

"This Is Bigger Than JCPOA" — Marandi on Iran vs US Power Struggle

Is the United States losing ground in its confrontation with Iran? In this explosive conversation, Mohammad Marandi breaks down the reality behind US–Iran negotiations, war strategy, and global power shifts. We discuss the latest developments in US–Iran talks, including Iran’s diplomatic moves in Pakistan, Washington’s escalating rhetoric, and the deeper contradictions within US policy. Marandi explains: Whether current developments signal indirect negotiations or a breakdown in talks Why US rhetoric on blockades and seizures contradicts its internal decline Iran’s strategic demands: removal of US bases, war reparations, and control over the Strait of Hormuz Whether Iran has moved beyond the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action framework Comparisons to Gamal Abdel Nasser and Arab nationalism The claim that Iran is emerging as a “fourth superpower” The political, military, and economic consequences of the conflict His experience on Piers Morgan Uncensored and allegations of media censorship This is a must-watch analysis of shifting global power, resistance politics, and the future of West Asia. Timestamps : 00:00 Intro Iran leaves Islamabad — What it means Are talks still happening? US decline vs aggressive rhetoric Iran’s strategic demands explained Beyond JCPOA? Is Iran a superpower? War impact on Iran Piers Morgan & censorship Keywords: Iran US negotiations, Mohammad Marandi interview, Iran strategy Hormuz, US Iran war analysis, JCPOA explained, Iran superpower debate, West Asia geopolitics, US decline analysis

#Mudiar

Hello and welcome to another episode of India and Global Left. If you are new to the show, please hit that subscribe button. Also consider becoming a YouTube member, or if you can, donate a small amount using the link in the description box. Without further ado, let me welcome our guest tonight, Professor Mohammad Marandi. Professor Marandi teaches at the University of Tehran in Iran. Professor Marandi, welcome back to India and Global Left.

#Mohammad

Thank you very much for inviting me. It's always a great pleasure.

#Mudiar

The Iranian team just left Islamabad after putting forth its demands, and the U.S. team is visiting Islamabad in Pakistan. What is the significance of this round of indirect talks?

#Mohammad

I don't think we can call them indirect talks because they're not in two separate rooms where messages are being sent back and forth. But I think we'll have to see what sort of message or messages are sent back and forth ultimately. My understanding is that the Iranian delegation took a letter by Dr. Ghanibaf, the chief Iranian negotiator, for Pakistani leaders, and obviously they will show that letter to the Americans, and it will contain Iranian conditions for renewed negotiations. We have to remember that the Iranians and Americans only negotiated over the past few months on one day, and that was in Islamabad when Vance and the Iranian Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Ghanibaf, met for a day.

Before that, it was all messages that went back and forth. I'm assuming that in Dr. Ghanibaf's letter, the issue of the siege on Iranian ports will definitely be mentioned. The Iranians have said that the United States is violating the ceasefire by continuing this blockade and by hijacking Iranian ships and attacking Iranian ships. These are acts of war. And until the United States continues to violate the ceasefire, there's really no meaningful reason why Iran should continue, because negotiating means that they will try to sit together and find new areas where they can move forward, and each side would have to have new commitments.

But if the American side is not abiding by its older commitments, then this creates an incentive for them not to abide by new commitments. And also, in order for it to carry out the old commitment, it would demand further concessions. So continuing negotiations is meaningless until the previous deal is carried out by both sides completely. We have to remember that when there was a ceasefire, the two sides agreed upon a comprehensive ceasefire for the region. And Netanyahu wrecked it. He carpet-bombed Lebanon and carried out a major assault. And Iran said, as long as that happens, we are not going to allow the extra ships that were agreed upon to leave through the Strait of Hormuz from the Persian Gulf, to allow those ships to leave.

