

Seyed M. Marandi: How Washington Manufactures Consent for War

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We learned from the Iranian Foreign Ministry that he's going on a tour to Islamabad, then to Muscat, and later on to Moscow. And then something came out in the mainstream media, basically from Karine Jean-Pierre, you know, the White House Press Secretary. She 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 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 that the Iranians want to speak with us and 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, you know, 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. Faghiri and Dr. Araghchi, negotiated with Vance, Whitkoff, 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—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 at least four people so far 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. Iran 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 with each day that goes by, the situation for the entire world gets worse. And while there's no fighting on the ground, no explosions, 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 Gulf of Oman, 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, to respond.

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I don't know the details to continue 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 information in 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, 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 Iranians. And when we were coming back, we were waiting for a missile to strike the plane. So these are the media, these think tankers, these politicians — they're all like sort of lieutenants of the mafia don.

But, you know, 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 Seyyed 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. Ghalibaf, 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's 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. But the Supreme National Security Council, designated with the support of the leader, Dr. Ghalibaf, to carry out negotiations with the United States.

So it's clear who the decision-maker is. It's Dr. Ghalibaf. And he is the one who negotiates, of course, within the framework that the council and the leader have designated for him. So there's no division. There are 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, not 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. Ghalibaf is in charge of the file. So that's just all nonsense.

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Because there was other news as well that said Dr. Ghalibaf was removed from his position as the main negotiator, 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?

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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, people here, 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. So, 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, you know, 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 Europe.

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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.

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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...

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Because, 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 don't, 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 to—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.

