

# Seyed M. Marandi: Iran Rejects U.S. Deal - War Is Likely Imminent

Prof. Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Prof. Marandi argues that the US has handed over a peace proposal to Iran that is not acceptable, and war is likely imminent (Recorded May 9, 2026). 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](https://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 are joined again by Professor Seyed Mohammad Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Thank you for coming back. We see that things keep changing fast in this war. The latest news I see is that the United States has handed over a peace proposal to Iran, and they're now saying they're waiting for Iran's response. However, it seems that part of this deal doesn't actually address any nuclear issues, and it also doesn't address the Strait of Hormuz, if I'm not mistaken. What can we make of this? Why are these negotiations taking place?

## #Seyed M. Marandi

Well, thank you very much for inviting me, Glenn. It's always a great pleasure. With regards to the content of the American proposal, we'll have to wait and see. But I think it's very clear that the Iranian position is not going to shift away from its current priorities. Number one is a ceasefire and an end to the fighting. The United States and the Israeli regime are currently violating that ceasefire. And until they end the slaughter in Lebanon and in Gaza and the siege, until Trump ends the siege on the Persian Gulf, there won't be any possibility to move forward. After that, it will be the 10-point plan that the Iranians put forward and Trump accepted.

The Iranians are not going to move away from that. If the Americans think that over time it's going to change, or that these are just put forward for internal consumption and that sort of thing, they're mistaken. They're badly mistaken. And it's a major miscalculation, as big as the miscalculation they made when they launched the war in the first place. So what the Americans are now saying—the news now is that the Americans are insisting that the Iranians have to respond within a particular time frame. And that very demand is going to make the Iranians respond later. In other words, when the United States starts trying to bully Iran at any level, the Iranians are going to push back.

So I assume that whatever deadline the Americans have given, the Iranians are going to give their response, even if it's ready a day or two or three later than that deadline, just to make sure that the Americans get the message that Iran's not going to be intimidated. So my assumption is that, and I'm just speculating, the American proposal violates Iran's sovereignty, and it seeks—again, without knowing the content—it seeks that which it has not been able to gain on the battlefield, and thus it will definitely not be acceptable if that is true. Iran is willing to be flexible on different issues, but not with regards to principles. So when it comes to the nuclear program, Iran is not going to give up its peaceful nuclear program or its enrichment program.

It's not going to give up its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz. It's not going to give up any of these key issues, but it's willing to do a deal like it did in 2015. But I don't believe the 2015 deal is acceptable to Iran either. It's going to have to be an upgraded version—not the upgraded version that Trump is thinking about, but the upgraded version that the Iranians are thinking about. So if Trump thinks that he's going to get a deal better than that of Obama's, I think he's badly mistaken. Any deal, ultimately, if we ever have a deal, will have to be much more favorable than the 2015 agreement. At the end of the day, Glenn, the Americans—or Trump and Netanyahu—they gambled and they lost. And they may attack again.

The belief here is that there's a very strong possibility that an attack may be imminent. And I know I've said this a couple of times before in the last couple of weeks, but that's been the mood here for the last couple of weeks—that an attack could happen at any time. It could happen now, it could happen tonight, tomorrow morning. It could happen any time before Trump's visit to China, and it could happen afterwards as well. At the moment, the way in which U.S. forces are postured in our region indicates that an attack is quite possible, is probable. Again, it may not happen, but that's what the Iranians have prepared themselves for. And the belief is that the attacks that the Americans have carried out in the Persian Gulf region, in the Gulf of Oman, and near the Strait of Hormuz—

This was a test. And I think they understood that the Iranian response was significant. The Iranian response was robust, as they say, I guess. I don't know what the terminology would be for this. So the Americans, they... regardless of what exactly happened during these last few days, the fact is that no ships left the Strait of Hormuz. And I think that's the most important thing to come out of all of this. Despite all their efforts, no ships left. They're all in the Strait of Hormuz. And the U.S. ships, from my understanding, have been struck—not by missiles, but by drones. The Iranians did not want to damage these ships badly because Iran does not want to escalate. But at the same time, the Iranians want the Americans to recognize that they are very vulnerable.