And then after 10 days, Netanyahu was forced into accepting that ceasefire, even though he's killing people every day, like in Gaza and in Lebanon. He's killing people as he killed poor people today, as far as I know. But after he accepted the ceasefire, then the Iranians allowed those ships to go through in accordance with the ceasefire agreement. But since Trump then subsequently said he would continue to enforce a blockade, which he had imposed a few days earlier, the Iranians said, well, if that's the case, then we're not going to allow any of those ships through because this is a new violation of the ceasefire.

#Mudiar

The objective conditions within the United States, both economic and political—political because the midterms are coming in the fall and Trump's and the Republicans' popularity is extremely low. Given the objective conditions in the U.S. are so unfavorable to the war, how do you explain the rhetoric coming out of Washington today? I'm particularly highlighting what you just said about the insistence of the U.S. side on not just blockading, but also seizing Iranian ships or ships related to Iran. That includes a major company, a Chinese company, and also, according to some reports, 40

different ships. Also, Scott Bazin said that they seized some \$344 million of cryptocurrency linked to Iran. How do you explain the divergence between the objective conditions within the U.S. and the rhetoric coming out from U.S. officials?

#Mohammad

Well, we'll have to see about some of those claims. But without a doubt, it just shows that what Joe Kent said in his resignation letter is absolutely correct, and that is that Iran was not a threat, of course. Iran was not developing a nuclear weapon. But this war is about the Zionist lobby and the Israeli regime. The United States is increasingly waking up to the reality of Zionism. Popular opinion is turning against the Israeli regime, especially among the youth. In the last two and a half years, they've turned hostile towards the regime. But the political establishment is very much captured by the Zionists. And so we have two divergent paths forward. We have two very different ways forward. One is the narrative that Trump is seeking an off-ramp, and the other is that Trump is about to escalate.

And it's very difficult to understand, if not impossible to understand, what Trump wants. But what is clear is that Trump did have an off-ramp. When Iran agreed to, after Netanyahu ended his bloodlust in Lebanon for a bit, and the Iranians implemented their side of the deal, Trump could have said, okay, well, I'll lift the siege. And that would have been an off-ramp. He could have called that a success, and he could have said that I opened the Strait of Hormuz. Forget the fact that it was always open before the war. But he could have called that a success and an achievement and used that as a means to walk away or to de-escalate. But he didn't do that. He did the opposite. He went and further escalated. He attacked the Iranian ships. He continues to impose this siege. So for me, it's impossible to understand what Trump wants right now. I don't know what goes on in his mind. What is clear in Iran is that they are preparing for war, and they've been preparing for war since the day of the ceasefire, since the day the fighting halted. And some believe that war can happen at any time now, that the United States may launch another war, or they may restart the war within hours, and quite possibly also with strikes on critical Iranian infrastructure. That's what Iran is preparing for. It may not happen in the next few hours. It may not happen in the next couple of days. But the Iranians are preparing for the worst.

#Mudiar

CENTCOM, I think it was yesterday, boasted of having three aircraft carriers now in West Asia, for the first time since the Iraq invasion, which includes more than 200 aircraft and 15,000 Marines and sailors, as they have announced.

#Mudiar

I wanted to ask you a little bit about the Iranian side of the negotiation, since, as you rightly pointed out, it's very difficult, perhaps impossible, to understand what's in the mind of the U.S. negotiators. I

wanted to ask you, how do you summarize or how do you analytically put forth the demands of the Iranian side? So we've known the clauses about the right to enrichment, relief from sanctions. Now it includes the right to collect tax or toll in the Strait of Hormuz, reparations. Some of the more radical demands include the end of U.S. bases in the region. But if you were to put forth for our viewers a framework of understanding it, can it be understood in terms of the JCPOA, or has it moved much beyond the JCPOA? What is that framework of negotiation for Iran?

