

# Seyed M. Marandi: Iran's Armed Forces Enter HIGHEST State of Alert – War Next?

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## #Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Saturday, May 23rd, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Professor Marandi, is here with us. Welcome back.

## #Seyed

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

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So just let us know what's going on in Tehran. Last night, everybody was talking about two delegations. One, the Pakistani official, who is the head of the army in Pakistan, Asim Munir, the Pakistani army chief. He was in Tehran negotiating, talking with Iranian officials. And then we learned the Qatari delegation went to Iran as well, and they're doing their job. I don't know if they're representing GCC countries or if they have a different sort of message for Iranian officials. What was happening last night?

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Well, the U.S. or the Trumpian talks, the U.S.-Iranian talks, or we shouldn't call them talks—the negotiations, the messages being sent back and forth—because there's no direct communication between the two sides. But the messages that are passing back and forth are happening more swiftly. And I think the reason why the Pakistanis are in Iran is to make the process move forward more rapidly. Iranians do not want direct negotiations. They don't want indirect negotiations. They prefer messages to go back and forth and to be written to make sure that there's no ambiguity, because the Americans have lied to Iran a lot in the past through verbal statements. And also, with the mediators, when something is verbal, then it's not clear.

The messages go through exactly as they should, so the Iranians want them all to be written. And so I think the texts are going back and forth at a more rapid—I can't say much more rapid—pace. I

don't know, but I would imagine at a more rapid pace than before. The Qataris, they're not mediators. I don't know the details of the trip, but they came and went, and it probably had something to do with the negotiations. But in any case, at the end of the day, this is between Iran and the United States. And the only thing that is important is what's in the two, and the messages being sent by the Iranians and the messages being sent by the Americans. My understanding is that there is some flexibility on the Americans.

But the question is how much and how far the U.S. is prepared to go, and so far there's no breakthrough. At least until last night, there was no breakthrough. I don't think there's any breakthrough as we speak either, and it could go either way. The Iranian armed forces are on full alert. They thought there was a—I mean, for the last three weeks, they've been expecting possible U.S. strikes. But last night, they were taking it seriously. I personally didn't think it would happen last night because of the ongoing talks. It would not look good at all when the Pakistani army chief is in Tehran and the United States assaults the country. It doesn't. Although Trump is not a rational or reasonable person, so it could happen anyhow.

But in any case, we'll have to see where that goes. I think there is a possibility that there could be a deal, but I think the possibility for another attack on Iran is quite high as well. It could go either way. The Iranians are not going to be very flexible, and it's obvious why. They won the war, and they didn't start the war. And in the U.S. siege warfare, the United States is hurting more—the world economy and the United States are hurting more than Iran. I mean, in the long run, they're hurting more. I mean, the global crisis is about to hit very hard. They don't have much time. The Iranians can wait longer. The Iranians are more patient for a host of reasons. One is that they're victims, Iranians being Shia Muslims in particular, that sense of resilience and resistance is very strong in them—resistance against the oppressor.

And that is something very deep in the Iranian culture. And of course, we didn't start the war—that strengthens that sense of resilience. And the Americans made a mistake at the beginning of the war. They didn't impose the siege on Iranian ports from day one. Iran did its trade for the duration of the war, and a week or so, or 10 days afterwards, using the Strait of Hormuz without any difficulty. And the Americans even removed the sanctions on Iranian oil for a period of time when Iran had a lot of oil on the high seas. The Iranians were actually expecting the Americans to impose a siege from the very beginning, and they were very pleasantly surprised to see that they didn't.

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So, you know, right now, let's look at Western assessments. I think about a month ago, the Americans were saying that the Iranians can tolerate this for like four months. I don't know if that's correct. I mean, U.S. intelligence has told the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal that Iranian missile, drone, and military capabilities are much better and much greater than was initially perceived. Well, we've been saying that all along. But if we say it, it's propaganda; if they admit it after weeks of delay, it's news. But even that is an understatement. The Iranians are more prepared

today than they were before the war, militarily. The economy is definitely doing worse, and life is more difficult, inflation is higher.