So the damage done was intentionally limited. In addition to that, the Americans have not been able to, from my sources—and my sources are not bad—they have not struck any military naval ships. They've hit a civilian ship that was carrying a small amount of cargo from Oman, killing one person. Before, I thought there were five people killed, but one person was killed. And they hit a number of fishing boats that were linked to, that were, I think, if I'm not mistaken, moving to help that boat

that was hit—the boat that was in distress. But no one was killed. But what the Americans did do is they murdered a few people on a tanker that was linked to Iran. But they have not been able to—not a single Iranian soldier has been killed.

Not a single Iranian naval boat or ship has been struck by the Americans. And no ships have left the Persian Gulf. And finally, as a reminder, I want your viewers to always remember, the Strait of Hormuz is not closed. The Iranians have never closed the Strait of Hormuz. It is closed to those five countries that participated in the war against Iran, meaning Bahrain, the Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Otherwise, ships that belong to friendly countries go through. And ships that belong to friendly countries that did business with these five countries, some of them through negotiations have passed through the Strait of Hormuz. But it is the Americans that have right now caused a situation where effectively nothing is going through the Strait of Hormuz.

## **#Glenn**

It would appear that the U.S. is going back to war against Iran. As you said, the true posture in the region indicates this. And also the rhetoric that is, you know, Iran has to accept this deal, Iran can't accept this deal. So it does appear that they're going back to war. On the other hand, the U.S. seems to have some limitations, though, in the actual weapons stockpiles and also in what it can actually achieve.

I mean, I think the Americans are now accepting more that they're not going to be able to achieve these objectives, to put it that way. The Strait of Hormuz is under U.S. control, so it begs the question what they would do next. But I wanted to ask, since you mentioned Israel and Lebanon, because one of the things that Iran has put forward would be to have an end to the attacks on Lebanon, but it appears that the United States isn't really going in this direction, or at least seemingly avoiding putting any limitations on Israel's warfare in the region. Do you know if this has dropped out completely of the talks, or is it on the American side at least, or is this still something they're discussing?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

It doesn't matter to Iran what the Americans want to have on the table or what the Americans remove from the table. There has to be a regional ceasefire. Lebanon was named, but it was because of the heavy fighting. But it's a regional ceasefire, so it would have to include Gaza. And the Iranians are not going to remove that from the table. That is a condition. If that condition is not met, then there's no ceasefire. And it doesn't matter what sort of pressure the Americans put on or try to put on Iran. So not only do they have to fulfill all of their obligations within the framework of the ceasefire that was agreed after 39 days of war.

So the Americans began the war with Netanyahu and the Zionist regime. They began the war by demanding unconditional surrender. And they failed. And at the end of the day, after 39 days, they

accepted the Iranian 10-point plan as the framework for negotiations. Trump himself accepted that. So that is why we accepted a ceasefire. And of course, it was a major symbolic defeat. And that's why Trump was ridiculed and attacked. And then his spokeswoman said, no, we threw this in the bin. But this is what he accepted. And so that is the framework for negotiations. And then we had the ceasefire.

The ceasefire that was agreed upon is the framework also for being able to move forward with those negotiations. So Iran is not going to accept the Americans shifting their position or saying that... I mean, what the Americans want is for the Israelis to slaughter Palestinians and slaughter Lebanese. I mean, the extermination... We've seen two and a half years of extermination in Palestine, and the collective West has supported it. That's not acceptable to us. And so that will not be a problem in the negotiations. That will block negotiations or progress in negotiations.

