

# Seyed M. Marandi: Iran Ready With Overwhelming Retaliation

Prof. Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Prof. Marandi argues that the U.S. is preparing another attack on Iran after Trump's failed meeting with Xi in Beijing. Iran has prepared an overwhelming retaliation. RECORDED MAY 16, 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](http://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 today 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 on the program.

## #Seyed M. Marandi

Thank you very much for inviting me. It's always a great pleasure to be on your show.

## #Glenn

Well, we now see that Trump has finished his meeting with Xi Jinping in Beijing. And while, of course, they focused on the most important issue, probably Taiwan, we also know that Iran was a key focus. That is, the United States evidently tried to push China to put pressure on Iran. And I was just wondering, what is your takeaway from this meeting between Trump and Xi?

## #Seyed M. Marandi

I think that Trump and his team are really detached from reality. And it was quite clear from before their trip how this would end. It really surprises me that they went through with the trip and made the sort of requests that they did without recognizing that it was clear beforehand what sort of responses they would get. I think it all goes back, or at least much of it goes back, to the fact that Trump has expelled so many Iran experts, Chinese experts, all the Iran experts and Chinese experts and Russian experts, as far as I know, from the national security apparatus. And therefore, when they travel abroad to China, they seem to be going in blind into negotiations and leaving the negotiations blinded.

If they'd only monitored the Iranian foreign minister's trip to China a few days before the summit, and they'd seen the body language, the statements made by the Iranians and the Chinese, as well as Chinese media reports and social media reactions to that visit, I think they would have, through that alone, recognized that their requests were not going to achieve any results. But in any case, I think it's probably even worse than I had anticipated—not on the Iran front, but in general. The trip achieved nothing. The only positive note, I think, for Trump was that he was able to stay in China for a couple of days without insulting the host. That was, I think, for him quite an achievement. But beyond that, I don't see any success. It was a wasted trip.

And I think now that he's returned to the United States, probably what we're going to see is a move towards renewed violence with Iran. The United States does not have the political will to implement the ceasefire, to end the siege on Iranian ports, and to bring about a ceasefire in Lebanon and Gaza, so that more ships—the ships linked to the five countries that assisted them against Iran—could pass through the Strait of Hormuz. They don't have the political will to do so. Probably, or I guess, it's pretty clear that the reason behind it is the Zionist lobby and the Israeli regime. They will not accept a ceasefire. They will not accept an end to the hostilities for a host of reasons. Netanyahu has his own personal agenda. There are the elections ahead, his court case, there's his coalition partners.

But we do see that, even though we do see splits, even though we are moving, I think, towards war—I think war could be quite soon, in fact—which may actually be a very heavy assault from the Netanyahu and Trump regimes, but also seeing the remnants of the terror groups that carried out the armed uprising, the armed insurrection on January the 8th and 9th, as well as Kurdish terrorists in northern Iraq, about 5,000 or so of them, and also the Takfiri, the Wahhabi-Salafi groups in Pakistan, in the Cezanne and Balochistan border, and inside the sort of no man's land in Pakistan which is not well governed by the Pakistani government. All of these may be mobilized if, let's say, they want to carry out a full-scale assault. They will deploy them, assault Iran, attack its infrastructure, and perhaps try to occupy islands and parts of the Iranian mainland, and maybe even carry out operations deep inside Iran to take away the dust, as Trump likes to call it. That is what Iran is preparing itself for. It doesn't mean that this is exactly how it will play out, but Iran is taking this scenario as the scenario that they have to be prepared for. And the Iranian Armed Forces are on full alert.

## **#Glenn**

Well, if we look at the media, we get similar reports that, given that there's no more—well, diplomacy more or less has failed—and they argue that Iran has rebuilt the overwhelming majority of its missile bases. And furthermore, given that the meeting with China is over, they're looking now to return to all-out war. That is, the United States and Israel are considering starting bombing and also seizing some islands, including Karg Island, which I have a lot of questions about how they're going to pull off, but also more efforts to essentially retrieve or remove the nuclear material from Iran. So, you know, a lot of talk. I'm not sure which of these objectives, like the nuclear material, if

that's just to shape the narrative that this is about nuclear weapons. I'm not quite sure exactly what the key objectives are. Again, the information war is kind of thick at the moment. But how do you expect the Iranians to respond if the U.S. and Israel decide to go back to war yet again?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

I think the Iranians have made it pretty clear that their response will be very harsh. It will be more decisive than even the 39-day war, or the 39-day hot war, the first phase of this current war, because the war is ongoing. We have siege warfare, of course, that Trump has also initiated and is carrying out. So the Iranians will hit very hard. And you know, Glenn, right now the Persian Gulf has entered the hot season, and it is very hot and humid in the Arabian Peninsula. It is not a good time to be an American soldier who wants to carry out an assault on the Iranian people. But if there is an assault and the United States makes the foolish mistake, and the Trump regime makes the foolish mistake, of striking at Iranian critical areas, infrastructure...

