Seyed M. Marandi: U.S. ‘Insane’ War Plans — Iran Offers Last-Minute Off-Ramp

Prof. Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: https://glenndiesen.substack.com/ X /Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen Glenn Diesen clip channel: https://www.youtube.com/@Prof.GlennDiesenClips Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen 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 00:00 Introduction and Context of Current Tensions 02:50 Iran's Intelligence and Military Preparedness 10:09 Consequences of Potential Conflict 13:08 Iran's Strategic Moves and US Midterm Elections 18:05 Negotiation Dynamics and Off-Ramps 24:49 Potential Outcomes and Global Implications 27:48 The Escalating Tensions in the Middle East 31:22 The Political Landscape in Israel 36:31 The Regional Chessboard: Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Beyond 41: 09 The Future of U.S. Influence in the Middle East 49:57 The Global Implications of U.S. Foreign Policy

#Glenn

Welcome back, everyone. Today is Sunday, November 1st, 2026, and we're joined again by Professor Saeed Mohammed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and also a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Good to see you again. How have you been? Glenn, it's great seeing you.

#Seyed M. Marandi

I'm good. Waiting for the midterms, waiting for war. We'll see.

#Glenn

Yeah, it's an interesting phenomenon. You know, in political science, at least in political realism, we're taught that the rationality of states depends on them acting according to the systemic pressures created by the international distribution of power, or the balance of power. So, by definition, if you allow domestic squabbling, your own elections, or any domestic issues to start dictating your foreign policy, this would be an indicator of an irrational foreign policy. But now it's become common.

If we're going to predict what's going to happen in Israel or the United States, we have to look at their elections. I mean, a lot of the domestic issues and infighting do influence foreign policy to a

great extent. So it is a strange time. But I hope we'll get back to the elections. I did want to start off first with the coming war, or round three of the war, because the U.S. is communicating its preparedness to launch another round of intense attacks on Iran, likely after the midterms. And in this regard, we saw that U.S. Senator Chris Murphy received classified briefings on the plans for attacks on Iran.

And his words were—and again, this is a direct quote—"Their plan is insane." And his reasoning was, you know, he went on to say that it would lead to devastating escalation, destroy the rule of law, etc. And in other reports, we've been reading about plans to target civilians and civilian infrastructure. And as Chris Murphy said, this strategy will not even achieve the objectives. It will only escalate. Again, there are a lot of different statements and different reports, but it appears that if the U.S. goes into a third round now, it will essentially leave all restraints behind, if one is to believe all these reports. So I thought I would get your take on this. What do we know now about American plans?

#Seyed M. Marandi

The Iranians look at the theater of operations, the battlefield, and make their assessments to a large degree. Of course, they have a very extensive intelligence-gathering operation. In fact, during the U. S. occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran was able to use that period—one could call it an opportunity—to gather huge amounts of information about the workings of the United States, because the U.S. embassies in Afghanistan and Iraq were not ordinary embassies. They had huge numbers of staff working there, and many of them were easy, from what I hear, to buy off. So they would meet people, or Iraqis or people in Afghanistan would meet them, or senior people in the military.

So, I mean, it's not directly related to this issue, but in a sense it is. Iran was able to develop an extraordinarily good understanding of the deep state and the reality behind the scenes in the United States through the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. And U.S. diplomats there, senior U.S. officials there, and the military there had access to top-secret information circulating inside the United States. So I thought that's something worth discussing. I think that information is useful to your audience. Iran understands the United States quite well, in contrast to the United States, which knows very little about Iran.

Of course, it's not just because of the occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many senior Iranian officials studied abroad, in English-speaking countries or in the United States. Many Iranians live in the United States. And English is our second language. We study English at school from the sixth grade. At top universities, students are expected to be able to use English resources for their research in all different fields of inquiry. Iran, in general, has a good understanding of the United States. There's no shortage of experts on U.S. politics or politics in Europe, or experts on NATO and that sort of thing, inside the country.