#Mohammad

Well, the JCPOA was a limited agreement about Iran's nuclear program, its peaceful nuclear program, and it led to limited sanctions relief. And the Americans never fulfilled their obligations. Under Obama, the United States waited for Iran to fulfill its obligations, and then it did not fulfill its own. And actually, the reason why Iran negotiates differently today is because of the JCPOA, because they remember how the JCPOA was designed in a way that was to Iran's disadvantage. So now, for Iran, the U.S. promise or the signature of a U.S. president is meaningless, especially someone like Trump. The only thing that is important for Iran are the facts on the ground. So when it was decided that Iran would allow ships, because the Strait of Hormuz was never closed.

Iranian ships, Iraqi ships, Russian ships, Chinese ships — they would pass through. The ships that were not allowed to pass through were from hostile regimes. The five regimes in the Persian Gulf that host U.S. bases — meaning Kuwait, the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain — which were used against Iran and were used to carry out assaults across the country and caused the deaths of thousands of Iranians, those countries are all considered hostile. So their ships were prevented from crossing through the Strait of Hormuz. But in the ceasefire agreement, it was agreed that alongside a comprehensive ceasefire across the region, including Lebanon, Iran would allow a larger number of ships, a certain number of ships from these countries, to pass through the Strait.

Now, when Netanyahu tried to crash the ceasefire agreement and carpet-bomb Lebanon in order to do so, Iran immediately stopped, blocked the movement of those ships. So it's no longer a piece of paper; it's a fact on the ground. They don't carry out their commitment, the Iranians don't carry out their commitment — they stop immediately. As soon as Netanyahu implemented the ceasefire after 10 days of slaughter, the Iranians began to implement the deal. And we saw the foreign minister announce that on X, on Twitter. But hours after — I don't know how long after, an hour or two, a few hours later — Trump said, the Strait of Hormuz is open. It's never going to be closed again.

But I'm keeping my siege in place. Now, that siege was only a few days old since Iran refused to let those ships leave because the Zionist regime was not abiding by the ceasefire. Trump, to put pressure on Iran, imposed that siege. But then when Netanyahu fulfilled his obligation, the Iranians said they'll allow the ships to go. Trump said, I'm keeping this siege in place. And again, the Iranians said, if that's the case, then we're not letting ships leave. So for Iran, everything at the negotiating table is a different sort of place than it was in 2015, where I made a promise and then you made a promise and I made a promise. So I carry out six or seven different promises.

And then suddenly you'd say, well, you know, that's good news, but I'm not able to fulfill some of my obligations and it's difficult. And, you know, so it was both limited and also somewhat—I don't want to say poorly negotiated—but it had flaws. This is something much more comprehensive. Iran put forward a 10-point plan in order to resolve the war, and anyone who reads the 10-point plan would see it's very reasonable. And Trump, by the end of the war, accepted the 10-point plan that Iran gave as the framework for negotiations. But after the talks began, suddenly the Americans said, no, we're not going to use this. But this is something that Trump accepted.

So Iran is going to stick with the 10-point plan. And anyone who looks at it, it's quite simple. It's basically sovereignty, the respect for Iran's sovereignty, protecting Iran's allies across the region from aggression, and reparations for the war. And, of course, the removal of sanctions. Of course, the Iranian nuclear program can be discussed, and a solution can be found where Iran's sovereignty is respected. And if there are serious concerns about Iran's nuclear program, ways can be—you know, we've already negotiated that before—ways can be found to ease those or deal with those concerns. But it's a reasonable plan, and Iran is not going to allow the Americans to push the negotiations away from that 10-point plan.

#Mudiar

Sovereignty is the big overarching theme, as you just said. I wanted to ask you about your response to some scholars from West Asia, but also beyond, saying that this moment of Iranian pushback against imperialism is so big that it can be compared to, or sometimes goes beyond, what happened in Egypt or Syria after the Second World War—the rise of nationalism under Gamal Abdel Nasser and others that gave the region tremendous self-confidence in terms of fighting imperialism and empire. There are others, like Robert Pape from the University of Chicago, who would go even further and say that this has propelled Iran into one of the four major powers, given that Iran would be able to control 20 percent of energy flow along with China and Russia alone. How far would you go as an Iranian? To what extent do you think this war has increased Iran's significance?