But militarily speaking, the Iranians are more prepared for war than they were three months ago. So let's say the U.S. intelligence services, their four-month estimate of Iran, is correct. Let's say one month has passed—three months remain. From what we're hearing from economists and energy market experts, the real crisis, when things begin to become really bad in the global economy, is weeks away, not three months away. So if it's going to be a waiting game, the Iranians can outwait the United States. If the Americans had started the siege from day one, let's say if we agree with the four months—I don't think it's four months. I think Iran can wait much longer, but let's say it's four months.

Then that would make it like a month and a half. That would make them closer to each other. So if we cut, let's say, the three months that are left, if we remove a month and a half from that, if the Americans had started from day one, then let's say the Iranians could wait a month and a half. The Americans can wait maybe, I don't know, three or four weeks. I don't know. But it would have made a difference. I believe Iran still would have had the upper hand, but it would have strengthened the U.S. position. I think the reason why they didn't do it from day one was because they thought that they would win the war easily, and they didn't want the global markets to become unstable and thought it would just be a glitch.

And then after a few weeks, things would go back to normal. So they didn't look at it from that. But I think it was a major tactical mistake, which is not reversible. It's too late, but... but again, I stress that even if they had done it, Iran would still have the upper hand, in my opinion. So right now, the Iranians are more patient than the Americans. The Iranian society is more resilient. They're willing to tolerate much more than the Americans. The military is prepared for war. It's more prepared now than before. In siege warfare, the Iranians have the upper hand, as I've been explaining. And so the Americans are in a rush.

They want this deal now. And it's obvious why they're in a rush. It's because of the global economic crisis. The Iranians are not in a rush. That I know. That I know. I can say that with 100% confidence that they're not in a rush. So that gives Iran even extra advantage. So that's where we are. I don't know if there's going to be a deal though, because the Americans are going to... I don't think there's going to be a comprehensive deal. If there is one, it's probably going to be something like the ceasefire that we had, but perhaps larger in scope. But I don't think we're going to have a comprehensive deal.

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Yesterday we heard that maybe the United States is giving the green light to Israel to attack Iran without the active participation of the United States. Then the Iranian response cannot be attacking, you know, the GCC countries, because Israel is attacking Iran. There is no, you know, reason for Iran to attack GCC countries. What is this logic? What is your understanding of that?

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It's not going to work. No, I saw that too, and first of all, the Israelis don't have those capabilities. Even in the last war, the 12-day war, the Israelis' jets were being refueled by the Americans. And the equation has changed. Iran is not—it's not going to be like it was before. Iran is going to assert its power, and it's going to punish the Israeli regime and its allies. There's no doubt about it. For the Emirates, I think it would be a bad day for them if the Israelis attacked Iran. That's for sure.

I think that Iran would just... If that happens, I think I would definitely not like to be them. If war starts, I wouldn't like to be anywhere in any of these countries, but especially the Emirates. This is just wishful thinking on behalf of the Americans. The Iranians are going to—this will be the big war. This will be bigger than the previous war. And it's going to end one way or another. So I, again, I don't know if there's going to be an agreement. I don't know if we're going towards war. But the Americans are not going to be able to play these games with Iran anymore. That era is finished.

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What do we know about the range of Iranian missiles? Because they said the IRGC has announced that if the war starts, it's not going to be a regional war. It's going to go beyond the region. And yesterday I was talking with my, you know, the experts and the friends we have on this podcast. There were some sort of doubts. What is the range of Iranian missiles, and how are they going to be able to increase that range? Because we know, by the way, that the former Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, because of his policy, his strategy, he said we have to be limited to, for example, this range — a particular range for the missiles. But right now, what do we know about that? Is that going to change because of this war of aggression against Iran? And they know that they're using the American bases in Romania, Germany, Greece, and other countries. They're using these bases against Iran.

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Yeah, I think that when they say that Iran is going to respond beyond... this response is going to go beyond the region, I think that is definitely going to happen. And I don't know whether Iran will start to strike Diego Garcia or something like that. I mean, in these far-off places, the Americans are much more vulnerable because their assets are not well protected. They're out there in the open. So Iran, if a few missiles hit somewhere far off, then they could do a lot of damage to the United States. But also, Iran's allies in the region are now much more prepared. Yemen is very prepared for

war, and the Iraqi resistance is willing and prepared to escalate far beyond what it did last time around. And as I said, the Iranian military capabilities are much stronger than they were three months ago. So it will be devastating, and it will not go well for the United States or the Israeli regime or their regional proxies.