They have different opinions, and there are different schools of thought, but there are a large number of experts. The United States, on the other hand, really knows very little about Iran. There are few experts, and those experts are often people who are there to say what officials want to hear. They have no direct access to Iran. They've had no real access to Iran for decades. And often you'll see that the Iran experts have no knowledge of Persian, the Persian language. Key experts have written books on Iran without ever setting foot in the country or being able to say more than a few words in Persian.

So Iran's understanding of the United States is based on what they see on the battlefield in the region: U.S. assets, where they've been moved, what weapon systems are being put in place in Qatar, in Saudi Arabia, in Jordan, in the Israeli regime, and so on. But they also closely monitor the U.S. elections, what's going on in the United States, and what's going on in the different states. And this is, I think, very important because, on the one hand, the Iranians see that war is imminent. The United States has almost everything in place. Not quite everything, but almost everything. On the other hand, the Iranians have prepared themselves completely for war. They have expanded their underground bases, their missile bases, and their drone bases.

Their production of new missiles with new technology is really going through the roof. They have problems with storage. That's how vast the production is right now. There are a huge number of volunteers who've joined the missile program. So they have more bases, they have more officers, and they have more missiles and drones. Their command and control structures have expanded. They're prepared for war, and they're obviously more prepared for another round, as you put it, than the Americans. And they see the threats that are being made against Iran. This is something that you and I discussed when the war began, during the first 40 days. In our discussions, I did point out that the Iranians said if the Americans and the Israeli regime go for Iran's infrastructure to try to destroy the lives of over 90 million Iranians, then Iran will take out the critical infrastructure of the Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf and of the Israeli regime.

And we saw that happen to an extent. But every time the Americans and the Israeli regime struck Iranian infrastructure, the Iranians would strike back very hard. And that caused them to refrain from going very far. You recall when they struck the Iranian South Pars gas field, which is a critical project in Iran, and the Iranians use the gas from that field extensively. The Iranians immediately struck Qatar and its LNG installations, as well as the Emirates and a couple of other places. And then Trump was forced to put out a Truth Social statement saying, “This will stop.” So if they go down this road, it's clear what Iran is going to do. Iran is going to wipe out everything. Everything.

And that means that Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait—they're all going to fall apart. There will be no governments there. And it will just be days. It will not take much for Iran. When we look at what Yemen is doing to Saudi Arabia, and we know that Iran's capabilities are infinitely greater than Yemen's, then it's clear what's going to happen. And that will lead to a swift collapse in the global markets, and it will lead to a global economic depression far worse than the 1930s. I mean, with the new technology that exists and a much larger population in the world today, I think it's

quite clear that the instability it will cause across the world and across the West will be unprecedented.

But one thing that the Iranians have done, as I said, is look at U.S. politics and create policy based on the realities of U.S. society. So ever since President Pezeshkian returned from New York and the General Assembly, the Iranians, as you know, have been striking ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz without permission very, very hard. They have dramatically increased the number of ships they strike, but they have also changed the means by which they strike them. In other words, in the past, they would often hit them with a drone just to cause slight damage. Now they hit them with missiles and heavy drones to do real damage to the ships.

Now, the reason why Iran does this is that these countries that are exporting oil are Iranian adversaries. They are in the U.S. camp and are co-conspirators. So the Iranians are saying, "If you want to export your oil, you have to get our permission." But the point is that this has caused the price of energy to go up, along with the prices of all the other commodities that come from the Persian Gulf region: sulfur, helium, fertilizer, and so on—everything. Iran has done that, calculating that this will put pressure on Trump ahead of the midterms. And this is where we are now. So not only has it caused the tide to turn against Trump and his supporters in the U.S. Senate and in the House, but it also gives Iran leverage at the negotiating table. So the United States began waging a new phase of its economic war.

