

Seyed M. Marandi: Yemen Joins the War - Red Sea Could Be Blocked Next

Seyed Mohammad Marandi discusses the ongoing escalation in the Iran War—and why Yemen's sudden entry could be a game-changer. Marandi is a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's Nuclear Negotiation Team. (Some of the video is lagging due to the ongoing bombing of Tehran). Recorded 29.03.2026. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: 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 today by Professor Saeed Mohammed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Thank you for coming back on.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Thank you, Glenn.

#Glenn

It's always a great pleasure being with you. Well, the last time we spoke, I asked you what the likely steps would be up the escalation ladder—what we could expect to see as this war continues to spiral out of control. You made the point that it was almost certain Yemen would at some point also join the war, and likely begin to shut down the strait that gives access to the Red Sea. Now, the latter hasn't happened yet, but Yemen has just entered the war.

So far, it seems that it's been limited to launching ballistic missiles at Israel. However, its participation—in terms of who it targets and its objectives—could, of course, increase as well. So I thought a good place to start would be to ask you how you assess the significance of Yemen joining the war. I've heard some American commentators say this could be the most important escalation in the conflict. But how important is it? And what else could they actually do as the war continues to spiral out of control?

#Seyed M. Marandi

It's definitely very important. The United States waged war against Yemen last year, and it failed and had to withdraw. Trump had to declare victory and walk away. So that itself shows how significant Yemen is. In addition to that, now that the U.S. is engaged in aggression against Iran, they won't be able to focus on Yemen the way they did last year. That gives Yemen much more room to maneuver. You also have the resistance in Iraq, which is striking U.S. targets inside Iraq but also increasingly beyond the borders. And we're still not very far up the escalation ladder. Yemen has joined, but its targets are still limited. Iraq has been involved for weeks now, but again, it can go much further. There's even talk that, for example, the Iraqis may take Kuwait.

They could enter the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen, too, could enter Saudi Arabia and, of course, close the Red Sea or strike Saudi oil facilities. Remember—I'm sure you do—during the seven years of genocidal war against Yemen, the Saudis, with the support of practically the entire world, or at least the West, were bombing Yemen day and night, slaughtering people. The Americans were patrolling the Red Sea, creating a food and medicine blockade. Actually, someone who had served with the American forces once told me at a conference that he saw U.S. forces stop these small boats, check them, and find that they were carrying medicine—trying to bring medicine into Yemen.

They would take that medicine and dump it into the sea. That's the kind of strangulation they were facing. Even Qatar and Turkey were supporting this genocidal war until the Saudis and the Emiratis lifted the blockade against Yemen, and then they tilted away. So, with all that support, the Saudis still failed after seven years. Ultimately, what brought about the ceasefire were Yemen's powerful strikes on the Saudi oil and gas installations. Today, Yemen is far stronger. It could easily take out Saudi oil installations and cut Saudi imports from the Red Sea completely. It can blockade the Red Sea, strike Israelis, and hit U.S. assets in the Indian Ocean.

But we don't know what weapons they have now. Obviously, over the past year, they've been developing their capabilities quickly—just like Iran did, just like Hezbollah did. And the West always underestimates them. You and I have already talked about this many times—how everyone was saying Hezbollah was defeated, that it was no longer a major force. But now we're seeing Hezbollah striking the Israeli regime hard and with great effect. And the same goes for Iran. The war was supposed to end in a day—the first so-called 12-day war. Now, during this Ramadan war, the current war, they thought it would end in a day or two. And when that didn't happen, they thought they'd take out the missile and drone capabilities in just a few days.

They kept saying they were decreasing the number of attacks by Iran. Now, after a month, we're seeing Iran's missile and drone strikes becoming more effective than before, especially during the last ten days or so. This underestimation—this strong tendency of the West to underestimate—is something we're seeing all across the world. They underestimated Yemen, they underestimated Hezbollah, they underestimated Iran, and of course, Iraq. We don't know what potential Yemen has,

but I'm sure it's much greater than before. And that's not good news for the United States. But on the escalation ladder, we still have a long way to go. If the U.S. escalates, if the Zionist regime escalates, this side will escalate too.

