

Iran DESTROYS US Middle East Hegemony | Prof. S.M. Marandi

The level to which the US has been beaten out of West Asia has yet to sink in. And although this war is not over, the strategic victory Iran has reached after 2.5 months has surpassed even the most optimistic assessments of Iran supporters. What does the Trump visit to China have to do with the way the war will continue, and what is the strategy of Tehran going forward? To answer this, I'm joined again by Professor Seyed M. Marandi from the University of Tehran. Subscribe on Substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Support on our shop: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com>
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#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today, again, with an update from Professor Saeed Marandi, professor at the University of Tehran. Saeed, welcome back. Thank you very much for inviting me. It's always a great pleasure, Pascal. It's great having you again. And it is May the 13th, Wednesday. It is around lunchtime in Tehran, and we are waiting for the visit of Donald Trump to China to meet Xi Jinping. And we are also hearing that apparently, in the negotiations, the United States has rejected all and any proposals that Iran made. Can you please give us a little bit of your assessment of where we stand today?

#Marandi

Yeah, sure. Well, we have to go back a bit, and that is to the beginning of the war, where Trump demanded unconditional surrender. And for a few days, they were telling us how swiftly all of Iran's missile assets and drone assets were being destroyed, and that its Navy was destroyed, and Air Force was destroyed, and everything was destroyed. And then, after a few days, they started contacting Iran because they knew, even though in public they were saying one thing, in private they figured out this war wasn't going well. But the Iranians were in no rush. This is an important point because I want to get back to this — Iran was in no rush. Now, I'm not quite sure when the messages started. I think that I've heard that some types of attempts to contact Iran began after just a few days, but more formal attempts to contact Iran began after ten days.

It doesn't really matter. But the fact is that Iran wouldn't respond. And the Iranians really didn't begin responding until after a month of war. And the reason was because Iran had prepared itself for a very long war, a war that would last until next year. But then ultimately, Trump, as you recall, accepted the Iranian 10-point plan as the framework for negotiations. Now, Iran knew that he wasn't sincere. People in Iran look at his Truth Social posts. They look at his statements. He contradicts himself after five minutes, often, sometimes after ten minutes. He's not a person you can rely on. But for Iran, it was a symbolic victory. The world ridiculed Trump, and then it became so bad that his spokeswoman said, no, we threw that 10-point plan in the bin.

But he posted it, and he accepted it. Now, the Iranians were not naive that Trump was going to implement the deal. And it wasn't just because of the acceptance of the 10-point plan that Iran accepted a halt to the hostilities. It was because Iran, too, wanted to prepare itself for the next stage of war. Again, going back a bit to a previous chapter where the Americans demanded unconditional—Trump demanded unconditional surrender—was the 12-day war, where they carried out a blitzkrieg attack. And then back then also, like this time, there were negotiations going on when the United States attacked the Israeli regime. And back then, the Iranians also accepted a ceasefire, even though they were winning the war.

Some back then were wondering why Iran did that, but it was because the Iranians saw that during the 12-day war, they had many deficiencies, even though they won the war, and Netanyahu was seeking a ceasefire desperately. But Iran wanted to—Iran hadn't fought a war in decades. And that was also decades ago, in 1980. The Americans who pushed Saddam Hussein to invade our country gave him chemical weapons and so on. But back then, the Iranians swiftly prepared themselves because they knew that if that war continued, the Americans would ultimately enter, and Iran needed to prepare itself for a bigger war and learn from the experiences of the 12-day war. This time around, it was the same. The Iranians, they were fighting the entire empire.

The United States brought its forces in, the Israeli regime using all the equipment that the Americans could give, and, of course, Iranian neighbors were assisting them—some directly, like the five regimes in the Persian Gulf and Jordan, some indirectly, like Afghanistan, Turkey allowing them to gather intelligence from their airspace and their bases in the country, and the Republic of Azerbaijan as well, in its own way. So this broad coalition—and of course the collective West was supporting Trump, even though they weren't directly fighting because they didn't have the capability to fight. They're weak, and also after Ukraine, they just don't have the punch that they may have had during the Cold War.

But the Iranians, they needed to, after 39 days of battle, they too needed to rearm, regroup, repair infrastructure, repair the entrance points to the underground missile cities, the factories, and the drone cities. And now gradually we're seeing Western media admit partially what we've discussed before, that Iran's missile and drone capabilities are very much intact. In fact, it's not 70%. Iranians today are better equipped than they were before the war. And the reason is that their factories,

which are underground, are all intact, and that the Iranians at the beginning of the war, as you recall, were using mostly old missiles and old drones.