Iran will not hesitate to destroy the critical infrastructure of the Israeli regime. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar—all these countries, the UAE—all these countries that are involved in the war against Iran, their critical infrastructure will be destroyed. And the countries, those entities that will be harmed the most, will be the Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia because of the weather in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf. If their electricity goes out, if their water supplies are struck, then people will not be able to live there. They will have to empty these tiny countries.

In the case of Saudi Arabia, not a tiny country, but they'll have to evacuate them. And this is something that even Turki al-Faisal, in his article that I'm sure you read a few days ago, acknowledged—that Saudi Arabia is deeply vulnerable if Iran does carry out these strikes. But since these countries are complicit in the war against Iran, especially the United Arab Emirates, they have a special place in the hearts of Iranians right now. But all of them are complicit. So if there is war, then I think that will be perhaps the end of these countries. And that would mean that the current economic crisis will definitely end up as a deep economic depression—a deep and long-lasting economic depression.

That will change the face of the world. There's no doubt about it. People across the world will be heavily influenced by the catastrophe. But Iran will have no option. Recall, I'm sure you recall, that when the Israeli regime struck Iran's South Pars gas field, Iran does not initiate—one, it does not initiate—but if the other side does, Iran said that it will hit harder, and it did. It hit Qatari and Emirati gas installations very hard, so hard that Trump put out a two-social post in the middle of the war, saying, "I had nothing to do with this. Netanyahu will not do it again." Why?

Because he recognized the devastation that Iran can cause. This time around, Iran won't be pulling any punches. The retaliation, the response of Iran, will be severe. And from my understanding, it will be overwhelming, and it will be far worse than last time around. So I consider it to be the start of a

new conflict, catastrophic for the world. But Iran will not lose the war. They can pound Iran's critical infrastructure; we will rebuild them. But the U.S. allies in the region—there will be nothing left for them to go back to. These countries will have to be emptied for months, and after a few months, who knows what will happen.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, well, this is often what people are speculating about—how fast this will go up the escalation ladder. But this is, I guess, also why many people cling to the hope that there won't be a return to hostilities, given that it will be so incredibly destructive. But from your perspective, though, is there any more diplomacy going? Because the Americans put forward this proposal to Iran. Iran said this was a non-starter. The Iranians put a proposal to the Americans, and they more or less said the same. So is this the end of the line?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, it depends on the Americans. Trump exists. That's why we accepted the ceasefire. It was, of course, a defeat for the United States, no doubt. Trump initially called for unconditional surrender, just like at the beginning of the 12-day war. And he ended up, after 39 days, accepting Iran's demands. Iran is not going to change that. The United States apparently seems to be under this illusion that if it puts pressure on Iran, this was just some sort of starting...

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Proposal that would be revised and watered down. And after a period of time, the Iranians would accept something similar to what the Americans are demanding. The Americans lost the war. They are not winning the siege warfare. The world is losing. The world is suffering as a result of Trump and Netanyahu and Zionism. And Iran, of course, is suffering too, but Iran will manage. And Iran will outlast the United States. And I think they know that quite well. That's why they initiated that two-day, or 36-hour, operation in the Strait of Hormuz, which failed—not a single ship out of the Strait of Hormuz. So they know that this is not going to work, and the time is not...

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

On their side. And every day that goes by, the crisis worsens. There is a solution, at least for this phase, and that is for the United States to accept the ceasefire conditions—the conditions that they accepted from day one, which they failed to fulfill. Those are the ceasefire conditions that both sides agreed upon after 39 days. If it had fulfilled those conditions, we would not have slaughter in Lebanon. We would not have slaughter in Gaza. And there would be extra ships, because the Strait has never been closed to Russia, China, or any country that's not hostile towards Iran. But these five countries that participated in the war—many of their ships could have passed through the Strait. And the global crisis would have been manageable today.

And if the United States today chooses to take the smart and sane route, it is available to them. But I think the decision is not Trump's. The decision is Netanyahu's. It is the Zionist lobby. They are very much in control. Probably Trump wants an off-ramp. He wants to end this, but he does not have that authority. I think we can also come to this conclusion through what Tucker Carlson has told us, or his audience, about his visit to see Trump and what he told Trump and Trump's response with regards to war. And on the other hand, Joe Kent's resignation letter, as well as his subsequent interviews, all indicate that the real power behind the decision for war and continued war is the Zionist lobby and the Israeli regime.