It's not a war that the Americans can win. It's not a war that the Israeli regime can win. And as we speak, Glenn, the shortage of energy, the shortage of fertilizer, the shortage of petrochemicals is increasing literally by the minute across the world. So the pressure from the international community on Trump, and the anger toward the Israeli regime and Zionism under Netanyahu, is building. And of course, the pressures inside the United States, I would imagine, are building too. So the Iranians know exactly what they're doing. Their allies know what they're doing. But they haven't yet shown their maximum capabilities—far from it. They're just trying to manage the escalation.

But I think there's no doubt that they have escalation dominance. And you know, Glenn, one thing I was thinking about just yesterday—and actually, I've been thinking about it a number of times over the past week—is that the United States could have taken a completely different route. About a decade ago, there was a book written called **Going to Tehran**. I don't know if you've ever seen it. It was co-written by Flint Leverett and Hillary Leverett. They worked in the White House—Flint was head of the Middle East at the National Security Council, and Hillary was head of the Persian Gulf. That's where they met, actually, and got married. Hillary is Jewish; Flint is Catholic.

You know, different religions, different backgrounds, right in the center of power. And then, when they left the White House, they wrote a book on Iran—which is actually a very good book. It's about why the United States has to come to terms with Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran. I'd actually advise everyone to read that book. But if the United States had taken that route, we wouldn't be in this critical situation today. We'd be in a very different world. But of course, instead of policymakers reading that book and listening to them, they did the exact opposite. They listened to the Zionists, the oligarchy, the Epstein class—and now we're in this critical mode.

So it's not just Iran; it's the Axis. And now we're seeing the Axis actually show its capabilities—from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, Iraq, and Iran. The potential is there to create a catastrophe for the United States. Already we're seeing Iraq expelling NATO forces, U.S. forces leaving. A form of liberation is already taking place there. So Yemen's entry into this war, even though it's still not actively participating except for missile strikes on the Israeli regime, has enormous potential. And if you shut down the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea simultaneously, then I think the catastrophe for the West—I don't think it can even be fully calculated.

#Glenn

What you said about underestimating Iran—I often make the point that this is a common theme with all our adversaries or opponents. We always underestimate Iran, we underestimate Russia, we underestimate China. The idea that they can be broken through economic wars or actual wars is an interesting phenomenon, because it's almost used as a loyalty test: you have to proclaim that they're

extremely weak and, at the same time, exaggerate their threats. And if you fail to do so, then, you know, you're seen as disloyal. So there's this obligatory underestimation—and also a huge threat.

Then if you fail to fall in line, that's taken as a sign you're taking the other side—it makes you a traitor. It's a very dangerous thing, because even if the goal is to defeat the Iranians, Russians, and Chinese, you don't want to underestimate your opponent. That's a very foolish thing to do. But I did want to ask you a bit about how you see the Iranian interpretation of attacks on it, and also Iran's own targeting. Because we spoke before about when the U.S. said it wouldn't attack Iranian energy and infrastructure, and then the Israelis allegedly attacked the South Pars oil field by themselves.

Well, we saw something similar just now. Trump proclaimed, you know, "We're going to give it a 48-hour deadline before we start attacking." Then he delayed it—extended it to five days, then to ten—and suddenly Israel began attacking Iran. At the beginning of this period, the critical industries, like the steel industry, for example, were hit, and the argument was, "Well, it's only the Israelis." How do you see this, though? Is this just another diplomatic ruse, or are they joined at the hip? I mean, how do you assess these constant efforts to claim we want de-escalation while at the same time escalating?

#Seyed M. Marandi

I obviously don't have access to what goes on behind closed doors in the United States or among the military staff here. But in general, the belief is that they are joined at the hip and that it's impossible for Israel to act alone. Military analysts in Iran—retired officers who appear on television or write online—say it's impossible for the Israelis to carry out strikes without full coordination with the Americans, and that this is a joint operation. So the strike on the South Pars gas installation was a test. Since the Americans and the Israeli regime were hoping Iran wouldn't retaliate, even though it had promised any response would be much harsher if struck, they tested Iran.