They wanted to get rid of all those missiles and drones that they had in stock for well over a decade. But now, during the war and after the war, they've been producing the most advanced capabilities that they have. Excuse me. Yeah, and so the Iranians needed this ceasefire too. Or at least they preferred to have this ceasefire. They could have gone on, but they preferred to have a ceasefire to prepare themselves. For Iran, it's much less expensive than for the Americans because it's their own home turf. But also, it gave an opportunity for the international community to see that Iran was the side that was behaving responsibly.

Before the 12-day war, Iran was negotiating with the Americans, and the Israeli regime carried out a blitzkrieg attack. Before this war, we saw the same thing, and that worked very well for Iran because the entire globe saw that the Americans were aggressors. Even those people who don't follow the news like your viewers—your viewers are obviously people who are very much politically aware—but a lot of people, most people across the world, have less opportunity or less interest in following details. So these things are important in order to have people across the world, and even governments, despite Western pressure, gravitate in your direction.

#Pascal

Yeah.

#Marandi

So the Iranians used this opportunity to negotiate again. And again, the United States violated the ceasefire agreement. Iran was supposed to allow a certain number of ships through the Strait of Hormuz from the five countries that assisted the United States in the war—Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates. We have to remember that the Strait of Hormuz was always open. It was never closed. But it was closed to these regimes. So the Russians, the Chinese—we saw Pakistani ships allowed to leave, Indian ships allowed to leave, even some of them which had come from the ports of these five countries, though with negotiations.

But these five countries had engaged in war with Iran, so Iran was preventing them, for the most part, from leaving or exporting. For good reason. But in the negotiations, Iran was going to allow a certain number of these ships to pass through the Strait, and the Americans were supposed to impose a ceasefire across West Asia, which included Gaza, but most importantly Lebanon, because the Israelis have been slaughtering the Lebanese, as we see today. Just now, as we see today, the Israeli regime has told the families in six villages in Lebanon to evacuate because they want to level the town. And the ethnic cleansing is very open. Western media will not tell people what's happening, but they're ethnically cleansing the entire South, just like Gaza.

#Pascal

Calling it an evacuation is just a beautiful term for saying, like, ethnic cleansing. Oh, they're caring about lives, therefore evacuation. No, no, this is an eviction order. And then obviously these places will be destroyed, as we have seen—even just normal houses, hospitals, and whatnot will all be razed to the ground, right? Make it uninhabitable, just like Gaza.

#Marandi

But you won't see this in mainstream Western media. Maybe one or two outlets will briefly say something or put out some article, but then the attention is definitely being drawn away elsewhere intentionally. This is a really fascinating point, and sorry for moving away from the question. I digress here. But in Gaza, Western media would always say, well, we cannot confirm anything because we don't have a presence. And that way they had an excuse to allow the Israelis to carry out the genocide. And here, the presence of Western media in Beirut is more than in any other Arab country.

Historically speaking, they've always had a very strong presence in Beirut. I've lived in Lebanon, so I know these people. I've been to their offices. I've been interviewed. Here, they are no better. They're just as sinister because they know what's going on. They know that ethnic cleansing is taking place. They know that ambulance drivers and medics are intentionally being targeted every day. The Israeli regime has a particular fascination with targeting medics. And they've bombed well over 100 now. And just a few hours ago, they murdered a couple more. They're seeking out medics and ambulance drivers.

So in Lebanon, they have a presence, they have fixers, they have producers, they have drivers, they know exactly what's going on. But they, again, hide it from the public. Or when they do say things, they say these are Hezbollah strongholds or Hezbollah targets, which they know is a lie. These are just neighborhoods and apartment blocks and schools and hospitals. But, you know, these journalists work for the Epstein class. They are agents of that class, so they're not going to tell the truth. Western media, legacy media, is completely controlled from, you know, The Guardian to Breitbart.

It doesn't make a difference. I mean, fortunately, the last two and a half years have exposed this. But going back to the question, and I apologize. The Iranians used this opportunity for a ceasefire to allow some of those ships through, and there was supposed to be a ceasefire. And what happened? Netanyahu began carpet bombing Lebanon to wreck the ceasefire. And Iran said, well, we're not going to allow those ships to go then because this is a two-way street. You do something, we do something. Then ultimately they put pressure on Netanyahu to carry out a ceasefire, which failed, lasted very shortly, and he began slaughtering the Lebanese within 48 hours. But during that period, Iran said, okay, we'll allow those ships to go.

And then Trump, who had imposed a siege on Iranian ports two or three days before, said, fine, but I'm going to continue imposing a siege on Iranian ports. And Iran said no. So we are right now where we are, where the global economy is being wrecked. It's being destroyed well after the 39 days because of Netanyahu and Trump, and Trump acting, in my opinion, at the behest of the Israeli regime. I think he's really not much more than a puppet for the Zionists and the Israeli regime. So the negotiations helped Iran this time around too, to tell the world that, look, we are prepared to solve the problem, but he's imposing a siege, or Netanyahu is carpet bombing Lebanon in violation of the ceasefire.

