

Seyed M. Marandi: Iran Opens Fire on American Fighter Jets

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#Seyed

Hi, everybody.

#Nima

Today's Tuesday, May 26, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Professor Marandi, is here with us. Welcome back.

#Seyed

Hi, Nima. Thank you very much for having me on your show again. It's always a great pleasure.

#Nima

Let me start with what happened yesterday. We had the two sides firing at each other, the United States and Iran. And it seems it started with an American attack on Iranian boats. What happened yesterday, Professor?

#Seyed

It was actually the night before, the day before yesterday at night. The Americans bombed two naval vessels, small naval vessels. I think two were on each, and they murdered four soldiers, four guards. It was unprovoked, and they were in Iranian territorial waters, and there was no excuse. They were implying, I think, that they had something to do with mines, but they were not even in a place that had anything to do with or any need for mines. It was Iranian territory, so it's very strange. And we're seeing very different messages from the United States. The Iranians responded. They fired missiles. And also, I think there was a ship struck hours ago along the coast of Oman, outside of the Persian Gulf, possibly a response to the U.S. aggression.

But the point is that we are getting mixed messages from the United States. On the one hand, we saw all those messages. First, we had flexibility from the Americans, and the deal, in my opinion, is a good deal for Iran. And then there was a lot of pushback in the United States, and then Trump began to make all these crazy tweets that, if he was serious, would mean that the deal was completely undermined. But from my understanding at the negotiating table, his tweets had nothing to do, or his social media posts had nothing to do, with what was going on at the negotiating table. But the last, I don't know, 5%, or the last bits, are frozen from my understanding. They've been frozen for a few days now.

Then we had this assault, and it's unclear why the United States is trying to—first of all, they murdered four people. Four families have lost their young sons. And it's unclear why they're doing this, why they did this. And then we had, of course, the Israeli regime again saying that they're going to carpet bomb Beirut and bring down all the apartment blocks. And you would think there would be, of course, outrage in the West. But the West has really exposed itself. There's human rights and all that nonsense everywhere, that this facade that we would hear about for decades or that we would see for decades, it's all gone. But Netanyahu wants to expand the war in Lebanon, to carry out airstrikes on civilian targets much more extensively, in order to wreck the ceasefire.

Because this reminds—it should remind us all of what happened during the first ceasefire. After the fighting, and right before the Islamabad talks, there was an agreement so that ships that were linked to those countries that were helping the United States against Iran—the Saudis, the Emiratis, Qatar, Bahrain, and the UAE—they would be able to leave. But one of the conditions was a regional ceasefire, including Lebanon. And so, as soon as that ceasefire agreement was signed, declared, Netanyahu began carpet bombing cities in Beirut. He killed hundreds of people in 10 minutes. I mean, it's amazing just talking about these things and how the West just lets it happen, and Western journalists are quiet.

It's just unbelievable how the narrative in the West—what it used to be like and what it is now when it comes to the Israeli regime. But in any case, he wrecked the ceasefire back then. If he had halted the fighting, then we wouldn't be in this global economic crisis that we're in today, because the shipping through the Strait of Hormuz would have increased back then. That's like a month and a half ago, more than a month and a half ago. Right now, it seems like he wants to do the same thing. And then the Iranians responded, saying that if he does this, then the peace process, the negotiations, will be disrupted or stopped altogether. So this is where we are right now.

And then, on the other hand, Trump put out a social media post—I'm sure you want to get to that—where he talks about the Iranian regime's nuclear program. And he says, instead of saying that the enriched uranium has to go to the United States, he's talking about alternatives. Now, Iran is not negotiating this with the United States yet. It has left this after the first stage. If the first stage

passes off successfully, if the 60-day confidence-building measures are implemented, then there will be negotiations which will be about the sanctions against Iran, which are very extensive, and many of them are law in the United States because Congress and the Senate have approved them.

And of course, the nuclear program. But that will be left for later. But now we have the challenge of the U.S. provoking Iranians by killing Iranian sailors and the Israeli regime slaughtering innocent civilians in order to wreck the ceasefire. So it's really unclear what will happen. No one knows. Everyone is just saying we have to wait and see. You can't even say, like, this will probably happen or that will probably happen. It's just too cloudy. It's too cloudy. You can't see through the fog.

#Nima

Yeah. The Iranian response, as we've learned from the IRGC, is that they shot down an MQ-9 drone, and they fired at another drone, an RQ-4, and an F-35. It seems that the F-35 is in the region. Are they testing the Iranian air defense system to see the location of the air defense system or to see what's going on close to the Persian Gulf, close to the Strait of Hormuz? What are the capabilities of the Iranian army, the Iranian IRGC, when it comes to the air defense and the improvement of the air defense system of Iran?