And Iran did retaliate in the way it had threatened to do, and that's what made Trump back off. Then, of course, as you rightly pointed out, Trump said he was going to destroy Iran's critical infrastructure in two days—which is a crime against humanity—and no one in the West seems to care, meaning among elites and the mainstream media. Just like with Cuba, a sad tale in itself that's also being ignored—the starvation of the Cuban people to bring them to their knees so they can take Cuba for themselves. But first he gave 48 hours. Then I think it's clear he was afraid that Iran would actually carry out heavy retaliation.

He did it for the markets, and he, of course, extended it for another five days, which was again to control the market—and it was pretty effective that week. It brought the price of oil down considerably. Then, ten days later, he again threatened to bomb Iran's critical oil infrastructure and power plants. That deadline was also extended for another ten days. I think that was basically for

two reasons. One is obviously to control the markets, because Iran's retaliation would be devastating for oil and gas, and for the ability of the Saudis, Emiratis, Kuwaitis, and Qataris to export in the future.

So, right now, if there is a deal—let's say at some point the Americans meet Iran's demands and it comes to an end, and they open the Strait of Hormuz—energy can gradually be exported, though it'll take some time. But a lot of the problems would decrease over a year or so, perhaps. I don't know the details; I'm not an expert. But if the fighting intensifies, obviously those installations will be destroyed, and therefore opening the Strait of Hormuz at some point would be meaningless. So I think he backed off again. But I also think he's waiting for the extra troops to come in, and then he wants to carry out an assault.

It was believed that he might carry out the attack during these nights, or that he might wait until the other forces arrive, and then possibly strike critical infrastructure as he launches attacks to capture Iranian territory. So there are many different scenarios being discussed in Iran. But I think it's clear that if there's escalation on the part of the Americans, the Iranians are going to escalate too. Just a couple of days ago, when they struck the Iranian factories, the Iranians retaliated—they destroyed, or at least badly damaged, the aluminum complex in the Emirates and in Bahrain—and it will continue. For example, they've begun to bomb Iranian universities, and they hit an important one. So now the Iranians are saying they're going to bomb American universities in the region—American and Israeli universities.

So the Iranians—every time they're struck, they strike back. That's a deterrent. But again, we don't know where this is going to go, because Trump is constantly changing his opinion. Right after he said, "We're going to wait for ten days," he didn't strike the electrical infrastructure or the power plants. But they are attacking key factories and infrastructure in Iran. So there's no, you know—and this further strengthens the argument among Iranians that they just can't do a deal with Trump. It's not possible, because he'll say one thing today and do something else tomorrow. Just like with the JCPOA, a U.S. commitment—he tore it up. Just like during the twelve-day war, when we were negotiating but he was secretly plotting against the country. This war is the same—we're negotiating.

There was progress, but he wasn't serious. Now he says, you know, "We're not going to strike." And then the Israelis strike. And even if we conclude that the United States is not in control, that's even worse. That means if they're not in control, then what's the point of having negotiations? Because if the United States isn't speaking on behalf of the Israelis—if the Israelis are the ones in charge—then what's the point of negotiating? So, no matter how you look at it, this reinforces the argument in Iran that now is not the time to stop the fighting. The facts on the ground have to change for us to feel secure in the future, because the United States is obviously either unwilling to abide by its commitments or incapable of doing so.

#Glenn

Yeah, that's an interesting point—the extent to which the U.S. is in control. You can have two competing hypotheses: either Israel is in the driver's seat, pushing for escalation and pulling the U.S. deeper into the war, or the U.S. is just using Israel as a frontman, allowing itself to play the good cop while Israel plays the bad cop. It's hard to know. But I take your point—at the end of the day, does it matter if you can't trust the one you're negotiating with? Hegseth, though, made the argument that a big strike would come soon, and it seems likely this would be coordinated with the use of ground forces to occupy something—whether it's Yemen, Iranian islands in the Strait of Hormuz, or even the Iranian mainland.