## **#Glenn**

How do you make sense of the seeming disruption, though, in some of the cooperation between the Gulf states and the United States? Because apparently Saudi Arabia limited its airspace to the Americans and then revoked it—well, pulled back from this limitation shortly thereafter. Are there any splits now in the American-led alliance, or was this just a very temporary phenomenon?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

I don't think anyone is very certain whether it was blocked and then unblocked at all in the first place, or whether it was blocked or is still blocked. No one knows. The only thing that the Iranians know is that the U.S. has substantial aircraft capabilities, air power capabilities. Qatar and the Emirates, I think their air power is focused in four places if I'm not mistaken, or five places, but a lot is in Saudi Arabia, in Jordan, in the Emirates, and in Qatar. The ground troops that they brought to the region, from my understanding, a lot of them are in Kuwait, in Bahrain, and in the Emirates again. So they are present, and therefore the Iranians are prepared for an attack.

And if Iran is attacked, we know what the Iranian response is going to be. It's going to be devastating for those countries that host and support U.S. action. It will be like the 39-day war, but probably significantly more devastating. You know, you recall that after the war, they were saying that Iran's missile capabilities were diminished, that their drone capabilities were diminished. And I was arguing that this is not the case. And now we're seeing information coming out in Western media that's closer to the truth. In other words, they're saying the strong majority of Iran's capabilities are still intact, whereas U.S. capabilities, as you've noted, have been diminished—their ammunition and so on.

But I would argue that even that assessment is not correct. Iranian missile capabilities now, and drone capabilities, are greater than before the 39-day war because Iran has been producing more advanced missiles. And before the 39-day war and during the 39-day war, Iran was using, to a very

large degree, its older missiles and drones. A lot of the missiles and drones that were used in the Persian Gulf region and against the Israeli regime were missiles and drones that were produced 10 or 15 years ago. But many missiles and drones have been produced in underground factories over the past couple of months that are of the most advanced quality—military hardware that Iran possesses.

## **#Glenn**

You mentioned before China, and as we know, Trump and Xi Jinping will meet, well, most likely at least next week. I'm guessing that Iran will be—well, the topic of Iran will be high on the agenda, especially given that the Chinese, for good reason, see themselves as being targets in this war. Yeah. And we've also seen reports of a Chinese vessel attack. Do you think—well, to what extent do you think this meeting between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping will, well, I guess, pan out in terms of the discussions around Iran? Are the Chinese going to play hardball on this? Or do you think they will roll over? Or what will they even put forth? Will they demand anything? No.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, the Chinese and the Iranians, when they met in Beijing a few days ago, had a very good meeting. And the Chinese were very impressed by Iran's performance during the war. Very impressed. Just like the Russians have been very impressed. And so have people across the world. I think many people expected, many good people expected Iran to fold in the war. And they were pleasantly—not surprised, shocked, if you can say—that it ended the way it did, which I wasn't surprised. I think many of our friends were not surprised, but anyway, many others were. So the Chinese have said that Iran's global stature has been enhanced significantly, and it will impact the future. And as you rightly point out, the United States is targeting China and Russia and Iran simultaneously.

And it's not lost upon the Chinese that the Americans have already occupied Venezuela and that they and the Israeli regime want full control of Western Asia. And that would mean that energy resources would be under U.S. control. So for China, that is obviously a serious concern. Not so much because of energy for Russia, but because NATO would have a very—if, for example, they had succeeded against Iran—their presence in West Asia would be very different from what it is today. So I don't think the Americans—there's much that they can do. And to be very blunt, I mean, Iran has very good relations with China and excellent relations with Russia. But Iran won this war on its own. I mean, there's no doubt that the driving force behind this victory came from within Iran.

It was Iran's resilience, Iran's resistance, the people. It was the armed forces. I mean, Iran has good relations—excellent relations—with China, Russia, and other countries. But the Iranians achieved a great deal on their own. That is what impressed the Chinese and the Russians so much, that the Iranians were able to score this victory. So no matter what happens, the Americans know that the Strait of Hormuz is controlled by Iran, and if the Americans are publicly involved in the Persian Gulf

region, then they have to abide by their commitments within the framework of this ceasefire. Nothing other than that will be acceptable to Iran, and there's nothing that the United States can do about it. They can wage another war, they can bring in land troops as well, but they won't be able to change the status of the Strait of Hormuz.

