foreign minister, or the external affairs minister, Mr. Jaishankar. I mean, he occasionally makes very good statements. For instance, on your program, I've talked about his

statement where he said, "We don't follow the NATO mindset." Well, it would be interesting, in all this period—these twenty years of the Modi government—to have had one text that tried to present a coherent theory of Indian foreign policy.

You know, there isn't. I've looked for it. There's no single text—like a white paper—on Indian foreign policy. Okay, you say, we're rejecting Nehruvian naïveté. Fine, let's set aside Nehruvian naïveté. So what's Modi's realism? Where's the text on that? Why does India engage with the BRICS? Iran is a BRICS country—yeah, it's a full member. Iran is a major supplier of oil, a country of about 100 million people, with enormous cultural links to India. Israel has no oil—no oil to provide for India. There's no tangible benefit from Israel to India.

You know, if you talk about hundreds of millions of Indians, they get a greater tangible benefit from a stable, low price of oil and gas from the Gulf Arab states than from Israel. Tangible benefit, yeah. I mean, where is the text, man? I don't know. I haven't seen it. You know, the Chinese have put out texts, even the Russians have a text on their vision of the world. I don't see it from India. And this is what India used to do, and I would like to see it. I don't know, even if government-friendly intellectuals have written this text—a theory of Indian foreign policy in the Modi era—where is it? Is it entirely driven by pragmatism? Was India's refusal to stop buying Russian energy pragmatic? I think it was pragmatic.

But I also think it was a little beyond pragmatic. It was also about thinking in terms of India's relationship with Russia. But what's the theory behind that? Is it an Asianist theory? Is it just nostalgia for a time when we had a very close relationship with the Soviet Union? What is it? I don't get it. You asked about the Global South, but then you drilled into India, so the temptation is to stay with India. But if we step back to the Global South, I think right now the bulk of the world's people understand quite clearly—including people in the United States, as you said—that this is a war of aggression, an absolutely unnecessary war imposed by the U.S. and Israel on Iran, an absolutely unprovoked war.

And this war has had an enormous economic impact, and it will continue to affect the world's population for a long time. Yesterday, Larry Fink of BlackRock said something banal, but I think it's worth repeating. It's totally banal. He said that a year from now—by the way, oil prices are around \$105 a barrel for Brent crude, just for reference—so, somewhere around \$105. Larry Fink said that next year, a year from now, oil prices will either be \$40 a barrel or \$150 a barrel. He said they can't be anywhere in between. I thought that was interesting.

That's quite a spread from Mr. Larry Fink. But what he's saying is that either, in a year, there will be the complete subordination of Iran—that's \$40 a barrel—or the United States will accept that Iran is a major power in the world and decide to back off. Those are the two options for \$40 a barrel. Or the United States and Israel will have to continue grinding on with this war, and Iran will refuse to

stop, and oil prices will be at \$150. Why \$150? But definitely not under one. Those are the two—or rather, three—choices. One choice is that Iran capitulates and collapses, and the Shah comes back, and this, that, and the other.

It's a totally inconceivable scenario. The second is that the United States has to accept Iran as a country with the Islamic Republic as its government, and so on—except that that's the reality, yeah? And then you can have a peace agreement. Or the third is, it goes on for a whole year. Very possible. Listen, did you imagine that the war in Ukraine would still be going on in 2026? I don't think so. I don't think you imagined it would grind on—that just a few days ago, the Russians would swarm Kyiv in the middle of the afternoon with over a hundred drones. I certainly didn't imagine it would go on this long, for years. Yeah. On and on and on.

#Mudiar

With regard to oil and energy prices, there's also a path people are now talking about, and that's within the context of how this war has, for right or wrong reasons, benefited China and Russia in different ways. One of the things being said about the energy sector is that if the Global South countries—or for that matter, Europe—if their leaders are intelligent enough to understand the vulnerabilities of relying on fossil fuels, given how many of these transit corridors run through choke points that are vulnerable to wars, and since we're living in an age of war now, within this phase of late imperialism—or late, let's say, U.S. imperialism—there might be a search for cheap, effective Chinese green energy technology. That could lead to a very rapid acceleration in the diffusion of these technologies. Initially, the Chinese would gain a lot, but eventually there would be more domestic production in other countries. And that might be one path out of this mess of being stuck in a fossil-fuel economy. Your response?