We don't really know. They could go for Karg Island—it's really unclear at this point. But at the same time, we see that, of all the Gulf states, it's the United Arab Emirates that seems to signal most strongly that they'll join the fight against Iran. I thought this was interesting because the UAE claims three Iranian islands that Iran took in 1971. And these islands could be critical in the future for the U.S. to control the Strait of Hormuz. So the Americans are saying, "We have to control the Strait of Hormuz." The UAE has—or claims—those islands, which would allow the U.S. to do so.

Now you see the U.S. talking about ground troops, and the UAE seems very enthusiastic about joining the war. So, I don't know—I'm speculating—but still, it seems there are reasons to believe that going after these islands would be an objective. On the other hand, it's hard to see how they could actually hold them. I think they could take them, but I don't understand how they could keep them; they'd be like sitting ducks, it seems. So I was just wondering, how do you assess the situation? If ground troops are coming, how can the Americans use them against Iran?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, I think the Emirates really aren't important. None of the Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf are important—they're not capable of fighting. The citizens of the United Arab Emirates number just over a million people. That's nothing. The same goes for Qatar, Kuwait, or Bahrain. And Saudi Arabia—we've already seen that it couldn't fight against Yemen. Now, given the situation, they can't fight against Yemen at all, nor against Iraq, the Iraqi resistance, or Iran. So it's basically the U.S. What the Arab regimes do is give the United States the ability to attack Iran. They allow them to use their territory—not just the bases. The Americans are all over the place. They use their airspace, their airfields, their airbases. That's basically the role they play. But Iran has said that if the United States assaults Iran's mainland or carries out operations inside Iran, that's something the Iranians are preparing for.

#Seyed M. Marandi

In fact, some people believe that.

#Seyed M. Marandi

This talk about this island or that island may be an attempt to divert Iranian attention while the Americans do something else. So Iran is preparing itself—has been preparing itself for, you know, two and a half decades at least. They've been preparing for today. And of course, the Americans miscalculated with the missiles and the drones. I think they'll probably soon find out that they've also miscalculated about taking islands, taking Iranian territory, or carrying out commando or other special operations deep inside Iran. But time will tell. The problem for the United States is that even if they do take territory, maintaining it will be the real issue. More importantly, what are they going to do about the oil and gas? And I...

#Glenn

Sorry, sorry to interrupt. You were saying, what will they do about oil and gas? And then you cut out. Okay, let me do that again. Yeah, I'll edit that part out. Okay.

#Seyed M. Marandi

But what will they do about oil, gas, fertilizer, and petrochemicals? If Iran doesn't control the Strait of Hormuz—first of all, from the shores of the Persian Gulf or the Gulf of Oman—the missile and drone bases are hundreds of kilometers deep inside Iranian territory, and there are many of them. The Americans have already failed to destroy them, and there's no reason to believe they can take out all those bases. If the Americans escalate, the Iranians will destroy the tankers, the oil and gas installations, and the other key assets in the Persian Gulf region that belong to these Arab family dictatorships who are complicit.

So let's say, hypothetically, the U.S. takes some islands or territory, or carries out operations against a missile base or a drone base—with success or failure, it doesn't matter. That's not going to open the Strait of Hormuz, and it's not going to prevent Iran from destroying and retaliating at the same time. So let's say they somehow manage to open the Strait of Hormuz, which I don't see happening. When there's no LNG, no tankers, what's the point? The price of oil will go up to \$200 a barrel, and then we'll see economic collapse. And this is something we've already envisaged. Well before this war, I was saying all this would happen. And...

#Seyed M. Marandi

That's quadruple. That will bring down the economy. Again, these analysts—these mainstream Western analysts—they downplay everything. And by downplaying everything, you can't make it go away; you just miscalculate. Just like with regard to Iran's military strength, just like with regard to Hezbollah, or Russia, as you pointed out, or China, or Yemen and Ansar Allah, the Iraqi resistance. So any U.S. attack on the mainland or on the islands is going to lead to greater disaster, because you'll have further destruction—much greater destruction—and that means the oil crisis, the energy crisis, the petrochemical crisis, and the fertilizer crisis will be permanent.