And there's no way that the Americans are going to be able to carry out some type of limited war and get away with it or have the Iranians respond in a way that would please the United States. The Iranians will strike back in a way that suits their interests. This is a broad anti-Iranian coalition. It's a broad coalition against the axis of resistance. It's a broad coalition against the free people of the region — the Iranians, Yemen, Iraq, the Iraqi resistance, Hezbollah, the Palestinians. And Iran will deal with it, both regionally and beyond. Also, there are other things that can be contemplated about global energy markets. I mean, with the technologies that exist today, the production of oil could easily be stopped outside of this region.

I mean, the Republic of Azerbaijan is one place, but that's closer to home. But you can envisage places that are under U.S. occupation or taken hostage by the United States, or, you know, Libya or other places where the United States, the West, they have major interests that could be targeted. I have no idea what this could mean, but in today's world, when the Israeli regime carries out assassinations from thousands of kilometers away, or they bomb targets by flying over multiple countries, I think that when Americans and Israelis have created a jungle and are imposing the law of the jungle, then they shouldn't expect others not to respond in kind.

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When you talk about we may reach some sort of agreement, is this agreement some sort of document about the preconditions for the next round of negotiations? What is that? Because many people are arguing there are no negotiations going on. There are no active talks between the two parties. We have Pakistan negotiating, you know, sending messages, giving the American message to the Iranians and taking the Iranian message and delivering it to the Americans. What is that? And what do we know about it? Let's assume they reach some sort of positive outcome. What is that positive outcome?

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Well, yes, you're right. There are no negotiations. There's no direct communication. They're all just letters. The Pakistanis are not doing much more than sending the letters back and forth. What I'm hearing is that the Americans are showing some flexibility, but not nearly enough. So there's no reason to believe that there will be a big breakthrough at all. And it could be that tomorrow morning at this time, we may be at war. Maybe tonight we may be at war. Maybe the day after. After all, this is a three-day weekend, and they like starting wars during weekends — a three-day weekend in the United States because Memorial Day is on Monday.

So this may be, you know, this may be the time that the, and we know that the United States loves carrying out wars while they're negotiating, in the hope of, like, on both occasions when they, I mean, when they launched the 12-day war, they were negotiating with Iran. And the negotiations, it turned out, were just a ploy. They just wanted to make the Iranians think that there wouldn't be war. Then before this war, we were negotiating and there was progress. And the foreign minister of Oman went to the United States saying that there was significant progress. And then they launched the war. And then after the war, we had the ceasefire.

And the Americans, instead of abiding by the ceasefire, imposed a blockade on Iranian ports. And the Israelis, of course, are carrying out genocidal attacks against Lebanese civilians as we speak. So negotiations with the United States don't necessarily mean anything. And messages being sent back and forth through the Pakistanis don't necessarily mean anything either. As I said, we could wake up tomorrow morning and war will have started, despite the fact that we're hearing that the Americans are showing some flexibility. Maybe they're showing flexibility to fool Iran into thinking that war is off the table.

But that's not going to work. The Iranians are 100% prepared for war. And their working assumption is that there will be war. That is the working assumption. The assumption is that there will be war. It's a given. Now, if the negotiations get anywhere, fine. But they're planning for war. But if there is going to be an agreement, the Iranians are not going to be very flexible. Why? Because they won the war. They're the victim. They have the upper hand. And in the siege warfare, the Americans have used a double-edged sword. Yes, they besieged Iran, but they've besieged the global economy now for almost three months too.

And the global economy, from what we're hearing, is weeks away from the crisis exploding. And some say it could be at the beginning of June. Some say the middle of June. Of course, it's a process. It's not like one day everything becomes clear. But things are going to deteriorate rapidly from what we're hearing from people in the know. And that is the reason why the Americans have such a sense of urgency. As I said earlier, the Americans want an agreement now. The Iranians are, you know, today, the Iranians are saying, no, no, no, we have to do this properly. The Iranians are in no rush. So obviously the Americans have reasons why they're in such a rush.