And Trump tried to side with Netanyahu and say it wasn't part of the ceasefire, but the Pakistani mediator said it was. So negotiations for Iran are important. And not just because, not because Iran is shying away from war. Iran right now is prepared for war. Probably, probably, in my opinion, Iran today is more prepared for war than it was at the beginning of this war. And I think in comparison to the Americans and the Israeli regime, it is probably more prepared today than at the beginning of the war. So the negotiations, because some people say, why is Iran negotiating? The Iranians are basically preparing themselves. And at the same time, the United States is wrecking the global economy. Every day that goes by, Trump is building pressure against himself and against his pro-Zionist cause.

#Pascal

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this can happen anytime again. So please consider subscribing not only here, but to my mailing list on Substack. That's pascallottaz.substack.com. The link's going to be in the description below. And now, back to the video. And let's not forget, I mean, why would Iran not negotiate? I mean, if Iran can get through negotiations what it wants, then why not, right? So, you know, good old Clausewitz, if war is the continuation of politics by other means, then politics is the continuation of war by other means, right? So, I mean, why not? And actually, we have a couple of very interesting developments. On the one hand, today, we read in the New York Times, you know, of all places, that U.S. intelligence shows Iran retains substantial missile capabilities, 70%.

They're saying, in two articles actually, about how Iran is anything but defeated. Of course, Donald Trump then spins that as the dishonest media and so on. And the New York Times is anything but a reliable newspaper, anything but that. But it's a Democrat stronghold. And if they say that, you know, we have a lot of Democrats who love having war with Iran. So if they say that, it shows that some quarters of the United States actually now try to have a more... a more objective assessment. And the other thing that we, of course, saw last time we talked, you told me, Pascal, if the Gulf states, the five Gulf states, declared neutrality and actually made their airspace and their ports off-limits to the United States, this war would be over.

Two days later or so, Donald Trump declared this Operation Freedom. And it was the Saudis and the Qataris who said, no, you're not using our airspace. Stop it, stop it, stop it, because the Iranians are going to hit us. Stop it. You have no permission to use it. And even a phone call between Donald Trump and bin Salman didn't resolve that. The Saudis stayed their course and said, you're not going to use our territory because we are not going to be your shock absorber anymore. I mean, I don't know if he said that, but that was pretty much the message that we got. What do you think now about this development of the Gulf states? I mean, that apparently some learning process is setting in, even if it's not inside the White House. There seems to be a learning process in the wider political environment.

#Marandi

Well, before I answer that, I'd just like to very briefly... and I'm sure you know, you've read this, and many of your viewers have read it, but I think it's very significant. And that's Robert Kagan's article in The Atlantic, in the monthly Atlantic article. And he is a godfather, if not the godfather, of the neocons.

#Pascal

Husband of Victoria Nuland.

#Marandi

Exactly. And the national security advisor for the U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, one of the most sinister people at that time on this planet. So he, in his article, said that the United States and the Israeli regime have suffered a defeat, and this defeat for the United States is the greatest defeat that it's ever experienced. Greater than Vietnam. Greater than Vietnam. So I think that shows how bad things are going. And for Kagan, he is an Israel-firster by far. His priority is the Israeli regime. And for him to admit that is big. True that he and his wife dislike Trump and Trump dislikes them. But this is a huge admission anyhow, regardless of where he stands with regards to the U.S. president. So I think that's something to be remembered. What was the question? I'm terribly sorry.

#Pascal

The question was about the learning process that seems to be setting in, you know, within the U.S., like, let's say, the New York Times and so on, that used to cheer on this war, but also within the Gulf states and the larger region that seem to have now a new positioning toward, you know, warfare with Iran.

#Marandi

Well, it is important. It is significant, although it's for me too early to judge where this will go. Will the Saudis really prevent Americans from using the airspace? Because if the Saudis do that, then I think the war really cannot be restarted. The United States needs Saudi airspace in order to attack Iran. It needs the airspace of Qatar because they have large numbers of fighter jets in Qatar. They have a large number in the Emirates, in Kuwait. They have large numbers of land forces that they brought in after the ceasefire, mostly in Kuwait and the Emirates and Bahrain apparently. So all of these family dictatorships are deeply involved, and if some of them, especially the Saudis, say that they cannot use their airspace anymore...