#Glenn

Well, it seems that besides the economic pressure—I very much agree—it would only grow from here on, and it can be intensified as well. But it's also often pointed out that, over time, the military balance will shift increasingly in Iran's favor. That's simply because Iran can launch very cheap and effective drones, and it has the ability to ramp up production. The production isn't that centralized, apparently, so it's very difficult to do anything about it. Iran will continue to have massive access to these cheap drones, while the Americans are forced to use their expensive, million-dollar interceptor missiles, which they have few of. They're costly, and even if they have the money to throw at it, they don't actually have the production capacity. So, in terms of weaponry, it seems it will move to the disadvantage of the U.S. over time. And, well, we've already seen something over the past 24 or 48 hours—Trump made that speech about the aircraft carrier. I think he said it was attacked from 17 different directions, which makes me question some of the official story that they had a, I guess, fire in the kitchen—that that's why it had to be taken out of operation.

I mean, this is not what Trump was communicating. But we also saw, over the past 24 to 48 hours, the destruction of an E-3 Sentry AWACS—the flying radar of the United States—which is indispensable on the battlefield, and they don't have that many of them. At least, not enough to lose. One of these was destroyed at a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia. Also, a few KC-135 aerial tankers were hit; those are important for refueling fighter planes or bombers, since they have to keep a safe distance from Iran. So how do you see this? How do you interpret it on the battlefield? Do you see the U.S. becoming more vulnerable? And what do you expect to see in the weeks to come? Because, you know, especially the Sentry AWACS—this is a very painful loss for the United States.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Oh, indeed—especially since they've lost all their radar systems on the ground. They're now much more reliant on radar systems in the air. I think the key issue here, Glenn, is that the Americans and the West have badly miscalculated Iran's missile and drone capabilities. But if they enter the battlefield on the ground, they don't seem to recognize that Iran's defenses will be deployed using weapons that have nothing to do with the missiles and drones already being used. In other words, in addition to those missiles and drones targeting Americans, there will be a host of other weapon systems and military units targeting the United States—with all sorts of other missiles aimed at their helicopters, their commandos, and their positions on the battlefield.

And Iran has all sorts of underground bases across the region—in the mountain ranges, near the mountains, and along the shore—that the Americans know nothing about. Many of these underground bases that launch long-range and medium-range missiles still haven't even been used; they haven't started operating yet. Most of Iran's strikes on the Israeli regime and the Americans in the Persian Gulf come from a specific group of underground bases. So, just as the missiles and drones currently being used exist in many other locations that have yet to become operational, the Iranians have an elaborate plan for dealing with a ground offensive.

This isn't something they've been thinking about just for the last few months. It's something they've been planning for the past 25 years. So when they come in, who knows what kind of weapons the Iranians have to target the invaders? And of course, that's only going to mobilize Iranians against them. And then, Glenn—and again, this is just hypothetical—but I think it's a serious argument: what if Iraqi forces, while the Americans are trying to invade Iranian territory, what if Iraqi and Iranian forces move into Kuwait and northern Saudi Arabia? What if Yemen enters Saudi Arabia from the southwest? Then what do the Americans do?

So are the Americans going to be able to block Iran? They could also end up surrounded by Iran, because if Iran moves into Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, that would destabilize those family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf region very quickly. And then where are the Americans going to retreat to? I mean, it's just a crazy project—even if the Americans bring in tens of thousands of troops to invade Iran. When they invaded Iraq, I think the second time, they took the country because Iraq was broken, the regime was unpopular, and the Americans had, what was it, around 200,000 troops—160,000, 170,000, 180,000 troops. And they brought in...

#Seyed M. Marandi

Heavy tanks—and they brought everything into the region. They were using Saudi Arabia and all that. Actually, the only country in the region that actively opposed the U.S. intervention in Iraq, the invasion of Iraq, was Iran. The head of Hezbollah spoke in Arabic multiple times against the war, saying, "We want freedom from this guy, from Saddam." But he also said that whatever Saddam may be, the U.S. has no legitimate right to invade. So these countries were all assisting the U.S. in invading Iraq back then.

