

# Crossing Iran by train during war

Independent journalist Ahmad Saadaldin of Propandco tells The Grayzone's Max Blumenthal about his 18 hour train ride across Iran, and what he learned about the country as it faced a war imposed on it by the US and Israel. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

## #Max

The U.S.-Israeli terror coalition has bombed, as I mentioned earlier, a major railway in Iran, which is a UNESCO heritage site. You actually rode the rails in Iran with your traveling entourage—Tim Anderson and Dimitri Laskaris. I'm incredibly jealous. I wish I could have been there; it looks like an amazing experience. You said you rode 18 hours, over 700 miles, from Bandar Abbas in the south to Tehran in the north, and the train ride cost \$8. You get a bed, limitless coffee and tea, and lamb kobideh for lunch. Here's a look at that—pretty luxurious compared to Amtrak, which is like the Greyhound bus on rails.

## #Ahmad Saadaldin

Our train ride with Tim Anderson—yeah, you know, it really wasn't a bad ride. It was very comfortable. I even show a clip of the bathroom; it's a public bathroom.

## #Max

Oh man, that's incredible.

## #Ahmad Saadaldin

Yeah, the mountains are just stunning. I mean, the entire ride, all you see are mountains everywhere. The reason I showed the bathroom was to give a sense of how clean it is for a public train. You know, you probably can't even stand the smell in a public bathroom on a U.S. train. But you can see there the beds—they bring you food directly to your room. Amazing. So this was actually one of my first experiences. Oh, wow, I've never taken a train this long before because I live in Florida. We don't have trains. They've been talking for, like, 25 years about doing a train from Tampa to Orlando, and they still don't have one.

## #Max

It's going to be useless, because once you get off in Orlando, you need a car—there's just nowhere to go without one.

## **#Ahmad Saadaldin**

Yeah, it's just silly. You know, I've never had a train in Florida, and I've taken trains here and there in other places, but never for 18 hours. I'd never slept on a train before, so this was my first time, and it was a very interesting experience. There was something I wanted to emphasize—I just sent you another clip in the chat. Yeah, I got it. It's a view of the mountains. Yeah, for people to get a sense—because you were talking about a nuclear weapon and whether or not that would break Iran—and you've been to Iran yourself. I'm sure you saw it driving to Isfahan and Shiraz. Iran is just mountains, and then in the valleys in between, you have these incredible cities.

So... there won't be a ground invasion. It's absolutely ridiculous. But it's not just about trying to send troops in and invade this kind of territory, which is unforgiving. It's also the fact that, embedded in the mountains, there are caves containing anti-ship cruise missiles—missiles, all kinds of things. They've completely prepared the coastline to protect the Strait of Hormuz and maintain control over it. All they have to do is threaten one or two ships, and that gives them enough control over the Strait. And that's what we've seen over the last month—they haven't really gone hard on trying to keep the Strait closed.

They've just sent a couple of messages to a few ships here and there, and that's enough to do the job. So if the U.S. tried to forcibly reopen the Strait, or if they nuked several cities in Iran—which would obviously be horrible, devastating war crimes—even if they did all that, they're not going to eliminate Iran's ability to defend itself militarily. And as long as Iran has that, I feel like, you know, they can rebuild cities, they can rebuild factories, they can rebuild railways. This is a country that built those things under sanctions anyway. What really guarantees their sovereignty and makes them relevant is their ability to fire these missiles, these drones, and control the straits.