

# Seyed M. Marandi: U.S. Naval Blockade & Ground Invasion of Iran?

Seyed Mohammad Marandi explains the Iranian perspective on why the negotiations with the US failed, what to expect from the US naval blockade, and the likely war that will continue. 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](https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen) Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: [buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng](http://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 Seyed Mohammad Marandi, a professor at the University of Tehran and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Thank you for coming back on the program.

## #Seyed M. Marandi

Thank you very much for inviting me, Glenn. It's always a great honor to be on your show.

## #Glenn

Well, last time we spoke, you were in Islamabad for the negotiations, which we now know failed. At that point, when you spoke, it was still unclear what exactly had transpired. So I was wondering, given the significance of the negotiations breaking down and the possibility of restarting the war, what do we now know about what happened in Islamabad?

## #Seyed M. Marandi

Well, before we went, I met people in the delegation at the airport. We also spoke on the plane, and in the hotel before the negotiations we had different conversations. It was clear that no one had any real expectations. The belief was that Netanyahu was the person in charge, that the Zionist lobby was dictating terms to the United States government, and that the chances for any success were very slim. But Iran participated for two reasons. Just like before the 12-day war, Iran knew there was going to be an attack. And just like before this war, Iran knew there would be an attack.

But it negotiated both to see if Trump wanted an off-ramp and, more importantly, to make sure that people around the world and Iranians recognized that Iran was trying to resolve the situation—so that no one could later blame Iran for not negotiating and thus causing, or being partly responsible for, the war. The same logic applied to this trip. They believed the United States didn't have the will to make the negotiations successful. But Iran also wanted to make sure everyone knew that we were willing to resolve the problem if the Americans were reasonable. So there were low expectations. When the negotiations took place, from my understanding, during the day there was progress on different issues.

But near the end of the day, the United States suddenly shifted its position and took a very hard line, especially regarding the nuclear program, the reassurances Iran had given, and the status of the Strait of Hormuz. When the talks broke off, it was expected that the following morning there would be further discussions. Later, we saw Vance walk away and claim that Iran wanted to build a nuclear weapon—which, of course, Joe Kent, in his resignation letter as the highest-ranking counterintelligence officer in the United States and a Trump appointee, rejected. So obviously, Vance wasn't telling the truth. He also said that Iran didn't accept our demands. Well, of course Iran wouldn't accept those demands. Iran wasn't the side that lost the war, and those demands violated Iran's sovereignty anyway.

But I think what came out of the negotiations was clear to the Iranians: Vance had no mandate. Dr. Ghalibov, the Speaker of Parliament, who's also an associate professor at my university, had an extensive conversation with Ayatollah Khamenei and Sayyid Mujtaba Khamenei, and he had a mandate. He negotiated; he didn't call Tehran during the talks. But Vance was constantly on the phone, and one of the people he spoke to was Netanyahu. And as we know, Netanyahu himself said that Vance reports to him—and so do other American officials.

Every day they report to me—which I find extraordinary, that he can talk like this and no one in the United States, in the U.S. media, or in the U.S. government shows any outrage. Basically, Netanyahu is saying, "I'm the boss here." So it was clear that Netanyahu would not allow an agreement to be reached, and that he's pushing the world toward a major economic catastrophe. We also saw that when the ceasefire was agreed upon—because Lebanon was part of that ceasefire—Netanyahu and Trump conspired to wreck it. Even then, it was Netanyahu who was pushing Trump, and that's what forced Iran not to abide by its commitments.

As soon as Netanyahu made it clear that they would not abide by the ceasefire in Lebanon, Iran continued to block those extra ships that were supposed to go through the Strait of Hormuz as a result of the ceasefire agreement. So Netanyahu, for the last few days since the ceasefire, has been impeding any easing of the global economic crisis—and he's making it worse, faster. And now, of course, by imposing the blockade himself, Trump is quickening the pace of global economic collapse. So this is basically where we are. By the way, when we flew back, as we discussed last time, after the Washington Post opinion piece that was advocating that the United States and the Israelis

murder the negotiators, we all thought the chances that our plane would be shot down were very high.

So the Iranians flew us basically into Iran but landed immediately near the Afghanistan and Turkmenistan border, in the city of Mashhad—the second-largest Iranian city. From there, we went to Tehran, which is about, well, I took a train, but others drove, some took cars, some took buses. I and others took the train. It's about, I guess, roughly a thousand kilometers. So we came by land. But it's quite extraordinary that the Washington Post, the U.S. media, the Fifth Estate, would now be advocating crimes against humanity in this way—competing with the ugliest of the Zionist killers in politics. But that's where we are today.