Iran is much larger than Iraq. Iran has shown how capable it is, and its territory is mountainous—unlike Iraq, which was flatland. There's just no comparison. So the United States, with a few tens of thousands of troops, won't be able to do anything. But again, the Iranians can outflank them. The Iranians, the Iraqis, and the Yemenis could enter the Arabian Peninsula. So if things get really bad, if escalation goes up, you can imagine all sorts of things that people never thought about before. But I think they're all quite possible now.

#Glenn

Well, how do you assess the resilience on the Iranian side? You know, many American commentators, especially, say that Iran's resilience will diminish because they've killed a lot of their leaders, hit many economic targets, and bombed civilians, creating social problems, and so on. What would you say to that? And also, if ground troops are used against Yemen, they're in a more exposed situation geographically than the Iranians. But still, on the map, they look very small, even though their population is about 34 million. I think Saudi Arabia has only around 24 million. So while it looks very big, it's mostly desert, and I think 35 to 40 percent of its population are expats. So what

would be your response to those suggesting that Yemen would be a vulnerable target, and that Iran wouldn't have the same resilience anymore?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, Yemen obviously won its war against the United States. It won the seven-year genocidal war. Now it's much more prepared, and the United States can't focus on Yemen because it has Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran to deal with simultaneously. And Saudi Arabia—they don't fight their own wars. They basically have others do it for them. Now they just don't have the kind of capability they had before. Yemen could strike their oil installations, create chaos in the country, and then move in. They're much tougher than the Saudis, and they've shown their resilience. In the case of Iran, Glenn, one thing that's true about Yemen, Iran, and Iraq goes back to Islam—and Shia Islam in particular.

General Soleimani gave a very famous speech where he said, "We're the nation of martyrdom." He was warning Trump, saying, "Don't threaten us." In that speech, he told Trump not to threaten Iran. "We are the nation of martyrdom. We're the nation of Imam Hussain." Imam Hussain, of course, is the grandson of the Holy Prophet. Iran's resilience has a lot to do with its Islamic and Shia identity in particular. This resilience, this resistance, comes from there. And that's true about Hezbollah, and it's true about Yemen. Just a while back, a Brazilian leftist friend of mine was talking to me and a journalist, and he said that a very famous Brazilian communist once remarked, "If Iran wins this war, I'm going to become a Shia."

So, you know, whether he does or not is irrelevant. The point is, it just shows how people around the world are in awe of the resilience of the Iranian people. They were supposed to fold a long time ago. I mean, when the leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, was martyred, for a week we didn't have a leader. For a full week, the country was being run according to the Constitution, with the president, the head of the judiciary, and a representative from the Guardian Council leading—but that's not ordinary. During that week, it was basically the people who were holding the country together. They were on the streets every night in the millions. Things were calm, and the armed forces were striking back.

Things were working sort of like a watch on its own. And now we have a leader. We have a new head, the chair of the Supreme National Security Council. Everything is in place, like in the past. They've largely failed in their assassinations, but even if they do murder people, they'll be replaced. So it's been a month, and still people are out on the streets every night. Actually, last night I had to go to a studio very far from where I live—a very faraway studio, not like where I am now. I literally crossed Tehran and went past four or five of these huge gatherings in different parts of the city to get there. The point is, people are resilient. We had heavy bombing last night—carpet bombing—and early this morning. And people were out.

When I came back from the studio, it was around 1:30 a.m. People were on the streets, waving flags, chanting slogans, listening to revolutionary music, singing along—that sort of thing. No, it's not

going to have... The Iranians are prepared. They understand this is a war for survival, an existential war. They see that we're the victims. They saw that Ayatollah Khamenei was right after all these years, that the United States is simply untrustworthy. They saw how the collective West antagonizes Iran—even those opposed to Trump. They'll demonize and antagonize Iran, whether it's CNN or The Guardian, or even semi-alternative media people like Mehdi Hasan and others. They're extremely hostile toward Iran, even while they criticize the U.S. government.