#Vijay

I mean, yes, it's already happening. Cuba, for instance, is facing a brutal oil embargo that the U.S. has placed on it, and it's having to accelerate the shift to solar panels, trying to get hold of batteries, and so on. But this is happening elsewhere too. You know, all countries are going to move. I mean, it's more likely that this war will push us toward renewable energy than any climate summit—any climate summit—and certainly more than a COP, which has become pretty useless. Yeah. The IPCC reports are not as important as the fact that oil prices are doubling in many countries. Yeah, that's definitely true. I mean, you started a bakery—congratulations—you should put solar panels on the roof.

And, you know, maybe you go back to what my grandfather built in Dehradun, which was a gober gas plant a hundred years ago. Yeah. He had a couple of buffaloes, and the buffaloes' gober—the refuse—was what powered this churner, and all the electricity on his farm came from the gober gas plant. He was off the grid a hundred years ago. You know, so yeah, there are lots of options. Now, I'll admit, a gober gas plant—you can't run a computer on it. You're just not going to get enough

power to run, you know, a washing machine or something like that. So you do need something more than that, and you need good batteries. Why isn't India producing high-quality solar panels and batteries? Stunning.

#Mudiar

Yeah, part of the reason is all this embargo on trade with China. Now we're seeing a bit of relaxation, but we went through two or three years of that madness. And there have always been complaints from the business class. Part of the reason for India-China normalization was that the business class kept complaining about these trade embargoes, and that was one of the main reasons that normalization happened. I mean, there were the tariffs and how the U.S. "betrayed" the sentiments of Indians, and so on and so forth. But yeah, thanks. I might also manage to get some subsidies for the gober gas plant if I could repackage it as the "holy cow" and all that.

But jokes aside—absolutely. Well played, well played. Yeah, jokes aside, I wanted to end this by asking you a final question on Cuba. When I was coordinating this interview, I was told you had been to Cuba, or that you were attending some seminars on Cuba. My feeling has been—and I hope I'm wrong—that Venezuela, Iran, and then Cuba... and my heart breaks when I say this, but that's what's written on the wall, as far as I can see, with the likes of Rubio and others moving in these geopolitical test games, as many administrators within the U.S. like to call them. How likely is another war or "regime change" operation in Cuba?

#Vijay

I mean, you know, the United States has tried to overthrow the Cuban Revolution since 1959, so it's not like they'd be starting from scratch. They're trying to squeeze it, and people are trying to break through that embargo. Trump has directly said, "First Iran, then Cuba." The problem is, he's going to be trapped in Iran—and that's an issue. I don't think the Iran conflict is going to end either quickly or easily, and I don't think there's an appetite for a quick invasion of Cuba. I think there's really no appetite for this, you know, in the country. I was in Havana about ten or twelve days ago.

It's a tough situation. There are blackouts and so on. It's not an easy situation. But they're going to fight it out, man. They don't want to return to being a gangster's paradise. Yeah. It's a sovereign country. And I agree with *The Hindu*. *The Hindu* ran a very good editorial, you know, basically saying, where's India? Where are these countries? Why aren't they standing up and saying this is ludicrous? It violates international law, violates Article 2 and Article 17 of the UN Charter. Sometimes I think I'm the only one who has memorized the UN Charter.

#Mudiar

Maybe Norman Finkelstein. I'm not sure. We'll leave it there, Vijay. This was a fascinating conversation, and thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate the answers you gave.

#Vijay

Thanks a lot.

#Speaker 04

Hi, my name is Ayushman. I, along with Mudiar Jyotishman, have started this platform. Over the last two years, we've tried to build content for the left and progressive forces. We've interviewed economists, historians, political commentators, and activists so far. If you've liked our content and want us to build an archive for the left, I have two requests for you. Please consider donating to the cause—the link is in the description below. And if you're not able to, don't feel bad. You can always like our videos and share them with your comrades. Finally, don't forget to hit the subscribe button.