## **#Glenn**

So the ceasefire isn't really working. But nonetheless, there's talk now about extending it. On the other hand, Trump is saying he doesn't necessarily want it extended, so it's hard to say what's happening. We also have the U.S. blockade now, as you said, on Iranian ports, and you can't help but think that a key target of this would be China, given that the vast majority of this oil is heading there. How successful is the blockade so far on Iran? And what do you think—how durable is it, and what consequences will it have?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Hard to say, because the blockade has only just begun. I think it'll take a couple more days to figure out what's happening. I think it's going to make the global economic crisis worse, and it's going to turn more countries against the United States because, for example, as you rightly point out, the Chinese are very angry. The Americans are basically dictating terms to China—saying you cannot have oil, you cannot trade, and you're not allowed to enter this part of the world. We've already seen that happen in Venezuela. Now it's clear that the Americans want to strangle the Chinese through controlling the region. But it's a double-edged sword, because at the same time it's intensifying the global economic crisis.

And for U.S. allies who are much more vulnerable than China, this is going to be catastrophic—and the catastrophe is going to happen earlier, sooner, quicker—because now nothing, or at least the plan is to have nothing, leave the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranians have also, by the way, as I'm sure you know, said that if this blockade continues, they'll start striking ships in the Red Sea and block the Red Sea and the Gulf of Oman. That will make things even worse, because the Saudis are now exporting, I guess, roughly four million barrels a day from the Red Sea. And of course, trade goes through the Red Sea. But in addition to that, as the Iranians escalate and as the world moves toward a crisis, the Iranians don't have a shortage of money right now, because they've been putting aside a lot of it over the last few years, especially in gold.

But the Iranians have also made a lot of money over the past few months, ever since the United States began increasing its presence in the region and then during the war. Iran has been selling its oil at a much higher price—without middlemen, without discounts. Iran also had about 200 million barrels of oil at sea and has sold roughly half of it by now. It still has another 100 million barrels, which it will probably sell within a few weeks. That's a huge amount of money—about two months' worth of Iranian oil exports. So it shows how little oil is left on the market. The extra oil is disappearing. Russian oil at sea wasn't as much as Iran's, but they also had tankers out there.

They've finished all of that. They've sold theirs. Iran has sold half of its oil. So, you know, this just shows how bad the situation is going to be soon, with regard to all energy-related items—helium, LNG, and other energy-related commodities. When factories run out of helium and LNG, and when agriculture faces a crisis because of a shortage of fertilizer and all that, I think then we're going to see dramatic change. At the moment, from what I'm hearing from people who understand politics far better than I do, this is just the tip of the iceberg, and we're moving very swiftly toward a turning point where things will go downhill very fast. And Trump is intensifying the speed at which we're moving in that direction.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, no, definitely. I think we're heading into a global economic crisis as a consequence of this. It's often pointed out that even if the war ended today and everything started flowing freely again, the current lack of fertilizers would still have massive repercussions on food prices, which would then, in turn, spread the conflict further. But besides the economic aspect, how do you see the possibility of the United States going back into a high-intensity war against Iran? Because I wasn't sure how to interpret the blockade.

On one hand, it looks like it could be an effort at escalation control. You put a blockade on your ports, you don't respond, and it could be more favorable to a high-intensity conflict where the Americans might be running out of interceptor missiles and losing a lot of planes. But at the same time, the Americans are moving a lot of military hardware into the region—troops as well, it seems. How do you assess it as a threat? How do you see the capabilities and the willingness of the United States to go back to this high-intensity fighting?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

The Iranians are expecting a major assault, and they're preparing day and night. They, too—like the Americans and the Israelis—are rearming, reorganizing, and building up both defensive and offensive capabilities. So Iran doesn't see the negotiations as necessarily serious at all. Most likely, the Americans are just buying time. The Iranians aren't naive. As I said before, before the 12-day war, many thought Iran was caught off guard. It wasn't. Iran had to negotiate for the sake of its own people, first and foremost, to show that they tried.

Because if we didn't negotiate and the U.S. launched an assault, Western media—like the Washington Post, which is right now calling for assassination—would be the first to say, "Well, if the Iranians had negotiated, we wouldn't be where we are." They're never going to blame the aggressor; they're going to blame the victim. And then part of Iranian—well, global—public opinion would be affected. But most importantly, Iranian public opinion, part of it, would be affected. We want to make sure everyone is on board. And that was true about the 40-day war, the Ramadan war.

That's true now. So the Iranians are definitely going to continue engaging with negotiators. But Iran's not naive. And as we saw, when the Israeli regime began hammering Lebanon, Iran cut off negotiations. It stopped its side of the bargain. It said, well, nothing is going to leave the Strait. What we promised to do—to increase the number of ships going through the Strait of Hormuz—that stops. So ultimately, by violating the ceasefire, the United States is hurting itself more than it's hurting Iran. The Israeli regime is hurting the global economy more than it's hurting Iran or Hezbollah.