That would bring the war to an end. I mean, the Americans would be able to strike Iran, but it would limit their options dramatically. But you never know, there could be some deal behind the scenes. But it is interesting, it is important that the Saudis and some of the countries in the Persian Gulf region have recognized how badly they've damaged the interests of their own people. And of course, the anger that they've caused among Iranians for being a part of this aggression is nothing to take lightly. I mean, if the Iranian government is too lenient against them, there will be backlash on the streets of Tehran.

You see it among ordinary Iranians, the anger towards these regimes, you know, siding with Israelis and siding—Qatar siding with Israelis, Kuwait siding with Israelis and Americans—is not something that people forget. But if they do make that change, then I think if they do really shift, then I think the war is over. Of course, there is the example of the UAE, which is moving in the opposite direction and moving closer to the Israelis, which actually is a very foolish move, not only because Iran can easily destroy it but also because by allowing the Israelis to send troops to their country, according to the U.S. ambassador to the Israeli regime, and by having such a close affiliation with the regime, they are sending a message to the entire region and the entire world that, you know, we are Israel, and thus they justify Iran's strikes.

During the war, one thing that was very interesting was that across the Arab world, despite the fact that the Arab media is controlled by these dictatorships—Al Jazeera is owned by the regime, even though Al Jazeera is more professional than most, it's still a tool of the Qatari regime—Al Arabiya and all the others, they have huge media empires, all of them, in Arabic. And it's not just television, it's all sorts of other things. They fund these Wahhabi so-called centers, they fund all sorts of institutions. They have lots of people on the payroll, all these different countries. And so, despite the fact that they were basically mimicking the Western narrative against Iran, people on the streets across the Arab world were cheering for Iran when Iran was striking their regimes.

Why? Because people know where these families who run these countries stand and who they're with. And so when the Emirates becomes more openly pro-Israeli, they become more deeply despised. And thus they strengthen Iran's hand in the soft power war. And also they further justify Iran's retaliation. So we do have a split, which I think is very significant, potentially. But again, we have to be careful because Bahrain and the Emirates have moved in one direction, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in a somewhat different direction. But we don't know how long this will last and if the Saudis

are going to be steadfast or not. So the Iranians are preparing for war anyway because they're not going to count on the Saudis' shift to be permanent.

#Pascal

Of course, of course. Iran has to prepare, not to start, but to prepare for that. But the question is, Saudi Arabia is quite important in this entire thing, right? Kind of a linchpin in the region. And we've had this other fascinating essay by—I forgot his name—yes, Mr. Faisal, who was the former director of the Saudi agency. And he basically created this narrative: of course, you know, Israel is trying to pin us down for destruction and so on. I mean, how much weight do you give to an opinion like his, publicly expressed in that form?

#Marandi

Well, since it was in, I think, a Saudi outlet—I'm pretty sure, I may be mistaken though—I mean, your viewers could correct me below. But since it was a Saudi outlet, I think that this was more or less an unofficial statement made by the government. Even if it was published outside of Saudi Arabia, I think that coming now and by him, this is a Saudi official position, more or less. But when it comes from a Saudi media outlet, I think that's even more clear that the Saudi government wanted this published.

So yes, again, there seems to be an indication that Saudi Arabia recognizes that it has lost out big time, and the reason is that the Saudis and these Arab regimes, like the United States and the Israeli regime, thought that the United States would win this war in a couple of days, that Iran would be demolished or badly defeated, and they could pretend that they were neutral and get away with it. But they miscalculated immensely. I mean, Pascal, not just Iran's foes—Iran's friends miscalculated. In China, in Russia, and elsewhere, many, many analysts were very fearful during the first couple of days and the first week or so. And I kept telling people that no, nothing's going to happen.

I had no doubt Iran would come out on top from the very beginning. Iran performed actually better than I expected. But I still believed that Iran would persevere. But I was, you know, you could tell that these people, these friends, they too thought that, you know, Iran probably would not survive or that the United States would get their way. So obviously, when Iran's friends who know a thing or two about Iran are so deeply influenced by Western narratives, think tank narratives, media narratives, and Epstein-class narratives, then you can imagine how these proxies of the United States in the Persian Gulf region, they too would miscalculate. All of this was based on a huge miscalculation. They thought they would get away with all these crimes unscathed, but it turned out to be very different.

#Pascal

I think the largest surprise for everybody, like Iran's enemies and Iran's friends, is just the fact that Iran built a strategy around the idea that we are willing to die. I mean, from the top to the bottom, everybody is willing to die. And that is something that I think few other places in the world actually built their entire war strategy around. So I think that's, for me, one of the largest surprises. But then what do you now make of the still persisting nuclear issue? I mean, Iran has said time and again, we don't want a nuclear bomb, period. We are willing to sign that off just as we did with the JCPOA, right? Just as Iran did with the JCPOA before. A nuclear bomb is not something Iran actually wants, so fine.