And I don't think that in the last 70, 75 days their authority has melted away. Although I would say, Glenn, and this is my interpretation of the Iranian position—it's not anything that I've heard from an Iranian official—but I sort of see it. What Iran hopes to do is to put pressure on the United States in such a way that the political elites in Washington would conclude that they will have to part ways with the Israeli regime on this issue, and that they will have to impose peace. They would have to impose a ceasefire for the sake of internal U.S. stability and for the sake of rescuing the U.S. economy. They would basically tell the Israelis to sit this one out. But so far, I don't think we're anywhere near there.

## **#Glenn**

Well, given that there's a good possibility now that war is imminent, and as you said, Iran would respond in an overwhelming manner, how do you see this being fought differently than the previous, you know, the 39-day war? Essentially, what cards does each side have to play here? You mentioned, of course, the United States possibly activating some of its proxies. But beyond this, what cards do the Americans and Iranians have to play now? Or will it be something similar to last time?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, the Wahhabi and Salafi proxies on the border with Pakistan, they will be dealt with rather easily. And the Kurdish terrorists and other terrorists that will be accompanying them in the case of an assault, they will be dealt with, although that will be more complicated because they're larger in number. But that would also ultimately, after the war ends, lead Iran and the Iraqi central government to put an end to the Kurdish regional government in Iraq. If they do allow this to happen, then they will be a part of the war. And in the future, Iran will not tolerate that. That will be the end of that regional government.

And so it's for them to choose whether they want to go for suicide or to continue with their current status. With regards to the United States, I think Iran will escalate very quickly, and it won't be like last time. It will be very swift. But also, Glenn, this time around, the Iraqi resistance will go all out. What the Iraqi resistance did last time was to harass the Americans and to give them a lot of

difficulty, as well as in some cases Kuwait as well. But I think that this time around it will be a very different story. Yemen is now fully ready and prepared for war, and so I think that the Red Sea will be shut down.

And Saudi oil exports and other exports from the Red Sea, that will come to an end. The Iranians have allowed the Saudis to continue with those exports because Iran wants an off-ramp for the Saudis. But as long as the Americans have a presence in these countries, the military has a presence in these countries, they are partners in war. And so the Iranian response will be on all fronts. And of course, Israel will be hammered very hard. So I think that this is going to be a very... a more intense war, and I think lots of things will happen very quickly. Again, I'm speculating.

## **#Glenn**

Well, I've also seen that Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia are now coordinating their military operations. I was wondering to what extent it would be possible for the United States to outsource part of the warfighting to its allies, because again, ideally, when the US goes to war, you know, we'll use Ukrainians to fight the Russians, you would ideally use Taiwanese or Japanese to fight the Chinese, and you would use the Arabs to fight the Iranians. But do they have enough fighting power collectively to actually carry part of this burden? I mean, Israel has quite a formidable army, but these Gulf states, the UAE and Saudi Arabia — to what extent can they make a difference?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, I think Yemen, the real Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula, they will by themselves be able to deal with Saudi Arabia. And the Emirates — none of these countries have fighting forces. They are not capable of even defending themselves. They are corrupt family regimes. They have never created an incentive for the population to fight for them or the country. The United States, with all of its firepower, lost the war against Iran. So what is the Emirates, with a population of 1.1 million people, going to do? And I'm sure that if you look at public opinion in the Emirates, even though it's a police state...

All these five countries are police states — Qatar and Bahrain. The West likes to call Iran a dictatorship, but in Iran you can say anything you want in public. Over there you cannot say anything serious in private. But I think, you know, if the Emirates were to launch a war against Iran, some people would want... I don't know. And during the 39-day war, the Arab streets were cheering for Iran, even though the media of these oil and gas regimes were day and night antagonizing Iran. But people see right through them. They know that all of them have relations, open and secret, with the Israeli regime.

They know what sort of relationship Qatar has with Israel. They know, of course, what... The Emirates has taken this further than anyone else. None of these regimes have a great deal of public legitimacy. They have a lot of money. But now, after what happened in this war, that aura has

collapsed. And they're in no position to fight. The smart thing for them to do would be to coordinate with one another and tell the Americans, no, we're not going to allow you to use our land, sea, or air. And that would go a long way to change the equation, but they do not have that sort of sovereignty.

## **#Glenn**

Well, my last question was just based on the meeting between Trump and Xi. How do you see the Chinese and Russian support being different this time around when the next US attack comes along?

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Well, Iran-Chinese relations, Iran-Russian relations are very good. And the meeting between the Iranian foreign minister and President Putin in St. Petersburg, as well as the meetings in Beijing, all went very well. And that is, of course, to be expected, I think, under the circumstances that we're living in today. It's quite clear how these countries have been converging over the years and how that is going to continue to be the case. But ultimately, Glenn, Iran won the war based on its own capabilities. True, its friends assisted them, just like Iran assisted Russia or China assisted Russia. But Russia, on the battlefield, is fighting its own war.

