

Wyatt Reed reports from pro-government Iran rally

The Grayzone's Wyatt Reed relates his experience to Max Blumenthal of attending a pro-government rally in Tabriz, Iran and explains the significance of the nightly national citizens' shows of defiance against US-Israeli aggression. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

#Max

How long were you in Iran?

#Wyatt Reed

Close to two weeks. I flew in at the end of, I guess around April 21st. It took me a while. I had to go from DC to Istanbul, from Istanbul to Van, and then from Van I had to drive to the border because Iran's airports had been closed and just now opened up a few days ago. So I had to make the land journey from Van to the border of Iran and then from there to Iran itself. And then I went to Tabriz and to Tehran. So it took a while. It was almost a three-day journey.

#Max

Yeah, Israel bombed the Mehrabad Airport repeatedly, bombing civilian airliners, and it obviously wasn't safe to fly in. Under what circumstances did you enter Iran?

#Wyatt Reed

Across the land border.

#Max

But I mean, like, who hosted you, and what was your agenda there?

#Wyatt Reed

I, uh, there's a group named SAAB, that's pronounced "SAAB."

#Max

Yeah.

#Wyatt Reed

So, uh, that organizes a sort of documentary fest, a media festival once a year. This year, instead of doing that, it's been postponed. They organized a small group for independent journalists to come in and sort of see the reality themselves. It's a great way to see firsthand what's happening, and obviously access to Iran is pretty tight right now due to the wartime situation. So I feel very blessed to have been able to be one of the handful of people who actually get to see what's happening firsthand, because obviously the media has its own set of difficulties.

CNN was able to get a reporter in briefly, but I don't think they were able to see much of the country beyond Tehran. So, you know, I was able to see not just Tehran, but to go to Tabriz, like I mentioned, to Isfahan, to Bandar Abbas, to the Strait of Hormuz, to Minab, the site of this horrible, horrible crime against humanity by the U.S. military, back to Tehran, and then, you know, fly out, be one of the first people who saw these airports back in use again.

#Max

Well, you got right into the mix right after entering Tabriz. You attended one of the patriotic, pro-government rallies that have been ongoing since the unprovoked assault on Iran began on February 28th. Here's what you saw.

#Wyatt Reed

And I am surrounded by hundreds, if not thousands, of Iranians who are gathered here to celebrate their country, to celebrate its resistance to what they view as a U.S.-Israeli war of aggression. It's people of all ages, all backgrounds — all the kids, all the women, all the men. They're all describing that they're incredibly proud of what their country is doing, and if this ceasefire does end tonight, they will be willing to stand by their government.

#Max

So what were your impressions there? I mean, there are massive rallies in Tehran at Enghelab Square, and it looks like they brought out, as they do in Tehran, a ballistic missile launcher, which was kind of a new effect.

#Wyatt Reed

Yeah, I mean, it's impossible not to be kind of impressed by these rallies, which, as has been relayed to me, were really kind of these grassroots expressions of support for their government. I'm not sure why this keeps happening. I'm going to just leave it straight up if that happens again. But yeah, it's impressive, right? The first impression is that there's this huge crowd of people. They're all very much in support of their government.

In some cases, they kind of serve as a hard line that gives the government leverage to continue to maintain a firm stance against the U.S. and against Israel, because you have this huge show of people in the streets that are not really pleased with the idea of negotiating with the U.S. You know, if you were an Iranian negotiator and you're dealing with Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff, and they say, well, we want you to compromise on these particular issues, you can say with full sincerity, well, our people won't go for that because there are tens of thousands of people in the streets. Yeah, I guess we cannot go sideways on my phone, so I'm just going to keep this straight up. Every time we get a comment, it seems like it switches — it just wants to be sitting straight.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So that, you know, it serves as kind of a check on the ability of the Iranian leadership to capitulate. You have a very clear, massive group of Iranians who don't necessarily want their government to be negotiating, don't want to negotiate away any kind of uranium enrichment. And in addition, something that is also very clear is that while these rallies originated — obviously the government is working with them, and they're bringing in, as you mentioned, air defense and kind of military hardware to show off and for people to pose and take pictures with — they originated just kind of grassroots, organically, people wanting to do something to show their support for their government during this war that was imposed on them.

And they also, in that way, serve as a kind of check against the foreign riots — the foreign-backed riots that plagued the country for a couple of days in particular, but for several weeks at the beginning of the year. The Mossad-backed actors would like more than anything else to destabilize the country through a series of violent protests and riots. They can't do that if every major city square in the country is being occupied by patriotic Iranians who are showing their support for their government. So as long as these rallies continue, and they've continued for over 60 days already, it's impossible for the Mossad-backed actors to really act against the government and to generate any kind of unrest.

#Max

Yeah, that's a great point. And it highlights one of the key failures that Israeli media has now been acknowledging. Ynet has a major feature we might discuss later about how the Mossad actually has taken credit again for those riots that we saw on January 8th and 9th inside Iran, and that they thought this war would generate more, and that along with pressure from the outside brought on by Kurdish proxies, they would destabilize Iran. And that project has completely failed, and you showed that failure with your attendance at that patriotic rally. We also saw human chains formed around

Iranian power plants and other key pieces of infrastructure. This is one of the most, honestly, from my point of view, one of the most inspiring anti-imperialist protests — people just defending their public assets against a project of state destruction by the U.S. and Israel.