

Seyed M. Marandi: The Strike That Wiped Out Trump's Plan (It's Over)

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Saturday, April 25th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Professor Marandi, is here with us. Welcome back, Professor.

#Seyed

Thank you, Nima. Thank you for inviting me. It's always a great pleasure.

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Let me start with yesterday, what happened yesterday. We've learned from the Iranian Foreign Ministry that he's going on a tour to Islamabad, then to Moscow, and later on to Beijing. And then something came out in the mainstream media. Basically, Karine Jean-Pierre, you know, the White House Press Secretary, said that they're going to send Steve Witkoff together with Jared Kushner to talk with Iranians in Islamabad. What was that? Was there any sort of communication between Iranians and Americans, and what is happening in Islamabad?

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No, there are no direct communications. There are no direct negotiations. There are no indirect negotiations. Sorry, my cough won't go away. It's been with me for months now, or at least for many weeks. Why they're doing this, it's difficult to say. You know how Trump works and how his White House works. It's impossible to decipher why, what this is all about. But it could be that they're trying to—I mean, they're definitely trying to tell the American people that the Iranians are weak and the Iranians want to speak with us and they want to capitulate for either one of two reasons: one, to buy time, but also to perhaps prepare the grounds for an assault.

Because if, when he says the Iranians want to talk, the Iranians want to meet us, the Iranians want to give up all these different things, and then when it doesn't happen, he can come out and say, which he has done already once before, he can say they promised this, but they didn't do it. So we

have to attack them. We have to do it by force. So the dishonesty of the Trump White House, I think, is clear for everyone. But the Iranian delegation is going to Pakistan. This is a response to the Pakistani delegation to Iran for mediation efforts. And Dr. Ghalibaf is sending, from my understanding, has sent a written message to the Pakistanis, which probably, I'm sure, the Pakistanis will hand over to the Americans.

And that's how it's always worked. I think, as has been made clear, except for the day when we were in Islamabad and Dr. Ghalibaf, along with Dr. Faghri and Dr. Araqchi, negotiated with Vance, Witkoff, and Kushner, besides that, we have not had direct or indirect negotiations. We've had messages go back and forth, which has been going on for many years. This is nothing new. So Dr. Ghalibaf's written message, I'm sure, will have a lot to do with the current situation between Iran and the United States. Of course, the Iranians are preparing for war. It could happen at any time. Some believe it is imminent, some not so much.

I mean, they don't believe that that's the case. In any case, the United States has brought in a lot of assets to the region, but the Iranians have also been preparing themselves during the last few weeks. And every day that goes by, the global economic crisis becomes more explosive because the Strait of Hormuz is closed, thanks to Trump's policy, thanks to the war, thanks to Netanyahu. Because as we all remember, before the war, the Strait of Hormuz was open for everyone. And when the war started, of course, Iran did not allow ships linked to the five countries that were helping the Americans wage war against Iran, helping the Americans and Israelis.

But other ships like Iranian ships, Iraqi ships, Russian ships, Chinese ships would go through. And then after the ceasefire, one of the— and I'm sorry, I'm repeating this, and you know this, and I'm sure most of your audience does too— but just a reminder, it's useful for people to remember why we are here. So according to the ceasefire, the Israeli regime was supposed to abide by a ceasefire. And by the way, today they're killing— they killed at least four people so far today in Lebanon. They're killing Palestinians in large numbers, slaughtering kids as well. But in any case, they were supposed to abide by the ceasefire. And they didn't. And Netanyahu began carpet bombing. So Iran said, we're not going to allow those extra ships to go through.

The extra ships mean the ships that are linked to hostile countries, like the Emirates, like Kuwait, like Qatar, like Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, who were involved in the war against us. So Iran refrained from allowing those ships to go through. Then finally, after 10 days or so, Netanyahu was forced to accept the ceasefire and agreed to let those extra ships go through, as we saw in Dr. Adolph Xi's tweet. But then Trump said that he's going to continue to enforce an embargo on Iranian ports, which he had done a few days earlier. In other words, after the Israeli regime violated the ceasefire and Iran said, we're not going to send the ships, we're not going to allow the ships to go through, then the Americans imposed an embargo.