I don't think there will be a comprehensive agreement, but there could be a partial agreement, and there are ways in which Iran can be flexible, I mean, without compromising its principles. I mean, Iran is not going to give up nuclear enrichment. It's not going to accept, like, you know, this long period of time where they don't enrich uranium or anything like that. But it's not going to give up control of the Strait of Hormuz. It's not going to give up its sovereignty. It's not going to give up its demands for reparations and the removal of sanctions. But there are some ways in which I could conceive it being flexible. I mean, for example, Iran is going to take fees or get fees for the Strait of Hormuz.

Does it have to announce it and make a big deal out of it? No, not necessarily. There are ways of doing these things where you can lessen sensitivity. There are ways that some things can be done. But again, at the end of the day, it's going to be the Americans who are going to have to give the concessions, not the Iranians. The Iranians can give token concessions. They can make some tactical concessions to give Trump an off-ramp, but they're not going to change. Why? They won the war. They have the upper hand on siege warfare. And the Iranians have the Strait of Hormuz. The Americans want it open. The Iranians are saying, it was open, you closed it. And if it's going to be normal, then things have to be normal for us too.

And so the Iranians have the — they're the ones with the power. And the Iranian people are patient. A lot of people have great expectations in Iran. The government has to take that into account. Some expectations are unrealistic, in my opinion. Some people, you know, they're demanding unconditional surrender or something like that from the Americans. But still, it's important that the government has to show that they were able to — I don't like using the term "cash in," but they were able to use this opportunity to change the equation. And I'm confident that they will be able to do that. But again, if I was a betting man — and thank God I'm not — I would not bet on a deal.

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Yesterday, all GCC countries together condemned Iran's new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz. Is that a political posture? And behind the scenes, somehow they have no choice but to agree with Iran's new sort of strategy for the Strait of Hormuz — the new mechanism, by the way, the new system, the toll system that they have in place. And the other point is, Professor Marandi, last night we know that the Bahraini delegation was in Tehran. What was the main reason for that? Is that communication between Iran and the GCC countries?

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Well, I don't know the details of that, and so I shouldn't speculate. From what I've read, not told — I haven't been told — from what I've read, it has to do with the negotiations. But whether they... I haven't read that they're representing broader — I mean, the five countries that helped the Americans attack Iran — there are major differences between them right now. And, well, they, you know, they can condemn all they like. They thought that they could get away with murder. They were with the Americans. They facilitated the war. They funded the war. They killed our people.

And pretending that they were neutral is just an insult to our intelligence. No one believes it. That's why across the region, people were cheering Iran when Iran was striking these regimes in retaliation. Because they know. Everyone knows. And the only people who weren't cheering were the Wahhabis and the Salafis and the Takfiris who were all on the payroll, and others who are on the

payroll. Otherwise, everyone, people were cheering. Why? Because they know these regimes, where they stand and who they are. Each is worse, as they say in Persian, each is worse than the next. One is worse than the other, or whatever, however that would be translated. So,

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They can complain all they want, but the status of the trade of hydrocarbons is never going to go back to where it was before. And there's nothing that they can do about it. Absolutely nothing. They should have refrained from killing Iranians. They thought, and remember, before we were hearing that they were against the war, before the war started. But then it turned out that they were not actually against the war. Now some of them are because they paid a heavy price. And they know that if the war restarts, that could be the end of their regimes. I mean, if Iran destroys Qatar's gas facilities and wrecks them completely, then Qatar is nothing. If Iran destroys the critical infrastructure of any of these countries, it could do it swiftly and it would bring an end to these countries.

So now they think differently, except for the Emirates, whose leader is firmly in the Netanyahu camp, which is actually a good thing for Iran because the more they're associated with Israel, the more popular Iran becomes. The more people see that the Iranians, despite all the propaganda, are the protagonists and these regimes are the antagonists. These are not smart moves—to show, to expose, to make open their relationship with the Israeli regime. These are stupid moves. But their complaints are not really important. The only thing that is important is Iran and the United States. No one else has a role to play. The Israeli regime, of course, because of its influence on the United States, because of Zionism—that is, when I say the United States, I'm including the Israeli regime.

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But Israel is facing a lot of crises at home.