The economic war against ordinary Iranians has been going on for decades. But now they've started a new phase through Bessent. There's D-Day. So far, we've seen no collapse, even though it was supposed to collapse the economy a long time ago. But the Iranians are building counterpressure, and this is also leverage for negotiations. So right now, we're two days before the elections. Today is the first; the elections are on the third. The Americans are changing their tone. We know that from what the chair of the Supreme National Security Council said in an interview on Iranian television last night: there was a complete change in tone in Vance's letter. It was respectful. In the past, all the letters were insulting and abusive, in line with U.S. tradition.

But this time around, that was not the case. Now, that doesn't mean that we're going to get a deal. That shows that Trump is feeling the pressure and that the tide has turned against his supporters in the House and the Senate. Some believe that there will be a blowout. Some believe that the Democrats will do well. Some say it's not impossible for Trump's supporters to save the day, but we'll see. But in any case, Trump is feeling the pressure. And so I think that is reflected in Vance's letter. The chair of Iran's Supreme National Security Council said that this change in tone by Vance was significant. So the Iranians are putting a lot of pressure on Trump, but at the same time, they're giving him an off-ramp. Where do we see that off-ramp?

We saw the foreign minister of Iran say, "We can actually open the Strait of Hormuz in two days." Why two days? Because the midterm elections are now in two days. When he said it, they were three days away. So it's clear that the Iranians are saying, "Look, you have to implement our

conditions, but we can put a sugar coating on it to make it look good for you, to help you meet your needs without it being fundamentally any different than before." So we are where we are. I mean, the expectation is not that there will be an agreement. This is not the working assumption in Iran. The working assumption is that there will be war. But this policy that Iran has been pursuing for the past few weeks has been carried out in order to see if we can get an agreement in the last day or two before the U.S. midterm elections.

#Glenn

It's interesting, as you mentioned, that we appear to be at a crossroads. As you say, we see some renewed efforts to revive diplomacy, with the Iranians making an offer to Trump. At the same time, we see these threats of essentially unleashing not just another round of war, but all these genocidal threats. So it is a strange situation. There seems to be some sense of stability at the same time as a threat to essentially set the whole world on fire. But how genuine do you think the U.S. desire to find an off-ramp is? And you mentioned the softer tone coming from J.D. Vance.

I mean, is this calculated to keep things calm before the midterms, as they don't want disruption, and to keep the markets calm? Do they desperately need an off-ramp? Is this a way of having the Iranians lower their guard before striking? I mean, call me foolish, but I do sense some optimism, though, not necessarily because of Trump's benign nature, but because there must be some recognition that there is no way to make this successful. So if you can't defeat Iran, just out of necessity, you know, in your own interest, you would want to seek an off-ramp. So, you know, that gives me some reason for optimism. But how genuine do you think this is?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, that's what Iran is trying to figure out. That's basically the million-dollar question, or the million-euro question in your case. Right now, the Iranians are using both carrot and stick. On the one hand, the Iranians are hitting ships in very large numbers. And it's very clear now. Remember, just a month or two ago, the Americans were saying the Strait of Hormuz is open. Well, now it's clear that it's Iran who's in control. They're just showing it more now than before because of the policy that I was alluding to earlier.

So Iran is not only building pressure by hitting these ships, but also, if war starts, the United States will be beginning the war in a much worse situation because a lot of tankers will have been destroyed, less oil will be on the market, and the markets will be in far worse condition. So when war starts, it won't be like eight months ago, when it took a while for all the global reserves to be depleted, whether it's, again, sulfur or LNG or crude oil or gasoline or whatever. Now, if there is war, it will immediately impact the global markets in a very negative way. So that's one point. Another is the other statements that are coming out of Tehran.

In his interview last night, which I advise your viewers to watch, the chair of the Supreme National Security Council did talk about the NPT. And he said, look, so far we have not changed our policy, but the demands of the Iranian people are that we change our—my words—nuclear posture. And if war is resumed, that could change. That is another stick alongside the carrot. And then we saw Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader, meet with the commanders of the armed forces and basically say that there's a unity of fronts, that the target list should be expanded, and that there's no geographical limit to our scope of operations. So we're seeing these seven sugar-coated demands from Iran put forward, but at the same time we see lots of sticks as well.