And by doing that, the Israeli regime is being viewed across the world as the reason for global misery and the rising hardship we're seeing everywhere. So after two and a half years of genocide, and now genocide in Lebanon, they're going to be blamed globally. Iran wants to make sure it's seen as trying to solve the problem, and that people see it's Netanyahu and Zionism pushing the world toward economic catastrophe. So Iran is preparing itself for war. But every day that goes by with a ceasefire puts more pressure on Trump, because the global economic crisis is approaching. Now, we don't believe that Trump will disobey the Zionists. The Zionists—they're the ones in charge. They're in control.

And so is Netanyahu, through the Zionists. The only way we can bring about change is to put so much economic pressure on Trump that he is forced—or the U.S. government is forced, or some Zionists in the United States are forced—to prioritize America over Israel. In other words, to make it so painful that they say, "No, we cannot continue; the cost is too high." But still, we believe there will be a war. We believe there will be a land invasion, a massive attack on Iran—a massive act of aggression. And there will be propaganda coming from Trump's opponents and supporters, all of them.

We'll see how great and successful it was. They've captured here, they've captured there. Perhaps a couple of ships will quietly—or quickly—pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and they'll announce some sort of victory. But it's not going to work. The Iranians are prepared; they're preparing further, and they will strike back. They'll destroy the facilities in the Persian Gulf—the oil and gas infrastructure and everything else that's necessary on the other side of the Gulf. And in a bigger way than last time, as we saw during the last day of the war, Iran hit very, very hard.

But there's also another element here, Glenn, and that is that we're approaching the end of spring. When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, and when it attacked Iraqi forces in Kuwait, those operations were carried out well before mid-April, during the cooler weather. In the next four weeks

or so, the temperature goes up a lot, and then we enter the hot season. You'll have sandstorms in the Arabian Peninsula, high humidity, and it will be very hot. Fighting under those conditions is very difficult. I have experience with that.

Because during Saddam's war against Iran, I fought in the south in the summer, and you can barely do anything during the day. It's very difficult. So I think American troops will not be able to perform well under such harsh conditions. The damage to American military hardware will also increase because of the humidity, the heat, and the sandstorms. I just don't see any opportunity. The Iranians have prepared themselves for over 20 years—well over two decades—and we've discussed this together for years. Everyone can look back; everything that's happened, we predicted before the war.

Just as Iran has prepared itself—with a huge missile and drone capacity—when the war starts, you'll see Iran hammering them day after day, 24 hours a day: the Israelis, the Americans, and their proxies in the region. But they've also prepared for an American invasion. They haven't just prepared for an airstrike or an air attack; they've prepared for a land invasion. So, do the Americans really think they'll just walk in and do whatever they want? They've already failed in their operation to steal Iran's enriched uranium. They will definitely fail on the battlefield. The weather is no longer suitable—it's sort of like winter in Ukraine, if not worse.

The summer in the Arabian Peninsula is brutal. And then imagine if there's a war—if they start striking Iranian targets or Iranian infrastructure, and we start targeting infrastructure on the other side of the Persian Gulf. If we hit their electricity in this weather, in the heat we're going to have in the coming weeks, everyone will have to leave. The Persian Gulf—these Arab regimes—have weather that's good for maybe six or seven months a year, and terrible for five or six months. So if Iran strikes their electricity, everyone will have to leave, not in more than a week—immediately. All of these regimes would collapse right away, especially since the elites in these countries are so well off they can't tolerate any form of hardship.

Whereas in Iran, if they strike our electrical power plants—well, Tehran in the middle of summer would be warm, we'd be uncomfortable, but there's no comparison. Right now, as you know, there's snow on the mountains north of Tehran. A lot of snow. Last night when I was out, I had to wear a light jacket, and even then I was so cold—in central Tehran, not in the north where it's more mountainous. So it would be very difficult for American soldiers, and if the two sides start striking one another, it would mean the end of Kuwait, the Emirates, Qatar, and so on.

## **#Glenn**

The land invasion—oh, this sounds like a disaster. I mean, with such a large territory and the limited troops on the U.S. side, it doesn't seem like they have anything close to the numbers they'd need. Planning a land invasion is something you'd want to prepare for very carefully, especially with a country like Iran, which, with its mountains and coastline, is basically built like a fortress. It's not the

first country I'd want to invade. But how do you see the Gulf states' appetite for returning to this war? I get the impression there are some mixed feelings. The UAE seems strangely optimistic, while others are more cautious. How do you see their willingness to take on a bigger role in the war against Iran if we end up in a full-scale conflict again?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

I think that's more or less how it is. It's the UAE that seems to be pushing for war—and probably the first country that would be eliminated. The others are increasingly worried about the situation, including Saudi Arabia. But as I said, if there's a war, that would mean the UAE is finished. If Iran's infrastructure is destroyed, it'll be difficult, but if the UAE's infrastructure is destroyed, that's the end. It's a tiny country, and it could be destroyed very swiftly—within a day. You know, the arrogance of the ruling family and their reliance on Israel and the United States is extraordinary. I'm not sure, but I heard that the Emirates' direct flights to the Israeli regime have once again been established.