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And the problems that the regime, the internal crises, Netanyahu's problems—these are growing. It's becoming clear that the situation in Israel is not nearly as good as they've been presenting it to be. And of course, in Lebanon, they're being hit hard by Hezbollah. Extraordinary scenes. And then, of course, in their rage, they go and bomb medics and they slaughter families. I mean, these Zionist monsters are exposing themselves to the world every day, even though Western media doesn't show any of this and they hide it because their journalists are all complicit. But people are seeing what's going on.

But this is—it shows the regime, it's making it more despised, hated, of course, and it's showing the resistance being effective. So Israel has many problems. But at the end of the day, at the negotiating table, this is between Iran and the United States. And if the Israelis don't abide by the

agreements between Iran and the United States, Iran will not fulfill its obligations. It won't happen. You see, the difference between Iran today and before is that Iran is much more assertive and more confident in the public. Ayatollah Khamenei was always very confident. But, you know, you have different people.

It's sort of like, you know, it's very cold and someone wants to go into a pool or into water, and they keep putting their toe in and they keep pulling back. But once you jump into the pool, then you're in. The Iranians have always been under the threat of war. Now we're in war, and Iranians say, wow, we've done much better than we—many Iranians—we're doing much better than we expected. Many, of course, were expecting victory. I always expected us to have the resistance to win, just as I always expected Hezbollah to do well on the battlefield. And before, when they were saying Hezbollah is severely weakened, I always rejected that.

And here we're seeing that we were right. So the Iranians are... In the past, for example, when we had the JCPOA negotiations in 2015, the nuclear deal, the deal had significant flaws. The Iranians carried out their obligations very swiftly. The Americans didn't. Obama cheated Iran. And the Americans dragged their feet. And until the very end, when Trump left, Iran was not really benefiting from the JCPOA nearly as much as it was supposed to. The Central Bank of Iran could never join the international banking system. The Americans cheated Iran. So now we saw in the ceasefire that when the Israelis said, you know, when Netanyahu, in order to wreck the ceasefire, he carpet-bombed Lebanon and slaughtered all these hundreds of innocent people just to wreck the ceasefire. And then Trump was saying, well, that Lebanon is not a part of the ceasefire.

Iran said, no, no way. This is a part of the ceasefire. This is what we agreed upon, and you're not getting away with this. We're not going to open the Strait of Hormuz to the ships from those countries. This is the difference. In 2015, when they would not abide by their side of the bargain, the Iranians would show patience. This time they're saying we're not having any of that. You don't abide by your commitment, we don't abide by it. If Netanyahu had not carpet-bombed Beirut, and then later if Trump hadn't imposed the siege on Iranian ports, which was an act of war and a violation of the ceasefire agreement, the Strait of Hormuz would have been open today. The global economic crisis as it is emerging would not exist. It would have been much smaller and easier to... The war would have had a huge impact.

I mean, 45 days of shutting the, you know, the Strait of Hormuz under those circumstances was going to have a big impact, but not nearly as bad as it is now. So Netanyahu and Trump, by violating the ceasefire, have kept the Strait of Hormuz shut. This time around, therefore, the Iranians have shown that they will not tolerate the Americans cheating Iran at the negotiating table or cheating Iran in implementing any deal. So this is going to make negotiations tougher for the Americans right now because the Iranians are, you know, going to say, well, if you don't do this, we're not going to do that. If you lie to us, if you cheat us, then we're going to make life difficult for you. We're going to make it hell for you. And Iran has the means because they have a powerful military and because they control the Strait of...

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We know that one of the main points in these negotiations is reparation for the war, you know, with the devastation that has happened since the war started, this war of aggression on Iran. And how does Iran see the GCC countries and their participation in this war? How are they going to be charged? Because of the devastation, because of the destruction of Iranian facilities, Iranian lives, everything that the United States and Israel did to Iran is part of their responsibility as well. How is that going to be communicated between Iran and the GCC countries?

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Well, Iran will demand reparations. In one way or another, Iran is going to get its reparations. It doesn't matter who pays. And the reparations will include Lebanon. Lebanon will have to be rebuilt. And the Israeli regime will have to leave. Without that happening, there's no deal. Without removing the siege on the Strait of Hormuz, without the U.S. withdrawing forces, without the Israeli regime ending the genocide in Gaza and withdrawing from Lebanon, there won't be peace. And so reparations are a part of that. Iran's sovereignty is a part of that, peace across the region. All of these will be a part of the negotiations. But Iran is not going to forgive and forget. That's not happening.