## **#Glenn**

Well, I was wondering, though, the Americans seem to be probing now, as they did with this Operation Freedom. They were going to see if they could sail through the Strait of Hormuz, if the Iranians would back down. If the Iranians did back down, of course, they would announce this to the world, especially to the Europeans, some of their allies in East Asia, trying to probably recruit some more to participate in keeping it, I guess, within full access for themselves.

But what do you see being Iran's, I guess, red lines that would trigger a much wider war? Because as you said, when Iran struck these American ships, they used drones because they didn't want to go too fast up that escalation ladder, to give the Americans an opportunity to back down. But again, the first time around, when the Americans attacked back in February, Iran went very quickly up that escalation ladder. So what do you think are the main red lines that the Americans might cross that would lead to a much more forceful, I guess, Iranian response?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, right now, as I said earlier, the main discussion is that there's a high possibility of the United States carrying out a major assault and simultaneously using terrorist organizations that are based in the no man's land in Pakistan, but more importantly, the terrorist organizations that are based in northern Iraq that could carry out a major assault. I'm sure you and your audience have been hearing the news of Iran striking at these groups in northern Iraq over the past few days, because the Iranians know that they are preparing for a potential assault. And so that is the basic... that is what the Iranians are basically thinking is the number one possibility — that Trump and Netanyahu will launch a major assault simultaneously. You may have land forces try to take islands or attack the mainland in Iran, or carry out an operation deep inside Iran, as they tried before and failed.

And then simultaneously you'll have these Kurdish terror groups with other terror groups alongside them, and these Wahhabi terror groups in Pakistan that will join them under the guidance of the United States and Israelis — a combined operation. But the Iranians are confident that they will manage, that they will be able to easily beat back the terrorists from northern Iraq and the terrorists from inside Pakistani territory, and also any American invasion of the country. They are fully prepared. And just as the Americans have been bringing in new troops, the Iranians have been very busy preparing themselves for the next phase. And as all this is happening, Glenn, the global economy is getting worse by the day. So while the Americans are constantly looking for ways to escalate, they are pushing the world closer to the abyss instead of trying to seek a solution.

And if they do escalate, since Iran's response will be very severe, then I would imagine that there will be, and critical infrastructure will be further damaged across the region, if not totally destroyed. That would make a global depression a fact — it will no longer be something that people speculate about. And also, even if the damage is limited, let's say the United States does this for a few days, because that is another scenario — that the Iranians are saying the Americans would carry out, let's say, a short attack. First of all, there would be damage. The Iranian response will be very severe. But also, it will set back any opportunity for a ceasefire to be put in place. So it's only going to make the global economy suffer more. And we are, from what I've been hearing from economists, reaching that very critical phase where the global economy goes far — the crisis goes far beyond inflation and rising food prices.

## **#Glenn**

Well, that's a great point, because even while this ceasefire — let's call it a very flawed ceasefire, but a ceasefire nonetheless — is ongoing, a lot of the problems are still building up. That is, the problems for the global economy are worsening. What do you think could be the wider, I guess, economic consequences if this continues much longer? As you said, we seem to be reaching a point where it will become quite disastrous. But again, we haven't felt everything, I think, because it hasn't really worked its way through the system yet.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Yes, I think there are things that are going to happen even if there is a ceasefire today. Even if the United States, under Trump, comes to its senses and tells the Zionists and Netanyahu, no, we're not going to continue this and we have to implement a ceasefire, and you can no longer bomb women and children in Gaza and in Lebanon, and we're going to have to end the siege on the ports. Even if that happens today, from my understanding, the global economy is going to suffer immensely. And that suffering is going to increase in the weeks and months ahead before it moves back to, not normality, but before it settles down. But every day that this crisis continues — so there's no shooting going on except for skirmishes near the Strait of Hormuz.