And then we had an Iranian commander speak to Al-Mayadeen. And I think your viewers should follow Al-Mayadeen. It's an Arabic news channel, but they have an English X account, a Telegram channel, and an account on Instagram. For English speakers, it's useful to follow Al-Mayadeen because it gives more credible information than many of the other outlets in our region and in the West. It is a useful tool to have. But a senior Iranian military or intelligence official spoke to Al-Mayadeen the night before last and gave a very harsh message, among other things, to the regimes in the Persian Gulf. He said, "Those who are living in their glass palaces..." Usually, in Iranian political language, when they're speaking about glass palaces, they're talking about these oil- and gas-rich family regimes in the Persian Gulf.

So that was a harsh message. And we're seeing all these different messages coming out at the same time. Then we saw the chief of the Iranian armed forces come out and say that we're not going to wait for them to strike. As soon as we see that they are preparing their strike, we'll attack. So you see all these different messages—lots and lots of sticks. But at the same time, there is this carrot, where the Iranians are saying, look, right before the midterm elections, there's an off-ramp for you. I'm personally skeptical. I think that we are heading towards war, and the working assumption is that there will be war. But if Trump doesn't accept, Iran at least will be in a stronger position after the midterms because Trump will have been weakened.

Second, the global markets will be much more sensitive if something happens. And also, Iran can say to its friends and allies and to its own people, "Look, we tried." Because there are over 90 million people, and while the country is very united right now about defending itself against the United States, a lot of people want to feel that Iran went the extra mile, as they say in the United States—that it tried as much as possible to find a solution. Well, that creates more unity, and it convinces Iranians that the government tried its best, so the United States is being irrational, and therefore we have to remain steadfast and defeat the enemy. So I think it's good policy. I think it's useful for Iran to pursue this course. And if Trump…

#Seyed M. Marandi

makes the right decision, it's obviously much better for everyone across the globe.

#Glenn

Yeah, no, I think these sticks, in negotiations, I guess they can be important because suddenly the old status quo looks so very attractive. That is, when you have the people from the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency, being allowed to enjoy full transparency in Iran. I mean, these are now the good old days. It would be great to be able to achieve an agreement. But indeed, as you say, if the Iranians actually leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty, that would be a disaster, not just for international security and the credibility of the US, but also for the entire political platform of the people who have been pushing this idea that attacking Iran is somehow the solution for ensuring that nuclear weapons don't proliferate.

But also, as you say, there are all these threats of responding in kind, because if the US goes through with attacking the nuclear power plants in Iran, the desalination plants, the energy infrastructure, even civilian infrastructure, Iran could do the same. I guess Iran also has the option of going after the data centers, as you and I have spoken about in the past, underwater internet cables, all of this. But my question is: what is Iran already signaling now? Because we see there have been a lot of attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz. It's unclear if they've been struck by drones or missiles, or if they hit mines. But how do you see this? Is this signaling or something, or is it just essentially pursuing the goal of closing the strait, continuing, you know, the policies that were already in place?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, they are also using mines. True. The chair of the Supreme National Security Council said that until Iran's conditions are met, the Strait of Hormuz is not going to be open. And this policy will continue indefinitely. As you know, though, when Iran says the Strait of Hormuz won't be open, they're speaking in relative terms because some oil shipments get through with Iranian permission. Countries that are friendly to Iran, as we speak, continue to take oil. Right now, the amount of oil that leaves through the Strait of Hormuz has gone down dramatically. And by the way, the situation for crude oil is better than for everything else. So, for example, the situation for fertilizer is worse. The situation for helium, sulfur, and LNG is far worse. For gasoline, diesel, or jet fuel, it's far worse.