The Iranians are fighting their war based on their indigenous capabilities, based on a military strategy that they have been working on for decades—three decades, more than three decades in some respects. These underground missile bases, we now... now they're beginning to acknowledge what we were saying all along, that they can't destroy those bases. I've been saying this, and so have others, for many years. But of course, they will never take it seriously until years after we say it, when the New York Times or someone else says it. But the B-52 bombers were bombing them day and night, to no avail. And I think we've discussed this before—most probably, Iran has a large number of bases that it has not used yet. It has not even opened them up for business because they just don't see any need to do so.

Why let the Americans know where those bases are, where their different gates are, when the current bases that are being used are functioning quite well? So, Americans have been bombing them day and night with heavy bombers. Iranian missile capabilities today, Glenn, are more powerful than they were before the war. The Iranian drone capabilities are more powerful than they were before the war. The Iranian economy is not in the place it was before the war. It is more difficult now. In that respect, that is a minus. But Iran will persevere because Iranians are resilient. It is a civilizational state. As I said, as Muslims, especially Shia Muslims, they have a very, very powerful religious and cultural affinity towards supporting the oppressed and standing up against oppressors.

This enhances Iran's capability to resist and be resilient. So the Iranians will definitely outlast the Americans. But when it comes to its military capabilities, the necessary ones, Iran is more powerful today, whereas the Americans have wasted a lot of ammunition. And on the other hand, on the

ground, I think what the Iranians have—just as they've been preparing those underground missile bases and drone bases for decades—the Iranians have been preparing for a ground invasion today. For decades. They've been preparing for a much larger ground invasion for decades. I think the Americans would be very foolish to conduct an assault on the ground. The Iranians will probably—again, I'm speculating completely—but I think the Iranians will allow them in.

They'll allow them to take islands. They'll allow them to take parts of the mainland. They'll allow them to carry out an operation deep inside Iran. And then they'll ambush them, and then they'll counterattack. And they'll hound them for weeks after, you know, for months, until they just wear them out and defeat them. If you recall, and I'm sure you do, at the very beginning of the war, we discussed the Iranian plan, and I said that Iran wants the war to last as long as possible. During the 39 days of fighting, after it became clear to the Americans after a few days that this was going nowhere, they began sending messages to Iran. The Iranians did not respond to any of those messages because they didn't want to. They wanted the fighting to go on.

And so it was only after 30, I don't know, four, five, six days, that the Iranians began to allow for those communications to take place. And ultimately, Trump had to accept the Iranian framework. And he was, as you recall, he was humiliated. Everyone went down, spoke in the bin, and we never even looked at it, but it was a humiliation. So the Iranians are unprepared. The Iranians think the longer the war lasts, even though Iran does not want war at all, but now that we have war, the longer it lasts, the better, because the Iranians want to make sure that the Americans never again think about aggression against Iran. So there will have to be a price for us to pay, but the Americans will have to pay a price that's so heavy—economically, militarily, and politically—that they will leave and never look back.

## **#Glenn**

Well, in terms of reassessment, how the war is going, you know, I know many people in America have accused you of spreading Iranian propaganda, but we now see that Leon Panetta, the former CIA boss, he's come out and said that Iran holds a gun to the head of the United States. And you had none other than the king of the neocons, Robert Kagan, writing an article in *The Atlantic* saying it's checkmate, the Iranians defeated us. So yeah, I guess reality eventually catches up with the best war narrative. So yeah, I mean, Robert has always been on the payroll. We've been paying him, I've been paying him for years now.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Yeah, that's the fact. And they can say I'm a mouthpiece, this is propaganda. For me, it was clear as day for many years that this would—I always thought it would ultimately reach this phase. I didn't think that the Americans would be able to come to terms with Iran. You know, for years I've been saying that the United States, if it engages in war with Iran, the results will not end well for them. The Iranian war plan has been magnificent, and the doctrine has worked very well for Iran. And just

as after the 12-day war, the Iranians went and rethought and regrouped and planned for the future, after this ceasefire, they've done the same thing once again.

So it won't end well for the United States. War is a horrible thing. I don't want war. But I have no doubt that it will end in failure for Trump and the Trump regime and the Israeli regime. It will end very poorly for Zionism because the world will blame the Zionists for the miseries that we're all going to experience. If the war restarts, I'm sure that we're going to enter a global economic depression—a major depression—if it's a severe war that strikes critical infrastructure. But we are where we are, and Iran will fight decisively. They will not back down until this is over.

## **#Glenn**

Well, thank you very much for taking the time on a Saturday night. I appreciate it. And yeah, stay safe.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

Thank you, Glenn.

## **#Seyed M. Marandi**

It's always a great pleasure being with you.