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I think the case of the Strait of Hormuz and what has happened in the Persian Gulf brings up how Iran is going to communicate with other nations, with imports and exports. For example, when it comes to the Caspian Sea, what would change in the near future in the eyes of Iranians? And how is that going to change trade between Iran and Russia, China, the new lines of communication, the railroads, maybe the ports in the northern part of Iran? Is there any sort of plan on the part of the Iranian government to transform the way they do trade with other nations?

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Oh, I think there's going to be a sea change. I think the north-south corridor between Iran and Russia is going to be a top priority. The Belt and Road Initiative, the network that links Iran to Central Asia and to China, or through Pakistan and hypothetically Afghanistan — these are going to be not just top priorities for Iran, but for everyone, because the United States is — the Trump regime is — they're pirates. And the Chinese know that. The Iranians know that. Everyone knows that. So Asian countries are definitely going to have an incentive to strengthen land routes and to strengthen trade by land in order to protect themselves from the United States.

Of course, the United States will try to counter that by strengthening ISIS and al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups in Central Asia and elsewhere. That's been the plan for a long time. That's why they

moved ISIS, elements of them, from Syria to Afghanistan. But still, I think that as the U.S. has shown itself to be a threat to sea trade, the priority for Iran to strengthen the land routes, and for Iran's partners, has increased. You see it a lot in Iranian media already, and the government is moving in that direction.

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Do you think that a new security architecture is taking shape, considering Eurasia? Because we had the Iranian foreign minister going to China, then Vladimir Putin. Right now, China is going to go to North Korea, and there are some rumors. They're talking about the new security architecture of Eurasia, in which the Middle East — or I would say West Asia — would be part of it. Or what's going on in the Persian Gulf — Iran, Russia, China, North Korea, maybe Pakistan. I don't know how Turkey is playing right now. How do you see that? Is that far from being achieved, or is it going to be something that is workable for the time being?

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It's difficult to say, at least for our part of the world. I mean, Pakistan and Turkey are very close to Trump. And Turkey is, of course, NATO, and so its interests are in line with Trump's interests. The Pakistani government has good relations with China, but we know the internal politics of Pakistan, so it is close to the United States. The countries in the Persian Gulf, they are bound to the United States. Jordan plays a very ugly role in all of the wars. I mean, it is, you know, seriously a tool — I mean, just simply a tool of the CIA and Mossad in our part of the world. Whether it's in the dirty wars or the wars against Iran or, you know, whatever the Israelis need, they'll get it from the Jordanian regime.

But these countries in the Persian Gulf, they're all bound to the United States. I can't see them, I can't envisage them easily moving away. Their families have interests in the United States and in the West. That's where they're educated. That's where probably they have lots of Epstein videos. There are probably lots of Epstein videos of the princes and the princesses and the elites there. And something that people should be very careful of, especially pro-Palestinian activists — they should be very careful about these things. I'm sure that the Mossad and the CIA and Western intelligence agencies, MI6 and others, MI5 — they're out there to get dirt on people. But in any case, these regimes are deeply bound to the West.

And I can't really envisage them — I can understand them moving to improve relations with China, with Russia, with Iran, but up to a point, up to a point. I don't see them, because they're proxies. They're bound to the West. So unless there's upheaval and change, which is quite possible, especially if there's war, then that would change the equation. But I do believe we are moving towards change, whether anyone likes it or not. The balance of power — this war has changed the

global balance of power. And again, if we go back to what Robert Kagan wrote, I think this is not some, you know, minority view. I mean, when the godfather of the neocons acknowledges this, this is the greatest defeat of the United States ever. And it's going to have a huge impact.

And these countries in the region, their importance has decreased a lot. The countries in the Persian Gulf, they're not what they were, you know, three months ago, or at least what they imagined themselves to be. It's never going to be like before. They made a big mistake. They made a catastrophic mistake, a criminal one. What they did was criminal and barbaric, but it was a major, major miscalculation. They misread the situation. And so I think that the region is going to change. But I don't think it's going to be—I don't think they want to be a part of a non-American project. I mean, Turkey—I mean, Erdogan has been in power in Turkey for God knows how long, over two decades.