And since the Americans said, we're going to keep that embargo, or that siege, the Iranians said, okay, then we're not going to allow these ships to leave. So during the last 16, 17 days, we could

have had a lot of ships leaving the Strait of Hormuz to ease the global economic crisis. But what Netanyahu and Trump did through their violations was to increase the global economic crisis. So each day that goes by, the situation for the entire world gets worse. And so while there's no fighting on the ground, there are no explosions and no airstrikes and no missile strikes, this crisis is going to eat away at the global economy.

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We learned yesterday that Iranian IRGC vessels escorted one of the tankers from the Sea of Oman to the Persian Gulf, avoiding the U.S. Navy operation, because they wanted to seize this tanker, but they couldn't do it because the IRGC went there to support and escort it. Are we going to see more of this sort of operation on the part of the IRGC and some sort of confrontation? It's not a war, but it's a confrontation between the IRGC and the U.S. Navy.

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I assume so. I mean, I can't say, you know, as an official response. I don't know the details about continuing to protect these ships. And so the chances for some sort of confrontation increase as a result. But in any case, if the United States launches another wave of aggression against Iran, then I think that probably we're going to see a lot of missiles and drones and airstrikes being carried out. But for the time being, as long as there is a ceasefire, I think that the Iranians are going to continue trying to protect their ships. And that could lead to some sort of military standoff or some sort of clash, which could then expand into something much bigger. It's a very tense situation right now.

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Is the leadership in Iran fractured, as Donald Trump is trying to picture in the West—that the leadership is fractured somehow—pointing out or sharing, you know, an article that mentions, “Let's go after those people who are not willing to deal with us and keep those people who are agreeing to deal with us”? What is that?

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Well, this is the language of the 19th, 18th century, early 20th century empire and imperialism and colonialism. The politically correct language and the language of international law have all been thrown into the bin. And so now the Americans are just behaving like thugs. They behave like thugs. They talk like thugs. It's like the mafia. Trump is a mafia boss, and these are his lieutenants in the media. I mean, when we were in Islamabad, the Washington Post called for the assassination of the Iranian negotiators. And when we were coming back, we were waiting for a missile to strike the plane. And so these are the media, these think tankers, these politicians—they're all like sort of lieutenants of the mafia don. But no, there's no fracture in Iran.

I think by now everyone recognizes how Western media works. Even media that's opposed to Trump, when it comes to Iran, when it comes to Hezbollah, when it comes to the Israeli regime, they will repeat the propaganda. And they will talk about divisions in Iran because they may hate each other, but they're on the same team when it comes to the empire and, of course, when it comes to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Axis of Resistance. And Iran is clear. It's just like before the war. We have a leader. The Constitution is very clear about his role and status. He's a very well-known person to senior politicians. He was not a public figure for ordinary Iranians, but senior figures knew him for decades because he worked in Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's office.

Then we have the Supreme National Security Council. After the martyrdom of Dr. Larijani, we have a new chair. It functions as before. And Dr. Qalibaf, he has a mandate on behalf of the Supreme National Security Council, which includes the heads of the three branches of government—the president, who is the head of the council, the head of the judiciary, and the speaker of parliament. You have military leaders, you have people from the cabinet, and two representatives from the leader. The Supreme National Security Council, with the support of the leader, designated Dr. Qalibaf to carry out negotiations with the United States. So it's clear who the decision maker is. It's Dr. Qalibaf.

And he is the one who negotiates, of course, within the framework that the council and the leader have designated for it. So there's no division, there's no factions. This is not like some fragmented, broken country where there are different factions holding different territory or anything like that. It's a normal country. If you go out on the streets, everything is normal. The police are there, the garbage is taken every night. It's just as it was before. So this sort of propaganda is basically to help strengthen a particular narrative, and that is that maybe, for example, Trump wants to buy time. So he's saying, well, we have to wait and see what's happening in Iran for us to be able to make a decision.