#Mohammad

Well, it definitely has increased the significance of Iran in the axis of resistance dramatically. And I think it's probably the single most important event since the Second World War. And this is a turning point for the U.S. Empire. And the United States, I think from this point onwards, will no longer be able to impose itself on countries across the world in the way in which it had done so before. Remember, just during the first year of Trump's presidency, he was bullying country after country, including India, with its huge population and size, on tariffs and on trade policy. I think that it's clear that the United States is severely weakened.

Of course, the war is not over, and it is quite possibly going to become very deadly in the days ahead. And many people will quite possibly be killed in the next round of U.S.-Zionist aggression. But

at least from the way I see it now, this will be of great importance globally. And it is the end of, I think, U.S. global hegemony. Not that it will change overnight, but I think it's clear that in the future the United States is not going to be able to behave with the impunity that it had before. I've spoken to some very senior diplomats and scholars in countries across Asia and beyond, including China and Russia, for example, and they have expressed shock that Iran performed this way in the war.

They were expecting Iran to be defeated in the first few days. In fact, they expected Iran to lose the 12-day war. And when Iran defeated the Israeli regime during the 12-day war, their views evolved somewhat. But when this war began, they thought that Iran would definitely be defeated within a few days. And although I never believed this, and friends of mine, none of us believed this to be the case, even I am impressed with how well Iran performed. They did better than I expected. But again, we are heading towards quite possibly a more devastating war because the empire, the dying empire, is lashing out. It's angry.

And remember, this is the empire that slaughters kids. It's not just the Zionist regime that goes after children, but the Americans go after children too. And we saw that happen many times during this war. On the first day of the war, they slaughtered 168 little schoolchildren intentionally, at a school in Minab. The reason why I say intentionally is because it was the first wave of attacks. All of the initial targets in the war are very carefully vetted. They had weeks and months to do so. That school was well known. It was on all the apps and on all the maps. Many of the children were the children of officers, and it was clear what the Americans were doing.

They wanted to make the officers suffer. And so, in any case, the point is that we are dealing with a dying but vicious and sinister empire, and we will quite possibly see very dark times ahead. And of course, the Iranians have said that if critical infrastructure is targeted, then they will destroy the critical infrastructure of the Israeli regime and its coalition allies and partners in the Persian Gulf. Because without them, the United States would not be able to wage this war. And without the United States waging this war, the Israeli regime could not wage this war. So if we do have a new wave of fighting, then I think that a global economic depression is assured. It will definitely happen.

#Mudiar

The IEA has already said that the impact of the rise in oil prices and the breakdown of the supply chain may last at least two years. At least for prices like LNG and LPG, it will be very, very high for at least two years. I wanted to finally ask you, what do you think would be the significance and impact on Iran itself, given that a lot of analysis and media in the West don't discuss this question? Of course, Iran has taken a lot of damage. Some calculations are to the tune of 200 to 300 million U.S. dollars, I guess. Don't quote me, I'm just citing off the cuff. But the bigger point being... a billion dollars. Excuse me?

#Mohammad

You mean a billion dollars.

#Mudiar

Billion dollars. Okay, yeah. Yeah, so what are the significances politically, economically, militarily? What's the significance of this war for Iran itself?

#Mohammad

Well, it also depends on how the war continues and how things play out. The damage could become much more. And I think that if the war continues and the United States and the Israeli regime strike Iran's critical infrastructure, then some countries in the region may actually disappear from the map. The Emirates and Kuwait and Bahrain and Qatar and Saudi Arabia — they are heavily dependent on oil and gas, and Iran will destroy all the oil and gas installations under those circumstances. And of course, Iran will destroy their electrical power plants. And we're heading towards a very hot season. We're heading towards summer. And in the Persian Gulf, the summer is extraordinarily hot and humid. And without electricity, sustaining society in these countries, especially the tiny countries, that will, I think, have an impact that goes far beyond the estimates. It will impact those estimates that we're hearing about two years and so on. If those regimes fall, then we may have a new situation altogether in parts of the Arabian Peninsula. And if the damage to Iran is increased, Iran will obviously demand more reparations from these very same entities. So it's hard to say where this is going to go. There will be a lot of chaos ahead, a lot of difficulty and pain ahead. But the Iranians have shown enormous resilience. This is something that people are talking about across the world. Their resistance, their resilience is something that no one thought was possible under these circumstances. And so far they've had complete success. And I believe that if the war restarts, we'll see the same.