Because, for example, if you want to take diesel, LNG, or gasoline through the Strait of Hormuz, it's very dangerous. If the ship is hit, it would explode. So the situation is becoming increasingly difficult for the global economy. And you also have the foolish war that Mohammed bin Salman restarted, probably at the behest of the United States, in which Yemen is destroying Saudi infrastructure. And the Saudi regime is completely incapable of stopping Yemeni missiles and drones. And that says a lot about what will happen if the war restarts, if the United States and the Zionist regime initiate a new assault on Iran. If they cannot stop the destruction of Saudi assets by Yemen, how are they going to stop Iran? And why aren't they defending Saudi Arabia?

The Americans are apparently bringing in all the air defense capabilities they have, from wherever they can find them. They've taken them from South Korea. They've taken them from the United States. The United States is no longer interested in protecting its own country or its allies in Asia, nor is it interested in protecting Saudi Arabia. Everything is being taken to Palestine to protect Netanyahu. And that has not gone unnoticed by U.S. proxies or allies, or whatever one wants to call them, in the region. They mean nothing to the United States. But in any case, it shows that Saudi infrastructure is being destroyed. Saudi Arabia's ability to produce crude oil, petrochemicals, and refined products is being dramatically reduced.

So the pressure is building. And Iran's policy complements what Yemen is doing, just as Yemen's policy complements what Iran is doing. It's not that they're directly linked, because the Saudis began this war against Yemen. But Yemen sees that when it strikes Saudi Arabia, it has a great impact, not just because of the damage it does, but because of the situation in the Strait of Hormuz. It becomes even more significant, and vice versa. So this policy will continue until the United States backs down. But of course, what will probably happen is that the United States will carry out an assault. And when that happens, I think that will be the catastrophic outcome of Trump's foolishness and arrogance, and the pressure coming from the Zionist lobby, the Israeli regime, and Netanyahu.

#Glenn

The elections in Israel—what do you think is the significance here? That is, Netanyahu's party failed to obtain a majority. He's still there, but as soon as a government is formed, it's hard to imagine him staying there. I'm kind of seeing it two ways. On one hand, it can be seen as a pushback against his policies. On the other hand, the opposition doesn't really have policies that are that different. It seems to be more systemic than just one person. I mean, we often like to attribute a set of policies to a single person. And when the person is voted out, then it's like, "Oh, well, that was his war. Now we start with a clean slate. And, you know, that wasn't our fault." So I'm not sure how Netanyahu's removal will eventually impact Israeli policies. Will it essentially whitewash Israel, allow it to start over again, or will it be something that severely weakens the policies it did uphold? Again, one can kind of see it going both ways on this one.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Yes, in Iran, that debate is ongoing. Many believe that, actually, if Netanyahu remains in power, there is this major advantage in that the world hates Netanyahu. And thanks to his policies and his leadership, the world hates the Israeli regime. And it has delegitimized itself in the eyes of public opinion across the continents. Never throughout the history of this short-lived Zionist regime, this Zionist regime that's less than 80 years old, have we seen a situation where it's become so despised. And that damage that Netanyahu has caused, I think, is unprecedented. I think no one in Israel has done as much damage to the regime as Netanyahu through his policies.

So if he remains in power, the Israeli regime's isolation will continue, the hatred for the regime will grow, and it will just get worse. So many believe that if he just stays in power, that would actually be worse for the regime, especially since his rivals are just as genocidal. They support the genocidal war. The debate is not over the genocide. And the head of the opposition is the person who came up with the Dahiya Doctrine. Dahiya is the southern part of Beirut, as you know. He was saying we should flatten southern Beirut, which is like flattening Gaza. So their genocidal mentality is no different. In fact, if the opposition did come to power, most probably...

#Seyed M. Marandi

Most probably—definitely—Western media, Western think tanks, and Western leaders will try to whitewash the regime, as you pointed out. And they'll try to say that it was Netanyahu who did all these things, what a terrible person he was, but this government is different. They'll do interviews with the new prime minister, try to make him look good, maybe have a cat nearby. You know, he may have a cat. They may give some anecdotal example of how he used to buy his falafels from the local Arab shopkeeper. You know, that's the sort of thing that you would expect. But the policies will remain the same. So there is a strong belief that perhaps it's just better for Netanyahu to stay put, but it weakens Netanyahu.