But also, a second purpose that could be in parallel with this would be to justify an assault on Iran, saying that ultimately they can't make a decision because they're fragmented or someone is blocking a decision. And so we have to start killing people again in order to get the right people to be able to make the decision and that sort of nonsense. But it basically would be a justification to buy time, and it could also be a justification ultimately to wage war against the country. But it has nothing to do with the reality in Iran. In fact, if we were really to look at the facts on the ground and make such a comment, it would be easier to say that the United States is deeply divided.

We see that senior, high-ranking military officials have been removed, the latest being the Secretary of the Navy. There's talk of a sort of civil war brewing in the Pentagon. We see politicians increasingly saying that Trump is not fit for governance, fit to be president. So if we look at the evidence on the ground and the news that comes out of the United States, the divisions are in Washington, not in Iran. No one has been removed from power. No senior military officials have been moved. No political figures have been moved. Dr. Ghalibov is in charge of the file. So that's just all not true.

#Nima

Because there was other news as well that said Dr. Ghalibov was removed from his position as the main negotiator or as the head of the Iranian delegation. I don't know where that came from, but they were talking about this as well. And what are they trying to achieve by this sort of rhetoric, in your opinion? What is the main goal? Because we know that the Iranian system—they don't have firsthand information from Iran, and they're trying to make some for themselves, for consumption in the West. Your understanding of that?

#Seyed

Well, I think part of it is also psychological warfare inside Iran, an attempt to make people feel that the situation is not good. Because ultimately, a strong majority of people here believe Iran won the war. And a strong majority of Iranians believe that the government should not be very flexible at all at the negotiating table. And the Americans right now, they're trying to gain concessions at the negotiating table, which they were unable to do on the battlefield. So one way to do this is to demoralize Iranians, to divide Iranians, to make them fearful of stability at home, I would assume. Now, it hasn't had that effect. I believe that Iranians see through all the propaganda. They live with Western propaganda day and night, every day. And it's been going on for decades.

So I don't see it having an impact in Iran, but I do think that maybe Trump is speaking to his own base. He's trying to, because the war is unpopular. So on the one hand, he may be trying to buy time to say, well, they can't decide. So maybe he wants to get more assets in place in the region or to see if he can find an off-ramp. But also, if he is planning to attack—and that's quite possible, very possible—then he would want to be able to convince his base that I tried to have peace, but it was the other side that is unable to make any moves because they're hardliners and they're moderates and they're at war with each other and that sort of nonsense. So I think it has a lot to do with his own constituency in the United States, but also trying to have an impact maybe on the ground in Iraq.

#Nima

How about those eight women that Donald Trump saved from execution?

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They were all blind, if you noticed. They all had similar pictures. And yeah, it was all fake. But you know, it says a lot about many people. For example, I don't know if you saw my debate with Piers Morgan three, four days ago, but he also tweeted this and said, oh, this is great news. But I'm sure he knows that this is fake. I'm sure he knew when he did that. Yes, he has producers and they do research, and it was obvious this was all fake. There was not a single woman who was about to be

executed for, I don't know, armed rebellion or anything. It was all just nonsense. So that is also part of the psychological warfare. And it was used by Trump to both demonize Iran, but also he said, well, they decided not to execute them so that the Iranians gave me those concessions. He wants to strengthen his hand at home and say, look, my threats and my power and my position have forced the Iranians to give me concessions. It's, you know, it's what Trump does. It's the only thing he's good at, actually.

#Nima

Actually, I'm not sure, Professor Marandi, if Piers Morgan knew about the reality, because the guy, he's so much into the rhetoric in the West, and he's one of the main... Well, the reason why I say this is that he retweeted the tweet of Trump hours later, and I do know that he does respond to my own tweets, and I...