But what is happening to the global economy is more devastating than a major war, because the global economy is silently being destroyed. So in the days and weeks ahead, what we're going to see is supply chains falling apart, because all of these petrochemical products — it's not just fertilizer, it's not just helium or oil, LNG — it's all those different products that are produced in the Persian Gulf region in petrochemical plants that are necessary for all sorts of goods to be produced in factories. And then also other products and industries that are in the Persian Gulf that are energy-intensive. And here was the ideal place to have those plants, like aluminum and so on. So we are heading towards disaster.

But instead of moving towards a ceasefire, Trump is making it worse. In other words, Glenn, time is not on the side of Trump. He thinks that he's starving Iran, and the Iranian economy is hurting, and

it's going to hurt more. There's no doubt about that. We are at war. This is siege warfare. But the global economy is much more vulnerable than the Iranian economy because Iranians have been living under siege for decades, and the world economy is not prepared for this. But second of all, the Iranians are resistant and resilient because they know that they are victims of aggression. The world has no reason to feel that they have to be resistant and resilient because the Zionists, Trump, and Netanyahu brought this upon them for no reason at all.

And in addition to that, the United States foolishly began this siege after the ceasefire. The Iranians were expecting this siege to begin on day one when the war started — the Ramadan War, the 39 days of fighting. The Iranians thought they were going to impose a siege on the Strait back then. So the siege on Iran is only like two, three weeks old, whereas what the Americans have done to the global economy, what the Israelis have done, is like seven — I don't know — it's like two and a half months now. So all of their calculations were wrong. Everything that they've done has been carried out foolishly. And the Iranians are very confident that the United States has absolutely no good options, and the world is going to blame the United States and the Israelis and Zionism for the catastrophe.

## **#Glenn**

How do you see the Middle East region in general being changed following this war? Because, well, we haven't seen Yemen yet join in. Well, of course, if, as you say, argue that the U.S. attack on Iran is imminent and go back to this all-out war, one can assume that Yemen might jump in rather quickly. But if we look at Iraq, it also appears to have changed a lot over the past two months. That is, a lot of the Western troops have been leaving, so that looks quite different. You also made the point that they could make a move against Kuwait.

We see the United Arab Emirates and Qatar especially have had a lot of their—not just their oil and gas profits, but also the trust in the finances there, the real estate—that all of this is going to be very difficult to recover. And of course, the big prize, I guess, for Iran would be to have the Strait of Hormuz under its control, which would allow Iran to extract both security as well as influence from it. Essentially, well, if any of these Gulf states want to be able to have proper access, they can't continue to, I guess, function as frontline states for the U.S. So how do you see the whole Middle Eastern region shifting if this war continues to go in Iran's favor?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, the longer the war lasts, the worse it's going to be for these five states, especially the Emirates. The Emirates is now trying to convince Egypt to help them, but it's not going to change anything. The Emirates is extremely vulnerable. It's a tiny regime with a population of 1.2 million. And Iran is not going to tolerate any of these countries being allies of the Israeli regime anymore. And they're not going to allow the United States to have these countries as a foothold to attack Iran either. In the case of the Emirates, it's the alliance with Israel. Even though the Iranians know that

all of them are friendly to Israel, Qatar has its secret communications with Israel. They've had it for years.

The Iranians know all of these things, but that's not going to be tolerated in the future. Neither will U.S. military assets that can threaten Iran be tolerated either. So the region is going to change. If there is further war, it's only going to weaken them because they're small and vulnerable. And if their infrastructure, especially in the summer months, if there is war and the United States does actually do a Trump-style threat and destroy Iran's critical infrastructure or attempt to do so, then the critical infrastructure of these countries will be destroyed. And they're all in the Arabian Peninsula. It's going to be very hot and humid there. They will not be able to tolerate the place. They'll have to leave. They'll all have to leave.