And he's still in NATO. He hasn't budged, and he's sending, transporting oil to Netanyahu throughout the genocide, throughout the wars. We shouldn't be naive about these things. It doesn't reflect upon the people of Turkey. Sometimes some of my Turkish friends say, why are you so critical of Turkey? I'm not critical of Turkey. I mean, I've been told by a non-Kuwaiti, a Westerner in Kuwait, that during the war, Kuwaitis were cheering for Iran. Not like a minority in Kuwait—Kuwaitis, I was told, were cheering for Iranians. Now, what he said is based on his own anecdote. He's in Kuwait, or at least he was in Kuwait.

I don't know about right now, maybe from his anecdotal experience, but it's not a huge country. But he was saying that people were, so it, you know, it doesn't—I'm not—when I say the Kuwaiti regime, I'm not talking about the population. We know that these regimes are police states. And so, popular opinion in the Emirates—I have no doubt that ordinary Emiratis are against the Israeli regime. I have no doubt about that. But it is a police state, and it's very tightly controlled. In Turkey, you see people come to the streets in support of the Palestinians. People are unhappy about the trade relations. But Turkey is still in NATO.

## **#Nima**

Just moments ago, we've learned that Israel is bombing the southern part of Lebanon again and again and again, each and every day. They're killing civilians. And the same thing has happened yesterday and the day before in Syria as well. What is the position of Turkey? Is that going to bring—because Turkey has a lot to do with the case of Syria. We know that Iran is concerned about the people in Syria and with the case of Lebanon. Is that going to bring Turkey and Iran to some sort of understanding with Israeli relations or objectives? Because they're attacking each and every country in that region, and it doesn't seem that in the long run they can continue this way. And Turkey—is it going to—are they concerned about Syria, the people? I'm talking about the people in Syria. Or do they care about the government, to keep the government, you know, in its position? Well, if Ankara were to change policy, Iran would cooperate.

## **#Seyed**

The problem is not in Tehran, it's in Ankara. So they are concerned, but they're bound to the West. The elites are bound to the West, and they work in line with broader Western objectives.

## **#Nima**

As we speak, again, they're transporting Baku oil to Netanyahu.

## **#Seyed**

You would imagine that Turkey would have broken off relations over the last two and a half years, even political relations. They refused to do that. Iran encouraged them to do that. They refused. And you know, when these countries in our region refuse to do that sort of thing, it makes it much more difficult to convince countries outside of the region—in Africa, in Latin America, and in Asia—to do the same. You first have to do it yourselves. But none of these countries made any move. Syria, as a result of the coming to power of ISIS and Al-Qaeda attacks in Syria, is exactly what Iran and Hezbollah were saying would happen. Should anyone be surprised that Jolani is obedient to the United States?

If Jolani was, you know, it was only about jihad and all the billions of dollars were pouring in, and the ISIS and Al-Qaeda head choppers, as some would call them, they were all being funded. Only until now—now where's the funding? Where's the support? Why don't they continue to fund these people so that they can take back southern Syria? As Hezbollah's fighting, this is the best time for the Syrians to fight for their territory because the Israelis would be overwhelmed. They can't defeat Hezbollah. And if the Syrians, which are a much larger country, were to open a front, then the Israelis would be in a lot of trouble. They're not going to do that. That was never the plan.

Those people who promoted the blessed revolution, they're always working for the CIA, knowingly or otherwise. They're always working for the Mossad. Even those who are pro-Palestinian, they're always working for the Mossad, wittingly or unwittingly. Some wittingly, some unwittingly. They're always on the Qatari money and whatever. We all knew it. This was never about Assad. They liked to say it that way in order to muddy the waters. From the very beginning, it was clear what this was all about. It was to break the axis of resistance so that the Israelis could defeat the Palestinians, so that the Israelis could have more ease in their expansionist policies.

## **#Nima**

If they were sincere, they should be defending their territory now.