#Seyed

You know, I and others wrote that this is fake news. Maybe, I mean, it's not impossible, but, you know, nowadays it's not like before. Now people have woken up across the world. And so, for example, when people like myself and others, in the past when we would say something online, the likes and the retweets were much less than now. Now people everywhere are seeing through the propaganda. They see that Trump is just making stuff up. Before, I think if they put out this story of eight women on the verge of execution or whatever, I think a lot more people would have believed it. And that's how it usually was. The anti-Iranian propaganda was much more effective in the past. But nowadays people are seeing right through it, and people are more active in responding to it because they know what the objectives are.

They know that these lies are to justify death and destruction and murder. Just like, you know, Trump recently extended the ceasefire in Lebanon, right? But Israel is killing Lebanese citizens in large numbers, in large numbers. I mean, four people already just this morning. Or in Gaza, the slaughter in Gaza is really bad. I mean, the genocide is ongoing. But you know, the only thing you hear in the Western media is a ceasefire, an extended ceasefire. You would assume that in Gaza there was a ceasefire. But people now, people see through this today. We're living in a very different environment. People have woken up too. I mean, every day that the Israeli regime carries out atrocities, it only strengthens the anti-Zionist movement. It only awakens people further because so many people are now involved, and they're reacting negatively to what they do.

So when Trump puts out this propaganda or repeats this propaganda about these eight women, before it would have had, I think, a lot more public support because people were ignorant—many more people were ignorant about what's really going on in the world. But today I feel that it doesn't have that sort of... the United States doesn't have the ability to manipulate public opinion across the world as it did before. But maybe you're right. I mean, maybe Piers Morgan simply thought that way. But his producers do their research. They go out and they check stuff, and they know what I

tweet. They know what others tweet. So when he tweets something like that, it's hard for me to imagine that he doesn't know. And if he didn't, he would probably soon afterwards be informed about it. But again, maybe you're right.

#Nima

Professor Marandi, what's going on? I think it's much deeper than that. And you look at the way the Israeli AI-generated videos are trying to picture that Iranian women were somehow raped during the protests, Iranian kids were raped. And looking at the numbers that they're giving us, even the president of the United States talking about 45,000 people were killed, we had some sort of 80,000 people. So where did it come from? Looking at what has happened in Gaza, I think they're trying to diminish, somehow distract people from the reality in Gaza, from what has happened in Gaza.

Because we had this case of rape in Israel—raping prisoners, you know, the people who were captured, the Palestinians who were in prison in Israel—they were raping them on camera. We had that. They're trying to do everything. And there was a report on Al Jazeera talking about this. And how deep is that? Because it seems that they're using the Iranian case, they created the protests, the riots in Iran, and then made this propaganda behind it to distract people from the reality of what is happening in Gaza, in the southern part of Lebanon.

#Seyed

Well, you know, Nima, years ago I wrote a number of articles actually about this type of narrative. There was a time when a lot of nonsense about Iran was being promoted. For example, that during the war between Iran and Saddam Hussein, when he invaded, they would send kids to the war fronts and they would run over minefields to clear minefields. Just fabricated nonsense. And they'd say that they'd give them keys to heaven. I mean, no, I've never seen such a thing, and no one else has seen such a thing in the Iranian war fronts. But it plays on those Orientalist tropes. And I actually wrote an article about these because you see them in these memoirs written by these Iranians and some of these Iranians in the diaspora. But they're all propaganda and fake.

And I actually wrote an academic article responding to this. And I had great difficulty publishing it because they said, well, prove that there are no keys to heaven. I said, you know, well, you can't prove a negative. But I was a combatant in that war, and I had many friends who were combatants in that war. And then I told them, you know, in one case, I told the editor of a very, very, um, important academic journal, I said, if I were to write an article saying that in Iraq—because it was back in the day when the United States was occupying Iraq—in Iraq, the American soldiers have keys to heaven, would you accept my article? And she, in response, said no. Why? Because that would be an outrageous claim. I said, well, how come when they make these outrageous claims about Iran and I say that they're not true, you say that I have to prove it?