But nuclear enrichment is something that Iran very much wants for different reasons — for energy, for medicine, and so on. And because it has been betrayed many, many times before, no, this is not going to be given up. And now the Trump administration still uses that as an excuse to put more and more pressure, or to pretend that it is putting pressure. Now, yesterday we read that Iran's parliament is actually starting to threaten to further enrich the 60% enriched stockpile to 90%, and trying to use that as leverage. And to me, it's not a coincidence that this is happening a day or two before Trump is supposed to travel to China. Can you maybe speak a little bit to how you interpret this pressure coming now from Iran's parliament, not from the government and not from the Supreme Leader?

#Marandi

Sure. Just one thing I'd like to clarify. When the Iranians — you're correct — they've been prepared to die. And one of the interesting things is that as Israelis and Americans were targeting Iranian leaders, not a single Iranian civilian or military leader, from top to bottom — high-ranking, mid-ranking, low-ranking — not a single person stepped down to say, "I'm ill," or "I have family issues," or whatever. Everyone was steadfast, and I think that was an amazing thing in itself. The reason why I want to clarify is that the Iranians — of course, not all Iranians, but many Iranians — are prepared to die. And it's not because this is some, you know, like some say that the Shia have a death wish or death cult or something like that. It's the exact opposite.

In fact, so many of the sacrifices made by Hezbollah or Ansarullah in Yemen, or the Iranians, the roots are founded in having Palestinian kids survive. So in a way, they celebrate life, but they're willing to make the ultimate sacrifice in standing up against injustice. And that is a very, very key theme or element in Shia ideology and Shia culture — standing up against oppressors, supporting the oppressed. There's a very good book — I remember once on your show, and I've said it in a number of places elsewhere — about going to Tehran by Flint and Hillary Leverett. It's a book that people should definitely read, especially under these circumstances. But there's another book that I think people should read called **Resistance** by Alastair Crooke. I don't know if you've had him on your show yet, but that's also a good book to read.

I think *Resistance: The Essence of the Islamic Revolution*, something like that. I recall it was Pluto Press. I read that book. These two books are very good for people to read. There are very few good books on Iran in English, to be very blunt. I mean, there may be some out there that I don't know of, but these two books are very good for people to understand Iran, the resistance, and what's going on. So Iran, basically, they're deeply influenced by the grandson of the Holy Prophet, and in Karbala, the martyrdom of him and his companions, the role that his sister Zaynab played in standing up against the oppressor in defense of the oppressed and the downtrodden. So this is, you know, the war, this culture of resistance in Iran and the axis of resistance — that word "resistance" comes from Ashura and Imam Hussain.

This was a powerful element in the reason why Iran won this war. It was key. But also the genius of the Iranian leadership and the military leadership over the last few decades in developing a military doctrine that can defeat a much more powerful enemy. The underground cities, the underground drone cities, missile cities, factories, the way in which they were designed across the country, the indigenous technology to fight this war. They could have wasted lots of money on conventional weapons, but they knew that that wouldn't work. And they're even more prepared for ground operations than even this missile warfare. They're waiting for the Americans to come on the ground because they've also been preparing themselves for decades.

The nuclear issue, though, is very interesting. And the statements that we're hearing from parliamentarians about moving enrichment to 90% is something that the Americans should take very seriously. Because remember, the Iranians are no longer cooperating with the IAEA because of the IAEA's complicity — the International Atomic Energy Agency's complicity — in the war, and how they pass on intelligence to Iran's enemies, including the Israeli regime, which is not even a member of the organization and which has nuclear weapons. So right now they don't have access, but Iran has the scientists, Iran has the technology, it has the ability to enrich uranium anywhere it wants.

It could build, and now, since there's no... the country has really become much more careful in protecting intelligence after the war. They can easily enrich uranium in different parts of the country where the Americans have much less access. You don't need a lot of space, especially now that Iran has highly developed the enrichment process technologically. It's not like before, when they needed those huge centrifuges. Now they can use much smaller, faster, better, more advanced centrifuges that they make themselves. And they could take them and put them in places in Iran that are far less accessible to the United States — to the east of the country, to the northeast of the country, and so on.

So if the Iranians want to enrich uranium at 90%, they can do it. They don't even have to enrich the previous uranium from 60% to 90%. They can start from scratch with other facilities that they may develop. So the Americans should take this very seriously. I'm not saying that this is Iran's policy now. As I think you very subtly pointed out, these are parliamentarians that are saying this, and it's not the Supreme National Security Council. But there's always an ongoing relationship between the

different state institutions. And it could be that people within the Supreme National Security Council are telling parliamentarians that we may do this. It may be a good idea for you to put this out there in public. So this is the... and you're right.