The Americans may invade parts of the country. They may start destroying our critical infrastructure to take us back to the Stone Age or to try to wipe out a civilization, which I think is the end of the United States as a power because the world is seeing the United States as being no different than Nazi Germany — actually worse than Nazi Germany in many ways, because they're supporting an ethno-supremacist regime in Palestine and carrying out all these atrocities in the name of ethno-supremacism. It's very interesting that just a few days ago I had a discussion, a debate with Piers Morgan, and I asked him if he believes that an ethno-supremacist regime is illegitimate or whether it was legitimate or not. And I asked him three times. He refused to respond.

And I think that just shows the real scope of freedom of speech in the West, and it shows the real state of affairs in the West with regards to freedom of speech. And the United States, by being prepared to carry out atrocities and genocide in Lebanon and Gaza and across Palestine and Yemen and against Iran, and to destroy Iraq and to destroy all these countries, or attempt to destroy all these countries for the sake of the Israeli regime, I think this will be remembered in history. And I think that will be the end of the United States, at least in this era, as the global—well, definitely as a

global hegemon—but I think it will be diminished in a big way because of how it will be perceived by people across the world.

#Mudiar

Just to end on a lighter note, how do you feel coming out of a Piers Morgan show or all those British outlets who, I don't know, it's very hard to describe who they are, but they're definitely controlled, and everything they do is to get their payment?

#Mohammad

Yeah, I think that on that show, at least for me, Piers Morgan, for the first time, revealed that he can't say just anything. And Piers Morgan Uncensored is indeed Piers Morgan very much censored. He cannot say things. And when you look at it from this perspective, then a lot of things that he does and a lot of the things that he says make much more sense. Because often you see him saying utter nonsense, and you'd think that he would know better after what he's been hearing from some of his guests. But when you see how he's incapable of taking a position on ethno-supremacism, then I think that makes everything clear as day.

#Mudiar

Yeah, I never had a doubt about how censored the so-called uncensored is. I don't like to discuss other forums here, but in this context, I remember Professor Fuad Azadi being interviewed. And the moment he said that Iran supports Hamas as part of national liberation, he was immediately shut off and thrown out of the show. And that was a very revealing moment.

#Mohammad

Well, I said that more than once. But Piers Morgan apparently, for some reason, keeps inviting me back on his show. And every time he, or almost every time, he gets very angry. After doing so, I don't see the point of him inviting me when he gets angry. A lot of people tell me, why do you go on repeatedly, and when he insults you in this very personal way? For me, that's not really important at all. If I have an opportunity to say something to a broader audience, I'll use that opportunity. And it doesn't matter if I'm attacked or they attempt to humiliate me or not. If I can convince two people to rethink, two people somewhere to rethink their views, for me, that would make it worth it.

#Mudiar

Absolutely. We'll leave it there, Professor Marandi. Thank you for taking the time, and have a wonderful rest of the day ahead.

#Ayushman

Hi, my name is Ayushman. I, along with Mudiar Jyotishman, have started this platform. Over the last two years, we have tried to build content for the left and progressive forces. We have interviewed economists, historians, political commentators, and activists so far. If you have liked our content so far and want us to build an archive for the left, I have two requests for you. Please do consider donating for the cause — the link is in the description below. Also, if you are not able to do so, don't feel sad. You can always like our videos and share our videos with your comrades. Finally, don't forget to hit the subscribe button.