So if that accusation is made about American soldiers, it's rejected out of hand. But if it's Iranian soldiers, it is believed until it's somehow disproven, and there's no way to disprove it, because something like that is almost impossible to disprove. But in any case, or for example, another one of those fake accusations was that they would say—and this is, I think, even more significant—they would say that Iranian female prisoners who were members of terrorist organizations, they would rape them and then execute them. And that's not even the worst part of it. The worst part of it is that they would say they would rape them for religious reasons, that if a woman hasn't had a sexual relationship and she dies, she goes to heaven. So they rape her so that she won't go to heaven.

And where does this nonsense come from? Like which—what are your sources? Which religious textbooks say this? There are none. It's all fake. It's all a lie, but it's widespread. I mean, nowadays, I don't know, but in the 1990s and at the beginning of this century, like **Reading Lolita in Tehran** by Azar Nafisi and all these other memoirs, and including history books on Iran, these sort of things—kids being sent on minefields, keys to heaven, raping women prisoners before execution—all of this was very widespread stuff. So now, the difference today is that they've been carrying out all these atrocities in front of the eyes of the world for two and a half years.

And the West has been trying to justify it or hide it or ignore it. And so people see through it. So now when they try, and they know that Iran is opposed to the genocide in Gaza and the genocidal attacks in Lebanon, now people don't see the propaganda the way they did before, when many people were much more naive back then, and they would accept the nonsense that the Western media would put out, or Western textbooks, or Western publishers would put out, think tanks. Now they say, well, you know, the Iranians are actually the only ones fighting against this genocide alongside the Axis of Resistance.

And so these people who are carrying out the genocide are accusing Iran of mass murder and rape and all that, but they're actually doing it themselves, using dogs, their men, they don't go to jail, they're celebrated in Israel for raping people, raping people to death. And so people don't buy it anymore. They see the genocide, and then they see the fake numbers, and people do more research than before because a lot more people are active, as I was saying earlier. So when I put something out in the past, I would get maybe 100 or 200 likes or a few retweets. Now it spreads, and not just me, so many other people.

Now there are so many young people who are so good that I feel like I'm really not important. I don't play much of a role because there are so many good people out there doing really good things, not just Iranians, people from across the world. People don't believe this propaganda. They recognize that, oh, you're accusing Iran of rape when you're the ones who are doing it or you're allowing your allies to do it. You're accusing the Iranians of killing like 80,000 people or 40,000 people in like 48 hours, just people on the streets. But for two and a half years, you've been leveling Gaza and Lebanon too.

So people don't buy this nonsense anymore, and I think it's clear that they want to, through these accusations against Iran and the resistance, they want to clean up the Zionist regime's image. But it's impossible, it will never happen. And I think people across the world today, you know, the support for Iran is global, and the support for the axis of resistance is global. And the anger and hostility towards Zionism and ethnosupremacism is global too. And by the way, if you saw the interview with Piers Morgan, he refused to answer my question when I asked him, do you consider a regime that is based upon ethnosupremacism to be legitimate or not? He refused three times. Why? We know why. Because if he says that, he'll be in trouble. And, you know, that's basically what we've all learned during the last two and a half years. And when it comes to Israel and Zionism, that's a very clear red line.

#Nima

Professor Marandi, what are the main obstacles when it comes to the negotiations with the United States right now? And how do you see the Iranian position considering the Strait of Hormuz and the Iranian nuclear program?

#Seyed

I don't know what will happen today. After all, the Iranian response is written, and I'm sure we'll also have a verbal — there'll be discussions going on, a verbal aspect with the Iranians, and the Pakistanis we'll be talking to. But I think the main part is written because Iran doesn't want anything to be misinterpreted or misunderstood. So we'll have to see, but the Iranians have always been willing to be flexible, show goodwill, but not to give up their sovereignty. And I think that the war itself should have been evidence enough for the United States to show that Iran is not going to submit and give up its sovereign rights. It's willing to be flexible, but it already was flexible.