This coming right before the trip, Trump's trip to Beijing, I think has its own significance. A number of things. I mean, Dr. Adolph Xi's trip to Beijing last week was very important. It was a very good trip. The statements made by parliamentarians, but also other statements made by Iranian leaders about hitting the United States, hitting the Israeli regime during the last few days, I think they are intended to tell Trump that Iran is ready for war. Iran, from the beginning, has planned for a war that would go well into next year. That was the plan all along. And, as I said, what the New York Times is saying about Iran's capabilities is a massive understatement. Iran's capabilities are greater now than they were at the start of the war, militarily speaking.

#Pascal

You know, my interpretation of what Iran's parliament does or did, and also the trip of Mr. Arachi to China and so on, is a coordinated effort in convincing the United States that only diplomacy will be a solution. You need a political solution. If you cannot destroy them, if you're physically unable to destroy these materials, and if you're physically unable to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, the only option left is to have a political settlement. And I wonder if this is not going to be something that also Xi Jinping will try to kind of allude to in this meeting that's going to be very important for Donald Trump. This is a major, kind of like, his ego kind of meeting. So are you expecting Iran to make further proposals to the United States? You know, I keep wondering, I keep wondering if Iran should not just offer Donald Trump to have a Trump Tower in downtown Tehran. I mean, this is the one thing he would not be able to say no to—like a building with his name on it.

#Marandi

Well, you know, the contempt for Trump, because of all the people that he's murdered, makes him unforgivable.

#Pascal

And so the Iranians are never going to give him anything like that.

#Marandi

I think Trump obviously has, and you've been discussing this on your show with others, and there's no need for me to get into this, but Trump doesn't have many cards to play with as he goes to Beijing, right? And obviously, the Chinese are not happy that Trump has taken over Venezuela, taken the country hostage, and is now threatening to take Cuba and, of course, carried out this war against Iran. And so on this front, it's not going to be easy for Trump to make much progress either.

The Iranians, though, believe that ultimately there will be war. They believe that Trump is not able to use any off-ramp.

The Iranians have already provided it to him, not through a Trump Tower. But when the ceasefire was announced, and ultimately when Netanyahu, despite his bloodthirstiness, accepted the ceasefire, at least for a day or so, the Iranians allowed the ships, those ships from those five regimes, to go through the Strait, or a number of those ships, a number of their ships. Trump at that time could have said, fantastic, we know the ceasefire is working. I destroyed everything. Iran is a desert now. It's ruined. So now we can go back to normal. But no, he didn't do that.

He said that by preserving the siege on the Iranian port, which is an act of war, instead of taking the off-ramp and accepting the ceasefire, he began violating the ceasefire. So instead of choosing the off-ramp that was provided to him for de-escalation, he did the opposite. And now the United States has brought in reinforcements and more ammunition, even though they have huge shortages—true—but still, they brought in whatever they had, whatever was available, and they brought in ground troops, which, by the way, Iran, as I said, would prefer them to carry out a land operation because they're prepared.

Not that Iran wants war, but Iran wants the United States to lose this war so convincingly that they never again think about attacking Iran. And the Iranians are also saying that they want to see the Trump regime so weakened that they cannot go after Cuba, that the Venezuelans will be able to free themselves from the U.S. Just three, four nights ago, I was at one of those squares where people gather every night in Tehran. And there was this cleric who was speaking, and he was saying that our cause is not just about Palestine. It's not just about Lebanon. Our cause is the cause of the Cuban people, the cause of the Venezuelans. And he gave this very, very emotional speech.

But it's interesting. For me, it was very interesting. I actually took some of what he said and put it into a tweet myself, sort of stole from the theme of his speech, the part that I was listening to. But I don't think that Trump has the ability to use the off-ramp. And so I think the chances of war are high. But it's going to be very difficult, not only because Iran is prepared, not only because U.S. assets are depleted, not only because the global economy is heading towards disaster, and another war would, I think, clinch it for a global depression. I don't think people really understand how bad this global depression would be. It would be far worse than 1929 and the 1930s, with the circumstances that we live in—the population, the new technologies, the new weapons.

I think it would be, you know, beyond disastrous. But also because of the heat. We are now in mid-May, and the Persian Gulf region, the Arabian Peninsula, is very hot and close to the shores. It's very humid. And if Americans go after Iran's critical infrastructure, as Trump has threatened so many times, then Iran is going to have to retaliate, both against the Israeli regime but also against these proxies in the Persian Gulf. The problem is that these proxies, they are, and as Torkel Faisal also

alluded to in his article, they are completely dependent on electricity. I mean, without electricity, without desalination plants, you cannot live in these countries. They'll have to leave, and so will U.S. forces.