So for many, this is the best-case scenario: what we have now, where Netanyahu is severely weakened. Some say that, well, the opposition is just as genocidal, but if the opposition comes to power, then maybe, out of necessity, they would be forced to take some steps and ease the tensions. So they'd have to stop the genocide in Gaza or end the occupation of Iraq. But there's also a lot of skepticism about whether that would ever happen. So in general, I think the consensus that does exist is that Netanyahu being in power is the worst-case scenario for the regime itself, for its continued existence in the long term.

#Glenn

Well, you mentioned Lebanon and all this. It made me think: what else would you add to the current unpredictability over the next, not just weeks, but days? That is, if there's a war against Iran—well, there is already a war, but if it escalates to these massive strikes they're planning—what impact would that have? Because they are calling for a campaign of short, intense strikes, but I'm guessing that Iran will have a say in this: to what extent, you know, when it starts and when it ends, and also who will be involved in these strikes. But we also see this possibly impacting Lebanon now. We see that Hezbollah has regained some strength, and there's been some indication that they're ready to start pushing back against the Israeli occupation in a bigger way. Of course, the situation isn't getting any more stable in the war between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. So what is the chessboard we're looking at here?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, there's also another element, and that is that if the war starts and Iran starts hammering these Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf, they will crumble. And then new forces will come to power. And whose side will they be on? I would assume that they're not going to be on the side of the Americans. And of course, we have Iraq too. The resistance in Iraq is very large, very powerful, and they obviously have access to all sorts of new technology because they're right beside Iran. It's more difficult for Iran to assist Yemen, more difficult for Iran to assist Hezbollah, even though Syria is in such a mess. The situation in Syria is so bad that you can get anything through Syria. You just pay some of these al-Qaeda smugglers or ISIS smugglers, and you can get whatever you want through to Lebanon. But in any case, the resistance in Iraq has everything that it needs.

You have a very powerful force there, ready for war. And then, as I said, it's unclear what happens in these regimes in the Persian Gulf when they begin to crumble, or when they crumble. And so many different things can happen. Hezbollah is prepared. And of course, if Iran is pounding the Israeli regime with missiles and drones day and night, and Yemen then, let's say, moves into Saudi Arabia—I mean, if the Saudi regime crumbles, Yemen can move in. And we've seen their missile and drone capabilities. So this is not something that the United States can manage. And of course, as this happens, the whole global economy will be collapsing. And I don't think Trump can sustain the war if the global economy collapses, because there will be instability at home, especially if he loses the midterms.

Especially if it's a major defeat, because he will lose legitimacy to carry out such a war. And then, of course, the economic hardship will hit people hard. And under such circumstances, can the United States sustain the war economically? Can it even keep its bases across the world if there is a global economic collapse? I don't think so. You and I are now speaking in a world where things are changing very fast, but the old order is still hanging in there. It's collapsing as we speak. But in two, three, four weeks, if I'm alive and we have this conversation, we may be living in a very, very different world, where things are falling apart for people across the globe. And, of course, the map may change in the Arabian Peninsula.

#Glenn

Yeah, and I agree. Whatever horrible peace deal the U.S. would have to settle for now, I think the alternative is going to be so much worse if they go down this road. And there will be no way of going back to, I guess, the current status quo. But my last question was just how you see the post-war situation, even if you don't have a war. Let's say the Americans take the Iranian off-ramp—that is, essentially, the sugarcoating of an MOU—and we put an end to this. Because I also saw comments from Senator Chris Murphy, who made some other points, saying that countries like Qatar and Saudi Arabia will probably move closer to Iran, diplomatically at least, after the war, if it's settled.