They stopped, I think, during the war. It's just... they don't seem to recognize the amount of anger that exists in Iran, among Iranians, toward that regime. It's enormous. And when they did, on the last day after the ceasefire, strike Iran, Iran hit them much, much harder in return. So... yeah, except for them, everyone else wants an end to this. But I don't think that's going to happen. I think the Americans are preparing for a major assault on Iran, and the Iranians are preparing too. They've been preparing for many, many years, and now they're just putting the final touches on whatever it is they have. They're working 24 hours a day to get ready for the next phase. And as I said—in my opinion, some may disagree—time is on Iran's side because we're approaching summer.

It makes those regimes more vulnerable. It makes life for American soldiers more difficult. But the global economy is a ticking time bomb. And every day that the Strait of Hormuz is closed, it intensifies the crisis. Countries put more pressure on Trump. Politicians inside the United States, and the American people, put more pressure on the Trump administration. The possibility is that U.S. national interests—which are completely at odds with Zionist interests—will diverge so much that the elites tied to Israel will have to decide whether to pursue a different route.

## **#Glenn**

This is the last question. What do you think a victory could look like? Because for Iran, what it wants to achieve is essentially to push back the heavy American military presence, which has been built up quite powerfully, along with all the economic architecture that comes with it. And, you know, that's a difficult thing to achieve, especially since I can't imagine the Americans going down without possibly even using a nuclear weapon if they faced too great a humiliation. Meanwhile, it's not clear. Well, I think a U.S. victory would be defined by regime change and by balkanizing Syria—perhaps not Iran, but Iraq. Yeah, sorry. But how do you see this? What would victory look like?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, it depends. I mean, ultimately, victory—the final victory—would be ending ethnosupremacism in Palestine, ending the genocide. Ending the genocide in Lebanon, too. The Israelis are slaughtering families day and night out of rage and anger that the resistance is effective, so they take it out on women and children. But that would be the real victory. At this stage, I think what Iran would define as victory is the United States backing down, the Iranians preserving their rights, and Iran's allies in the region having protection—no longer being attacked. A long-term ceasefire, let's say. But also, I think that Iran's victory would mean that Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz permanently. And it didn't have to be this way.

Iran had the ambition to control the Strait of Hormuz. But the Americans started this war, and their proxies in the region—Qatar, the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait—were all involved, Jordan too. And so that's the price they pay. The Iranians, in order to make sure this never happens again—this war of aggression—believe they have to control the Strait of Hormuz and also receive compensation. This is a means of doing that: sovereignty, the Strait of Hormuz, and peace and quiet for their allies across the region. Iran didn't start the war. Iran at no stage escalated. Even now, Iran has said that if the siege on the Strait of Hormuz continues, it will respond by blocking the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandab, and the Sea of Oman.

Iran is saying this and plans to do it in response to the U.S. siege. Iran's decision to stop allowing more ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz and leave the Persian Gulf is a reaction to the violation of the ceasefire agreement, where the Israelis have been slaughtering people in Lebanon in breach of that deal. During the war itself, the escalation always began on the American and Israeli sides, and then Iran would retaliate. So Iran struck, let's say, energy infrastructure in the Persian Gulf—oil and gas—after its own infrastructure was targeted. Iran doesn't want this, but ultimately, I think victory would mean sovereignty, control over the Strait of Hormuz, and peace for people in Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, and Yemen.

## **#Glenn**

Well, it seems like a big ask, but if you look at the shift in the world order—the one that was organized for decades around U.S. hegemony—and how it's rapidly moving toward a multipolar system, it's not as if the world isn't already changing at an incredible rate. It looks as if Iran is probably going to exit this war in a stronger position. I know there's been a lot of death and destruction in Iran, but the wider distribution of power, the geopolitics of it, appears to be coming in Iran's favor. If so, this would go down as one of America's worst wars, one of its greatest disasters—comparable to Iraq, Afghanistan, or Libya. This seems like it's going to be a massive disaster for the empire. But perhaps if it incentivizes the U.S. to focus on rebuilding the Republic instead of the empire, then maybe everyone benefits in the end. So, absolutely.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Absolutely. I mean, if someone actually came and said, "I really want to be American first," I think the entire world would welcome that.

## **#Glenn**

Well, thank you for taking the time and sharing your insights. Uh...

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Thank you for having me, Glenn Diesen. It's a great honor.