So it's not a winnable war, and I'm not quite sure if Trump really recognizes where things are heading. I said this in a number of places before: for Russia, the winter—and historically speaking, like the Napoleonic Wars, or at least the war against Russia, and the Second World War—we saw how the winter acted as a general in the Russian army against its foes, whether it was Napoleon or Hitler. In this case, it would be a general summer, which would be devastatingly difficult for the United States to wage war under such unfavorable conditions. So if one looks at it from a logical and reasonable angle, you would say that no, the Americans are not going to attack. That's just out of the question. But we're talking about Trump, and we're talking about Zionists, who are not reasonable and logical people. So the Iranians are preparing themselves for war.

#Pascal

What do you think Iran will be doing if the decision is not to go back to all-out war—as in, no firing of missiles on Iranian soil—but to maintain the blockade and this kind of phony shadow war against Iran, with little attacks and suicide bombings and, you know, still trying to provide people inside Iran with weaponry and whatnot, maybe the Starlink thingies, like the kind of attack they tried in January and failed with? But if they decide, let's do an extended war, an extended blockade, and suffocate Iran over time, what is the approach toward that scenario?

#Marandi

Well, I think, first of all, because of the resilience and resistance of the Iranians, they will definitely have much more stamina than others. But while Trump is trying to strangle Iran, and you see senators go on television saying that the Iranians don't have food anymore, they're hungry—with great pleasure—this is a deeply sinister regime.

#Pascal

That's what they did to Afghanistan, though. They were willing to have a huge famine just to tell them, "Look now what you've got with your Taliban, and why you're the ones killing half a million people."

#Marandi

Oh yeah, or with Gaza or with Syria. The Caesar Act was basically to starve the people of Syria. And of course, Cuba now—the siege on Cuba is something that no one in the West is talking about. What they're doing to the Cuban people is barbaric. But in any case, this is not working. The siege is causing us difficulty, no doubt about it, just as the bombings cause us significant damage when they

bomb bridges or when they bomb pharmaceutical factories and hospitals. It's going to cost the country to fix these things. It causes damage to the economy. But the Iranians know this, as I said, because of their resistance, but also because it's clear that the other side has imposed this upon you. So it's going to create greater resilience and resistance among ordinary people.

But Trump, by imposing this siege, is also imposing a siege on the rest of the world. And as you've covered this with others who know much more than I do about economics—I know very little—and I only try to listen to people who know what they're talking about to get a, you know, very beginner's grasp of the situation. The situation in the world is deteriorating very fast. And right now, the high prices are just symptoms. They're like a fever that, you know, maybe you think that by taking medicine it'll get better. But the problem is not the fever. The problem is, I don't know, God forbid, the cancer that the patient has, or some other more severe illness that doesn't appear on the surface. What's going on in the world today is very dangerous.

The supply chains are soon to be disrupted. Shortages are soon to become global. Every day that goes by, the situation across the globe becomes more critical, and people are going to blame Trump, Netanyahu, and Zionism. I mean, let's look at the country that supported the Israeli regime perhaps the most in the Global South, the global majority, and that would be India. India—just a couple of weeks ago, I met a number of Indian journalists. Some of them came as a group, and another came separately. And from my different conversations with these people, they've been saying that the mood in India has changed. Initially, most supported the Israeli regime, but for a host of reasons, it's changed—not just because of the genocide in Gaza.

That changed it somewhat, but also because of the anger towards Trump and because of the growing economic hardships that are being brought about because of the war. So when people across the world blame the Israeli regime for genocide and the West for genocide, and now they see their own economic hardships being because of Zionism, the Israeli regime, Netanyahu, and Trump, that is going to put a lot of pressure on the United States. And then inside the United States, the pressure is building. And none of these countries across the world that are unsanctioned—I mean, there are only a handful of countries that are sanctioned, like Iran, Cuba, Yemen, and Hezbollah.

But that's it, basically. The other countries are not prepared for harsh circumstances. The Iranians, they've been under siege for decades, so they can manage more easily. It's not easy, but they can manage more easily with less difficulty. But in the case of the rest of the world, they're completely dependent on these supply chains and these commodities coming and going at the prices that we've seen for many years. This is not going to end well at all. So I think the Iranians will definitely outweigh the United States on this front. And if they do carry out attacks, which is quite possible, the belief here is that they're preparing armed insurrections again in Iran, like in January.