Not out of some, you know, sympathies or shared cause, but just geopolitical realities. This is the major power in the region. And I guess the luxury of simply organizing the entire regional security architecture around an anti-Iranian alliance—that formula is gone, which means, you know, either

adjust to new realities or suffer the consequences. So I was wondering to what extent you see it in a similar way. That is, do you think some of Iran's fiercest enemies, be it Saudi Arabia or Qatar—I don't think you mentioned the UAE—but anyway, do you think some of these countries, out of self-interest and a desire to survive, will begin to, I guess, accommodate Iran and look toward forming a new security architecture for the region?

#Seyed M. Marandi

The UAE is in the same boat. When that senior Iranian official spoke to the Al Mayadeen news channel about the glass palaces, he meant all these five countries: the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait. And yes, there's no doubt that they will have to change. In fact, one reason why Iran is saying that they will, from now on, control the Strait of Hormuz is to tell these countries that, in future, you're not going to be able to behave as before. These countries bet on the wrong horse. They went and joined the American war against Iran, expecting a quick victory and expecting that they would be celebrating alongside the Americans. They bet on the wrong horse, and they are guilty of helping slaughter thousands of Iranians and destroying Iranian infrastructure.

And if there's further war, obviously, that will probably be a death sentence for those regimes if Trump does move in the direction that Senator Murphy seems to be indicating. So yes, I think that if there is no war, these regimes will have to behave very differently. And by the way, another thing that Ayatollah Khamenei said in his meeting with the commanders of the armed forces yesterday was that we will determine when the war ends, if there is war. In other words, if Trump thinks he's going to come in and carry out a few days of strikes and then say, "It's over, we won," that's not going to happen. This phase is a decisive phase. The Iranians want the siege to end.

And they are going to impose their will on the United States, come what may, whatever the consequences, whatever the pain, because Iran will not accept more siege and years of what the world is experiencing now. This has to come to an end. And so when the war starts, Iran will hit hard and for as long as it takes to have those seven demands met, to bring an end to the siege. So Trump has put himself in an impossible position. Again, the Iranians have put forward this sugar-coated seven-point plan, which is, in reality, 11 points, because some of the points contain two points within them. But in any case, the Iranians are willing to sugarcoat it in a way that wouldn't look too catastrophic for him.

Of course, his political opponents, especially now that he's so unpopular, will protest and point out the sugarcoating, I'm sure. But in any case, it's up to him. This is his offer. But as I said earlier, personally, at this stage, as you and I speak, I believe that the chances of war are significantly higher than the chances of the United States accepting that sugarcoated medicine or that sugarcoated pill. But the negotiations are ongoing, and as we speak, the Iranians are blocking a lot of that shipping from passing through the Strait to make Trump think a little bit harder during these final hours before the midterms.

#Glenn

In some ways, the war against Iran is very similar to the situation we have in Europe, because it's also essentially a story about a world order based on a hegemon, in which the security architecture is organized as a military bloc against the largest power in the region, that is, Iran. In Europe, they've built essentially the entire security architecture on NATO expansion, so the European security architecture has been an anti-Russian military bloc, isolating the largest country in Europe. But I guess there are more similarities. Much like their inability to destroy Iran, they're not able to defeat Russia either. And as a result, the Americans, at some point, will be forced to pull back. And then the proxies or frontline states, allies, whatever words one wants to use, will have to make an adjustment.

Not out of empathy, but out of self-interest. And the European states obviously must adjust to new realities as well if they do want to survive. But it is a critical time because you can't really sit on the fence anymore. Either you make a peace deal or you have to go all out in a war that will likely destroy at least this continent. But it appears it's the same thing in the Middle East. As you said, it's a decisive phase now. If they go all in to try to really destroy Iran by going after all its major economic and civilian infrastructure, it's just hard to imagine Iran holding back then. I mean, what would be an incentive for restraint? And as you said, with the world economy, what else can be done now?

I think most people are now recognizing that we're in a very, very difficult spot. And I've seen people like Chancellor Merz in Germany now complaining that this war in Iran, through no fault of our own, is causing all this economic hardship. Again, this is the same guy, though, who said that the Israelis are doing our dirty work for us in Iran and then applauded the U.S. for its attack on Iran, positioning Germany essentially as the leading supporter of the United States. And now, of course, there's still not one criticism of what is being done—well, only criticism of Iran for defending itself. They now want to throw up their hands and go, "Oh, this was no fault of our own." It's quite extraordinary. Sorry, just one last question.