They see that, you know, this Epstein class—the oligarchy—the dominant narrative is basically the one the Zionists want. So the only way forward is self-reliance, not pinning any hopes on the Democrats, or, I don't know, the Labour Party in the UK, or the Greens somewhere. It doesn't make a difference. People here recognize that. And what the West fails to understand, again, is that they believe their own propaganda. You've been to Iran, so you know this. Iranians know exactly what's going on. They watch Western media. And remember, some are fluent in foreign languages—they can watch satellite TV and see what the West is saying. But those who aren't fluent watch the hundreds of Persian-language media channels funded by Western governments, beamed into Iran, all full of hate and disinformation.

So they know what the other side is saying. It's not as if it's a closed society. But despite that, they're on the streets. Despite that, when we didn't have a leader for a full week, everything was calm. You can walk on the streets of Tehran right now—a woman alone—at 12 p.m., at 1 a.m., and feel pretty secure. I'm not saying there's no chance of, I don't know, robbery, but you can feel pretty secure. So that analysis is based on their own propaganda model—information that comes from their propaganda model, from their narratives—just like Iran's military capabilities, just like Hezbollah. I mean, Hezbollah is the best example of all. We were told that after the fall of Syria and U.S. control of Syria, we have U.S. soldiers in Damascus, in Damascus hotels, as we speak—you and I right now.

Although apparently they're emptying those hotels because Iran threatened to strike them—the Four Seasons and the Marriott, I think. But after the United States took control of Syria through its Takfiri proxies, and after the ceasefire in Lebanon, with the Lebanese government under U.S. pressure working against the resistance, everyone in the West—and many people in the region—were saying that Hezbollah was finished. But now Hezbollah is performing even better than it was before the ceasefire. So these are things the West simply cannot learn, and they're going to have to deal with it. I have no doubt that when they strike, when they invade Iran, there's going to be propaganda from CNN. They'll be saying, "We're winning, we took this."

We took that, we destroyed this place, and we destroyed that. And they'll put out footage—most of the footage they put out—these are decoys. Right now, most of the planes they supposedly bombed are decoys that Iran has destroyed, ones purchased from China. During the last eight or nine months before the war, Iran bought hundreds of thousands of decoys from China—or maybe not hundreds, but a huge number of decoys and launchers. And the decoys are very, very good; they

even give off heat. So the Americans have no idea what they're dealing with. The Western media, for two or three days, will say how successful they are, but I think after a week or so, just like the war itself, it'll become clear that this was all a miscalculation.

#Glenn

I guess this goes back to my initial point—that this is a key problem with the tendency not just to exaggerate the threat, but also to exaggerate the weakness of adversaries. Because one often ends up with the conclusion that, well, something has to be done: they're an overwhelming threat, but they're also weak, and if we just have the will to push a bit, then the whole house of cards will fall apart. The problem is, when that doesn't happen, you end up in chaos. Just to draw a parallel with the Chinese—when the semiconductor industry didn't collapse after... well, sorry, when the tech industries didn't collapse after losing access to semiconductors, or when Russia didn't collapse after sending weapons and imposing sanctions, or Iran either—one is left in this strategic vacuum, because that was essentially the only card to play.

That is, show enough power and the adversaries will fall apart. So... and always, always, that goes for all the small- to medium-sized countries bombed over the past 30 years as well, when there's no exit strategy. You know, it's shocking that one keeps doing the same thing over and over again. But again, absorbing this mistake—the attack on Iran—this is something I don't see how one can recover from, because this is a closure, a dead end. I just don't see an end to this war. I guess I'd ask, do you see any other possibilities than the U.S. obeying, I guess, Iranian demands? Or is there a meeting point somewhere halfway?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, Iranian demands will have to be met. How they're met—how they'd be negotiated—that's a different issue. Some things the U.S. could walk away from and say, "We had nothing to do with this." For example, Iran will demand reparations, and the U.S. will say, "We'll never give them reparations." Well, Iran can take it from the Emirates, the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, and the Qataris. So that won't be a U.S. problem. Iran will not allow the United States to use the Persian Gulf region as a platform to invade or strike Iran. The United States could say, "We won't accept that," but in reality, Iran can force those countries in the Persian Gulf not to allow the U.S. the access it had before.