And that's what... Trump, the JCPOA, which actually was not a very good deal for Iran because the Americans were not abiding by it under Obama. It was flawed in the way it was designed, and the Iranians made mistakes in that deal. But in any case, Iran carried it out. The Iranians signed on to the JCPOA back then because they were willing to be flexible. But even back then, no one was willing to sacrifice Iran's sovereignty. Today, after two wars in less than a year and the failure of the Israeli regime and the United States and the U.S. proxies in the region, there's no reason at all to believe that Iran is going to give up its sovereignty. So Iran, if the U.S. is really serious about concerns about Iran's nuclear program, that can be solved.

We already had an agreement before. But it remains to be seen what the United States wants to do. I think, from what I'm hearing from others, that Trump wants an off-ramp. But the Israelis and the Zionist lobby in the United States won't let him have it. Let me give you an example of where he could have had his off-ramp. When Iran refused to allow those extra ships to go through the Strait of Hormuz because of Netanyahu's slaughter across Lebanon, after a few days, Trump imposed that blockade on Iranian ports. But Iran continued to refrain from allowing those ships to go until

Netanyahu accepted the ceasefire, right? And then Iran said, okay, those extra ships, in accordance with our agreement with the Americans, our ceasefire agreement, they can go.

But Trump, he could have had his off-ramp there. He could have said, okay, now that the Iranians are opening the Strait on most of these extra ships, I will lift the siege. That would have been excellent. And you know Trump, he could have said this was a victory, and even though it would not have been a victory, he would have framed it that way. He didn't do that. He escalated. He said, I'm going to keep the siege. And then the Iranians said, well, if that's the case, then we're not going to allow those ships to pass through. So people are saying he wants an off-ramp, and the ceasefire — this was an excellent opportunity, but he did not pursue it.

So it's impossible for me to say what he wants to do and what he is going to be forced to do. Again, I constantly speak of Joe Kent, a Trump official installed by Trump, head of counterintelligence. He says that Iran was no threat, Iran was not pursuing a nuclear weapon, and this war is Israel's war. This is a Zionist war. So when he says that, then I don't think within 60 days the world has changed that much for it to be anything different now. Although I believe that what Iran is trying to do is, through economic pressure, it is trying to force the United States to prioritize its interests over Israeli regime interests.

Now, whether it will succeed or not, time will tell. But what Iran wants to do is put so much pressure on the United States that at some point the Americans tell the Israelis, we just can't do this anymore. We have to think about our own economy — it's in bad trouble. Our own military has suffered as a result of this war. And so we have to prioritize our own interests over those of the Israeli regime. This is what the Iranians are trying to push for. I don't think we're there yet, but I think that is the ultimate objective.

#Nima

Just mentioning that Joe Kent was the head of counterintelligence, Professor Marandi.

#Seyed

Yes, sorry, counterterrorism.

#Nima

In the case of the Strait of Hormuz, Professor Marandi, we've learned that the Iranian parliament is deciding about the future of the Strait of Hormuz. And Iran has already received some tolls from this trade. How is that going? Is that happening as we speak?

#Seyed

Well, now this strait is closed, thanks to Trump. Some Iranian ships are apparently getting through, leaving and coming in. But other than that, no other ships are passing through as far as I know. Trump's siege—yes, Iran was receiving money from ships that were passing through, and that money has gone to the government.

#Nima

And I think the basics right now for the Iranian negotiators would be the Iranian nuclear program and how they can, because the case of the Strait of Hormuz is non-negotiable. Is that the case?

#Seyed

It is non-negotiable, but I don't think the Americans are going to let go that easily, because as far as I know, that was also a key issue for the Americans. On the one hand, they wanted to be part of this mechanism of control, but then elsewhere, when Iran said no, they said, well, no one should be allowed to have authority over the Strait of Hormuz. But the Iranians told the Americans, I mean, I'm using my own words, but this is not the Gulf of Mexico. This is the Persian Gulf. So you have no right to have control over the strait. But it is interesting — on the one hand, the Americans were saying, okay, well, let's be partners, but elsewhere, when Iran said no, they said, well, no one should be able to control the strait.