#Seyed M. Marandi

You and I spoke earlier, and you mentioned that— Just one thing that I'd like to add before you ask your question. I may forget. I'm growing old. And that is that one of the foolish things that the Americans have done is that they're carrying out this war while the war in Ukraine is ongoing. And they escalated in Ukraine by allowing the Ukrainians to begin targeting civilian infrastructure deep inside Russia at a time when the war was ongoing. And then this has had a huge impact on China because, as you described, in both Europe and our region, the United States has tried to isolate Russia or Iran. That's what they've been trying to do to China in Southeast Asia as well, around the South China Sea, for example, with Taiwan and so on. But that is also beginning to fall apart.

Because I spoke to a Japanese senator, and he said that the United States just removes assets from Japan for the West Asian theater without even telling the Japanese. The same is true with South Korea, as we discussed earlier. So U.S. influence in Southeast Asia is diminishing. They're being seen as unreliable. They've been egging on South Korea, the Japanese, and others to be more aggressive towards China, and yet they forced the THAAD missiles upon the Koreans. The Koreans didn't want them. And then they took them away after the Koreans had paid the political price. So this policy in West Asia and the policy in Europe are having enormous consequences for U.S. policy towards China as well. And it's going to lead to an enormous defeat on that front, not necessarily due to military action, but because U.S. influence is simply melting away.

#Glenn

Well, the former head of the German armed forces, Harald Kujat, actually made this criticism three years ago, arguing that what the United States would do was pull the Europeans into this war—we can't even call it a proxy war; it feels more like a direct war now against Russia. Russia would eventually win, and then the U.S. would pull back and just leave the whole thing to the Europeans, whom they had helped pull in. So this is a declining hegemon, though. That's what it does. It passes the buck. It pulls frontline states into war against adversaries and then asks them to pay the cost for it. You saw it in the Middle East.

You saw it in Europe and, of course, East Asia, as you said. But let me just get to my last question, because earlier, when you and I had spoken, you mentioned that Iran and Oman essentially already had at least a rough outline, if not a complete draft, of an agreement on how to manage or administer the Strait of Hormuz, but that the U.S. has essentially said no, at least not yet, which is why it's just on hold. Is there anything else in the making? If the U.S. were to reach the conclusion that it's best just to swallow this bitter pill, do we have any other things pending? I mean, in terms of a post-war settlement, is there something that could also reorganize relations with other Gulf states?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, this point is actually important. The chair of the Supreme National Security Council said that if the United States accepts our conditions, if they take that sugar-coated pill, then the Strait of Hormuz will be reopened based on the Iran-Oman agreement. And you recall I said that there is an agreement. For many weeks, they were saying, “We’re negotiating,” but that was just talk. They had already agreed. Everything was clear even back then. But they have not announced it because the circumstances are not right for that. But if Iran opens the Strait of Hormuz, it will be in line with that agreement. There will only be one corridor. Iran won’t accept any corridor except for the designated corridor that Iran and Oman agreed upon. So that’s something that the Americans and everyone else are going to have to accept, especially the countries in the Persian Gulf.

And he also alluded to the issue of fees, which is very much alive. That's going to happen. So Iran's authority over the Strait of Hormuz is something that is not going to be negotiated, both with regard to security and determining who comes in and who goes out, and with regard to fees. Iran sees this as its right. These countries that are exporting from the Persian Gulf were and continue to be co-conspirators against Iran. So that is the price that they're going to have to pay, assuming that there's no war. If there is war, and Murphy's interpretation of the days and weeks ahead is correct, then I really don't think that the current regimes in Kuwait, the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar will remain.

#Glenn

Well, Professor Marandi, as always, thank you so much. And yeah, if there's war this week, I hope you and your family stay safe. But again, let's hope for peace, at least.