So the United States could say, "No, I'm still there, and I'm going to remain there." I mean, Iran doesn't have a problem with these countries having political or business relations with the United States. The issue is being a platform for murdering Iranians and destroying Iranian assets and infrastructure. So there are things that can be solved without the United States being humiliated. But there are also red lines—things Iran has to do. For example, Iran's allies in the region will be part of the deal. There's no doubt about that. Hezbollah will have to benefit from it. Yemen will have to benefit from it. The Palestinians will have to benefit from it. The Iraqis will have to benefit from it.

So there are certain things that will have to happen whether the Americans like it or not, because if they don't, Iran is basically inviting another invasion six months, a year, or a year and a half down the road. That has to end, so we have no option. But I think this war—the real issue—is not how many children they've slaughtered. Last night they killed a lot of people in Tehran. They just bombed houses. I mean, the last two or three nights they've been particularly vicious. And last night, not just in Tehran but elsewhere, they were bombing homes and killing people—like in Lebanon and Gaza. It's a kind of, I don't know, they're trying to create fear, I guess. They're frustrated that they can't defeat Iran. Last night, for example, they murdered an Afghan family of Sikhs in Rey, southeast of Tehran. They're just slaughtering people.

But all of this, you know, at the moment, is costly and putting a strain on the military and their resources. But that, I think, is the sideshow. Iran can destroy U.S. assets. The real issue is the oil, the LNG, the petrochemicals, and the fertilizer. That's where the United States is in serious trouble. If prices go through the roof, and Yemen also strikes Saudi installations, then I don't think the war is sustainable anymore. The United States will have to stop, because there will be an economic depression, and I think there will be severe unrest in the United States. I also think the United States won't have the money to sustain the war.

But the Iranians recognize that, and that's their objective—to increase the pressure to a point where the Americans say, "Okay, let's find a solution that's satisfactory to the Iranians." And again, it can be negotiated in a way the Americans would accept, in my opinion. This reminds me of the book **Going to Tehran**, which I recommend your viewers read, by Flint and Hillary Leverett. The Americans could have had a very different kind of relationship with Iran. They explain Iran's history and address many of the myths and the demonization of Iran. It could have been completely different.

But now the United States is in a situation that's only going to get worse for everyone. Bombing Iran in the hope that people there will submit hasn't worked before, and it's not going to work now. And time is not—this is what the Iranians understand very well—time is not on the Americans' side. Time is on the side of the Iranians, because every minute the shortage of energy, petrochemicals, and fertilizers grows. Every day it's going to get worse. Next week, the markets, I would assume, will begin to reflect this. And then the week after... I think after that—different people say different things—but within three weeks from now, they say the situation is going to be very critical.

And even a week from now, they say it's going to get pretty bad. We have to keep in mind that the ships carrying oil, fertilizer, energy, and petrochemicals—many of them take weeks to reach their destination, and then it takes another couple of weeks for everything to reach the market. It's only now starting to hit. People are talking about some shortages here and there and prices rising, but pretty soon it's going to get very bad. And the Iranians know that. The Iranians don't want this; they didn't start the war. But the only way to stop the Americans is to increase the pressure so they back down. And I think pretty soon that pressure is going to be felt in a very big way.

#Glenn

Well, thank you for taking the time to speak with us. And, yeah—stay safe.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Thank you, Glenn. It's always a pleasure being with you. I hope and pray for better days for everyone. I know people across the world—so many people contact me and say they're praying for the Iranians. I know communists; I have communist friends who say they're praying. So... the world is indeed changing, and views are evolving. And although, as I've said many times before, I'm very optimistic about the future—even though I may not live to see that day—and while the days ahead may be darker and darker, I'm confident that ultimately it will be better.