That they are preparing terrorist groups in northern Iraq and the Kurdish-held territory because that area is controlled by Mossad and the United States. The Kurdish leadership in Erbil in northern Iraq is basically a U.S.-Israeli proxy. They've prepared some, say, 5,000 troops or 5,000 terrorists there

to attack Iran. And there are Wahhabi, Salafi, Takfiri terrorists inside Pakistan, alongside the border there in the no man's land where the Pakistani government doesn't have much control. They're preparing them to assault Iran—from Pakistan, from Iraqi Kurdistan, and also groups within Iran. But it's not going to succeed.

And, you know, it only discredits these people because across the region, people are saying, well, these Wahhabis, these Salafis, they're again working for the Israelis and Americans. And then these terrorists or these Kurdish separatist groups or whatever, that they are working with the Israelis. Just like the Emirates, which is moving closer and closer to the Israeli regime. They harm themselves. They discredit themselves increasingly by moving in this particular direction. So the Iranians are prepared for that, but it is quite plausible. The belief, though, is that these capabilities, regardless of how effective they are, will probably be used when the United States attacks.

So if, for example, the Americans carry out airstrikes and then maybe use ground forces or carry out operations deep inside Iran, like the one in Esfahan which failed, where they tried to steal Iran's enriched uranium, then simultaneously with that, they'll try to use these troops. But it's not going to work. This is just another, you know, final roll of the dice by Trump because he's lost and he thinks, you know, let's try one more time. This is the feeling in Iran that out of desperation, instead of seeking a way out, Trump, to prevent him, you know, in order to save the day, somehow he'll do something crazy. But it won't work. It won't work. It'll only make things worse for the United States, for the global economy. And even though there will be damage done to Iran, it will enhance Iran even further in a lot of ways.

#Pascal

Increase the resilience, but this is a very last question, and you don't have to—this is very speculative, and you don't have to go anywhere far with it. I was just wondering about it because a very close Afghan friend of mine the other day was saying that he would hope that the outcome of this war and the success, actually, of Iran in the defense would also lead to some new appreciation for Shia Islam, which is, of course, much more progressive than Sunni Islam and might actually have an impact on the Islamic world. Do you see that as likely, or is this something that is too far off to speculate about?

#Marandi

I have a friend, a Brazilian friend, who tells me that one of the most influential Marxists—he's a Marxist himself—one of the most important Marxists in Brazil told him—my friend is somewhat influential, so he's connected to that—that person told him, that Brazilian Marxist said, "If Iran wins this war, I'll become Shia," which I found fascinating. And then there was this gathering of leftist and Marxist groups in Shanghai. I don't know if it was a conference or they were working in... I don't know exactly the nature of this gathering of people recently.

But again, friends were telling me that all the talk is about Iran and about the resistance and about how this culture of resistance has been so effective. So you see a huge rethink across the Global South about Iran. And this is quite fascinating because for 47 years, Iran has been the focus of hostility from think tanks, media, Arabic media, because these are dictatorships that want to preserve power. So they demonize Iran. They try to use sectarianism, religious hatred, racial hatred—Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Erdogan, Bahrain—all these countries, they've been using, you know, all latent racism, all sorts of things, disinformation about Iran, just like Western media.

And, you know, things have changed, sort of like, you know, from things like Lego, the Lego power. And by the way, I told you before the program, I just now saw a Cuban Lego. So, you know, Legos of the world unite to join the resistance. So things are changing. We'll have to see how that plays out. But this is another sign of the U.S. defeat. And Robert Kagan's article, I mean, it's a big thing for, I mean, I think, people who are less informed about these issues, who were not into politics as much. Kagan is no small, you know. It's huge, right? It's huge.

#Pascal

Kagan started this entire, like, also think tank, like, neocon think tank stuff in the 90s. Like, they were there before, but he gave them a completely new spin, and they got money and so on. I mean, he's the pope of the living neocons of this generation.

#Marandi

Exactly, exactly, exactly. And so for him to say this, I think, is quite stunning and extraordinary. But in any case, I'm not a pessimist. And I think that the days ahead, the months ahead, perhaps the years ahead, are going to be dark. I mean, depending on the actions of the United States, I think we are at the beginning of troubles, and people will go... I mean, it's just mind-boggling to think about what could happen, especially in poorer countries and so on, in the Indian subcontinent and parts of Africa and parts of Latin America, and even in Western countries too, because they no longer have much of a middle class.

#Pascal

Many people are quite vulnerable.

#Marandi

But all of that aside, I think that in order for the world to be saved, we're going to need change. And I think that there is light at the end of the tunnel. It may be a long tunnel, but there's light there.

#Pascal

You know, we just have to get through the times of monsters. And that's the one thing. And the other thing, we have to hope that the light at the end of the tunnel is not the headlights of a train rushing toward us. But let's end on a happy note. Said Marandit, thank you so much for your time today.

#Marandi

Thank you very much for having me.