But the Iranians are not going to relinquish control of the strait. And it's not simply about money, Nima, as you know. Part of it is — a big part of it is — security. The Iranians do not want to allow the Americans to rebuild their military bases in the Persian Gulf. And they don't want these Persian Gulf regimes to be a platform for further aggression against Iran. So a large part of this is about security, but a large part of this is also about reparations, because ultimately these countries in the Persian Gulf are answerable for the slaughter of these kids, for the slaughter of families, for the destruction of so much infrastructure.

True, the Americans and the Israeli regime fired the missiles, but if these governments did not give consent, the Americans could not have waged this war. And without their consent, the Americans cannot wage war again. They cannot continue the war. Without Saudi air bases, without the airspace of these countries, without the financial support of these countries, without their bases, without being allowed to use civilian areas in the Persian Gulf region, a war cannot be carried out by the Americans. Whether it's a land assault or whether it's a strike deep inside Iran, like near Isfahan, where they tried to come in and remove or steal Iran's uranium, or whether it's missile and drone strikes — without these countries, the Americans could not have waged this war. So they're complicit.

#Nima

We had Zelensky going to Saudi Arabia. What is the Ukrainian government trying to do? And is that related to some sort of military cooperation? Because Zelensky is not in a good position right now, and we know what's going on in Ukraine. But the desperation in these Arab GCC countries in the Persian Gulf is somehow unbelievable. What do they want from Zelensky?

#Seyed

I think Zelensky wants to make money. He wants to say that I can provide you with extraordinary drone capabilities. But he's in enough trouble as it is, and he is desperate to use his capabilities to fight the Russian armed forces. But I'm sure that there will be some form of cooperation, though it's going to be too little and too late. Iran's drone capabilities are extraordinarily massive, and the targets in the Persian Gulf region are so many and so easy to strike that there isn't much they can do to prevent Iran from retaliation. And have no doubt, if the Americans or the Israeli regime start targeting Iranian critical infrastructure, Iran will hit Israeli critical infrastructure. The regime's critical infrastructure will be hit hard, but all these Arab family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf — their critical infrastructure will be destroyed too.

And Iran is not going to hold back. It's not going to pull punches. And we're now at the end of April, and people can go and check the weather forecast. Within three weeks, if not less, the weather in the Persian Gulf is going to get much warmer and much more humid. And then it will go up, and for five, six months, it will be intolerable. American troops and others will have great difficulty in this region in the coming months. But also, if the electricity goes out in these countries, people will have to leave. The Emirates will be emptied. The whole regime will collapse. So the smart thing to do would be for these family dictatorships to tell the Americans, "You're not allowed to use our territory." But they don't have that sort of agency.

#Nima

Here is what the Pakistani sources just moments ago put out: that prospects for the resumption of the second round of U.S.-Iran talks are rapidly fading, as Tehran is still not ready to meet the U.S. delegation. And Reuters reported that Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, presented a list of demands to the Pakistani mediator. I think Iran is somehow communicating that there have to be some sort of preconditions before the meeting happens. What are those preconditions? What are those basic or crucial points on the part of the Iranians?

#Seyed

Well, the U.S. violation of the ceasefire — the United States has imposed a siege on Iranian ports. These are acts of war. The ceasefire was very clear, and the terms of the ceasefire were clear. And also, the United States has attacked Iranian ships. It has hijacked Iranian ships. These are all acts of war and violations. So I would imagine that Iran would demand an end to the siege and the return

of all the Iranian ships that have been hijacked, if not other things as well. But these, I would imagine, would be at the top of the list. Because remember, Nima, how can Iran negotiate with the United States when the United States is not abiding by its current commitments?

What is there to talk about? If I sell you a car and you pay for the car, but I don't hand it over to you, and I withhold the car, and then I come and say, "I don't know, now I have a washing machine to sell to you," and you say, "Well, first of all, hand over the car." Why in the world would you purchase something else from someone when he's withholding the goods that he had already sold to you? The Americans have an agreement with Iran. It's a ceasefire agreement. Iran has certain obligations. The Americans have certain obligations. The Americans think that the Iranian side must carry out its obligations, but they don't have to.