The countries will all be emptied out, and U.S. forces will not be able to stay there under such circumstances when there's no electricity. So it would be utterly foolish to engage in warfare against Iran, and especially after a week or two, because this month, May, is a transition month. The end of May is much hotter than early May, much more humid than early May. Time is not on the side of the Americans. And these regimes, their fate will be determined by the actions of the United States. The summer weather for Iran is like the winter for Russia. When the Napoleonic wars and Napoleon's invasion of Russia, World War II, we know the role that winter played for Russia. The summer heat in the Arabian Peninsula, I think, serves the Iranian military very well. But hopefully they won't do this.

Iran does not want to hurt these regimes. If we look back at the damage that Iran has done to these countries, which is massive, but when we look at the number of people who died, it's extraordinary. Only 20 people died in these countries, in these five countries, roughly 20. 3,400 and some Iranians were murdered by the Americans and Israelis and these countries that helped them carry out the war. But only 20 were killed in the Persian Gulf. Why? Because Iran is careful not to target ordinary citizens. They've been targeting those assets that have been targeting Iran, or they've been retaliating as a result of strikes on Iranian critical infrastructure.

They've been striking back at critical infrastructure, but they never targeted ordinary people. So when you look at the damage done, the damage done to these five regimes, and Israelis, of course, that goes without saying, and you put that alongside Iran, the infrastructure damage—the damage to these regimes is much greater: the oil and gas and so on. But when you look at the number of people murdered, it's incomparable—the Iranians and the Lebanese, of course. So Iran doesn't want anyone to die. Iran does not want anyone to suffer. But if Iran's critical infrastructure is struck, there's not a chance in the world that Iran will refrain from retaliation.

Because if they don't, that will invite further strikes against Iran. Remember, when this coalition, this Epstein coalition, as I call it, struck the Iranian South Pars gas field, what did Iran do? Iran struck Qatar gas immediately, and it was a devastating blow. And then Trump put out a Truth Social post saying, "I had no idea this was happening. Netanyahu won't do this anymore." That's deterrence.

Iran did it so that Trump would refrain from launching further attacks. If we have another war and we have such a scenario again, Iran will be ruthless in destroying infrastructure.

## **#Glenn**

Well, that was my last question. If, again, you say the war appears to be imminent, you can also, as you pointed out now, argue that the window of opportunity for the U.S. to launch another strike might be closing. So it's an indication that this might come soon. But if the U.S. decides to return to all-out war, what cards do you think the Iranians will play, or how will they do this differently this time?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, if we look back at the 12-day war and the current war that began two and a half months ago, you see that the Iranians performed much better this time around than in the 12-day war. They won the 12-day war. But after the ceasefire, they went and rethought their strategies, their military structures, their civilian infrastructure, and thought of ways to be better prepared for war. And during this war, they outperformed that war. So I have no doubt that the experiences they've gained from the 39 days are going to give them a big advantage.

And there, you know, Glenn, there is a strong degree of self-confidence among the Iranian people, which existed at the start of the war, but it was enhanced a great deal during the war. Because a lot of Iranians were expecting success. I was expecting success. But a lot of Iranians were not so confident. Now you see that the number of people who feel very confident about fighting the United States, responding to aggression from the United States—the amount of confidence today is significantly greater than before. So the United States has no good options. The smart option would be to back down.

But, and I said this during the war, the Iranians from the beginning were preparing themselves for a long war. And the Iranians would prefer the Americans to carry out a land invasion because the Iranians want the United States to have a comprehensive defeat, to experience a comprehensive defeat so that we never have to go through this again. So the Iranians are not at all worried about another war. They're saying that if they back down, fine. If they implement the ceasefire, fine. But if they want to go and continue the war, we're fully prepared. Because ultimately what the Iranians want to do is to make sure that this country is never assaulted again, it's never invaded again, it's never attacked again.

## **#Glenn**

Well, thank you for taking the time, and I hope to speak to you very soon, as the situation appears to be changing very, very rapidly. So, thanks again.

**#Seyed M. Marandi**

Thank you for having me, Glenn.

**#Seyed M. Marandi**

It's always a great honor, and I hope to speak to you soon.