## **#Seyed**

They were all about jihad, whatever that means. And of course, jihad for us is very different from the jihad of the ISIS and Al-Qaeda terrorists backed by the CIA. We have a, you know, our worldview is, you know, for us, I was just saying the other day to someone, I said, you know, from our religious and ideological perspective, if the Jews in Israel were in Gaza, and the Palestinians were in control of Palestine, and they were doing to the Jews in Gaza what the Zionists are doing today to the Palestinians, Iran's policy would be to support the Jews in Gaza. It would be just as it is now. Why? Because that is the moral position to take. And supporting the empire or working to strengthen the empire, pushing the policies of the empire, are immoral.

Iran's support for the Syrians was because it knew that ISIS and Al-Qaeda are to the benefit of the United States and to the detriment of the Palestinian people and people across the region. But if right now Jolani decided to shift policy and say, "I'm going to defend my territory," the first country to come to his aid would be Iran. It would be Hezbollah that sends its advisors there to help him. It would be the resistance in Iraq that volunteers. And no one else would help him, I have no doubt. All those billions of dollars that came in to create this dirty war to destroy Syria, none of that will come in. Just as it's not being given to them now, it won't come in.

If, you know, somehow miraculously Jolani decided that he'd be the anti-Jolani, that he would be independent of the empire, the first to support him would be Iran and Hezbollah. They would be there immediately. They would give him whatever he needs to liberate the country. But that was never the intention in the first place. And I think people have woken up to that. Those who still close their eyes, they know why they're closing them. It's because they're on the payroll. It's because of sectarian blindness, a disease in itself, the disinformation that they spread out every day. It shows why that disinformation—it's obvious why it's being spread—because they have to keep the waters muddy. Because if the water is not muddy, then everyone will see more clearly what's happening.

But people are seeing much more than before. It's in its interest to join Iran, but it's for Ankara to make that decision. If Ankara had joined Iran, if it joins Iran today, it would be horrible for the Israeli regime. But that's not going to happen, not under it—sorry, I interrupted you. That's something I never understood. Why is that? I see no reason for Iran and Turkey not to participate, not to cooperate, not to... Well, you know, because Western intelligence agencies, they helped Mr. Erdogan, they helped him, and Turkish intelligence at that time, they helped him. The Islamic movement in Turkey under Necmettin Erbakan was a very different thing. And they were able to change the course of much of the movement in a way in which someone, or people much less threatening to the empire, came to power. But if the original—if someone like Necmettin Erbakan was able to gain power and he was removed through a coup—but if he was able, or someone like him was able, to gain power in Turkey, we would have a very different Turkey today, and the Israelis would be in a lot of trouble. So it's not as if Turkey is like this. This is just—it's just like Jordan. Do you think ordinary Jordanians—and the Jordanian regime is a horrible proxy regime—but do you think Jordanians are happy about it? No, of course not.

**#Nima**

Professor Marandi, before wrapping up, we've learned in the last two days that more than 36 tankers pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Who are these countries that are getting their tankers to pass through the Strait of Hormuz? And are they paying directly to Iran? Are they communicating? How is the payment system? Is that in Iranian Rial, in Chinese Yuan, or something else? How is that working?

## **#Seyed**

They all pay, and there are different means to have it done. It can be done in different ways. There's not a single method. But all of them belong to countries that are not showing hostility towards Iran. That's the key point. Remember, as I said on multiple occasions, Iran never at any point closed the Strait of Hormuz. Never. Only those countries that were hostile towards Iran, that helped the United States murder Iranian kids in Minab, to murder our leader, to bomb gymnasiums where those girls were playing volleyball and they massacred all of them. I think it was a city in the south of Iran—Lar, maybe, I'm not sure.

But I shouldn't remember these things, but uh, I mean, they carried out all sorts of atrocities, which is unforgivable. It's not the first time that they've done this. They helped ISIS and al-Qaeda before that. They helped Saddam Hussein invade Iran. But countries that were friendly to Iran, it was never closed to them. And the ships that passed through, they pay a fee. There are different mechanisms and ways to do it, or different scenarios. There are different ways that fee can be paid. But there are countries that have some sort of friendly relationship with Iran. They're not implicated in the war. The goods may have been from, like, these five countries in some cases. They were purchased and they're stuck in the Persian Gulf. You know, they are facilitating their departure.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. Thank you so much, Professor Marandi, for being with us today. Great pleasure, as always.

## **#Seyed**

It's a great pleasure, Nima. Thank you very much for inviting me to your very good show.

## **#Nima**

Thank you.