That's how they behave. That's what the empire is like. That's what this exceptionalism is all about. That was the problem with the JCPOA, because Obama had obligations and Iran had obligations. The Iranians made the mistake of carrying out their obligations, and Obama failed to do so in most cases. So the JCPOA was, for Iran, a failure. This time around, the Iranians are not going to negotiate that way. They're saying, okay, we will only agree when you carry out your obligations too. If you don't do them, if you don't carry them out, then we won't either. So when the Israeli regime said, we're not a part of the ceasefire, Iran said, you are.

The Pakistani prime minister also acknowledged that. So we're not going to carry out our obligations either until you abide by your own obligations. When Trump later said, well, I'm preserving the siege even though you're abiding by your commitments, then the Iranians said, no, that's a violation of the ceasefire. So we're not going to carry out our commitments. So my guess, and again, I'm not privy to any Iranian demands or what is in the letter that Dr. Ghalibaf gave to the Pakistani senior officials, but I would imagine that it would be that in order for us to move to a second phase of negotiations, first, what has already been agreed upon has to be implemented in full by both sides.

#Nima

I think, Professor Marandi, many people believe that Lebanon, and not Iran, is not going to abandon Lebanon. Lebanon is part of the deal. Lebanon will be, and always is, among the basics for Iranian negotiators. And we know what is happening right now in Lebanon. They call it a ceasefire, which is not a ceasefire. It's somehow a ceasefire between the Israeli government and the Lebanese government, but they're attacking people in the southern part of Lebanon. And they're attacking, you know, somehow demolishing, destroying everything in the southern part of Lebanon. And Hezbollah is capable of—yeah, we've just lost Professor Marandi. He's going to be back in a minute. And I think what I'm trying to say here is that Lebanon is so important for Iran right now, and Iran cannot leave Lebanon alone.

Because if Iran doesn't support Lebanon, that doesn't make sense to the people. Because the new polls in Iran are showing that the support for the Axis—more than 80% of the people in the new

polls show that they believe Iran should support acts of resistance. Basically, they have to support Hezbollah in Lebanon. And this is the basic question right now: where is Lebanon in these negotiations that are happening between Iran and the United States? And how would Iran defend Hezbollah? It's the only force right now. Professor Marandi is back. Professor, I was saying that the only reason Israel is not occupying or destroying Lebanon the way they did in Gaza and in the West Bank is because of Hezbollah. And where is Lebanon in these negotiations between Iran and the United States?

#Seyed

Well, my connection is not very good, so I hope I won't be disconnected. The Lebanese government is conspiring with the Israeli regime and Trump against the people of the South, and they're traitors to their own country. When Iran and the United States came to an agreement over the ceasefire, the prime minister and the president tried to wreck that agreement and said, "We're going to pursue a ceasefire through a different route," which was ridiculous because it was already agreed upon, and they would have had a ceasefire without paying any political price. But the Israeli regime carried out major attacks and then invaded the South and now occupies parts of the South because of what they did. So what they did is treacherous—treason any way you look at it. They were trying to conspire with Netanyahu against their own people.

#Nima

But the Iranians are not going to relinquish Lebanon at all.

#Seyed

Let me put it this way. Iran will treat Lebanon as it treats its nuclear program. It will treat Lebanon as it deals with its own borders. It will not allow Lebanon to be sacrificed, no matter how long this takes, no matter what the cost. I mean, let me give you an example. Why did Trump put a siege on Iranian ports? Because Iran would not allow the ships to go through until the ceasefire in Lebanon was implemented. So it was because of Lebanon that Iran refused to allow those ships through. And it was because Iran did not allow those ships through that Trump imposed that siege. So Iran is more than willing to make sacrifices for its allies, and it will continue to do so. And Iran will not allow the south of Lebanon to remain occupied. This is a tough war. It is a difficult war. And there may be very dark days ahead. But Iran's determination is very clear.

#Nima

Yeah. Thank you so much, Professor Marandi, for being with us today. Great pleasure, as always.

#Seyed

It's always a great pleasure being with you, Nima. Thank you for having me.

#Nima

Thank you.