#Seyed

Well, obviously that is a part of it, but they actually did kill four people. Four people were martyred. So it goes even further than that. They haven't done any extensive damage beyond that. I mean, when they said they fired missiles at launchers and that sort of thing, none of that was really serious. What happened basically was that the Iranians fired missiles at them after they murdered those four sailors, and then they fired missiles back. And then today, a ship was hit off the coast of Oman. I don't know exactly what was on that ship, but I think it was a commercial ship. But I think that probably had something to do with the UAE, I'm guessing. But in any case...

#Nima

It was an oil tanker, Professor.

#Seyed

For which country? UAE. Yes, but probably near UAE, because Oman and the UAE... yeah, they're so close. Yeah, so Iran wouldn't do... Iran has never struck anything that belongs to Oman. During the war, they remained untouched. There were a couple of drones that hit Oman, and it was clear that it was from the Emirates or Saudi Arabia, because Iran has very good relations with Oman. Actually, Oman has benefited enormously by staying out of this war. And they have excellent relations with Iran, and they have had no damage. And that's the path that the others could have chosen. And they chose to do the opposite and assist the Americans. But in any case, the point is that when you

look at what the Americans did in the Persian Gulf, and when you look at what Netanyahu is planning to do in Lebanon, and what he has been doing, and then when you look at Trump's social media posts that I explained earlier, it's very difficult to see where things are going to go.

The Speaker of Parliament went to Qatar to make sure that, as part of this agreement, the transfer of about \$12 billion to Iran from Qatar actually takes place, actually happens. Because the last time, if you recall, it was when the money was stuck in South Korea. Then they transferred it to Qatar, and then they wouldn't transfer it to Iran. The Americans were dishonest. The Biden administration was dishonest, and they wouldn't let that money through even though there was an agreement. They used shortcomings in their agreement, loopholes, to prevent Iran from using it. So this time around, the Iranian delegation is in Qatar to make sure there's no loophole, and as soon as there's an agreement, if there is an agreement, that that money is swiftly transferred to Iran.

#Nima

Just before talking about that, I want to focus on what has happened in Qatar. But here we learned that Oman is improving its relationship, you know, in terms of trade with Iran. And a new executive decree ordering Oman to increase its volume of trade and economic relations with Iran was signed by the Sultan of Oman. And I think the new mechanism of this Strait of Hormuz is bringing these two countries together as well. And Iran said it's not going to be a toll. Yesterday we learned from the foreign minister of Iran that there would be no toll system, but a fee system, something like an environmental fee, something of that sort.

#Seyed

Yeah, so there's no toll, but there will be a fee. Now, in any case, they're going to benefit from each ship passing through. But perhaps just as important is the fact that they will be able to control who goes through, because they don't want American naval ships to go through. They don't want American ships to go through that carry equipment for naval bases or Israeli ships, regime equipment, or anything like that. So the Iranians are going to remain in charge of the Strait of Hormuz, and they are cooperating with Oman, and the Omani government is fine with it. And as you rightly point out, the relationship is expanding. The same is true with Pakistan, and both to the detriment of the Emirates.

Of course, Dr. Qalibaf's trip to Qatar is both to negotiate and to make sure that the money, if there's an agreement, is swiftly transferred to Iran. But also he's there to improve relations with countries in the Persian Gulf, because they made, except for Oman and Iraq of course, they made a bad choice in supporting the United States and helping them kill all these Iranians and destroy so much of our infrastructure. But the Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei, he has stressed on more than one occasion that we have to have good relations with our neighbors. And so Dr. Qalibaf, I'm sure, I mean, he is there also to see if there are ways to improve the relationship with the countries in the Persian Gulf, to push them or draw them away from the United States, at least to a degree.

#Nima

Actually, moments ago, before coming to this live, we had the account of Ayatollah Mujtaba Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, publishing that he says, "I invite all Islamic countries and governments to friendship and cooperation in goodness, so that by working together we may take steps towards the advancement of the Islamic Ummah and the resolution of the Islamic world's problems." Here is a new concept, in my opinion, coming out of this war, this conflict, which is the solution that the Iranian Supreme Leader is talking about — a new security architecture, a new cooperation, something that would bring peace and prosperity to the region. What is the Iranian concept on that, and how far would the Iranians go to achieve that?

#Seyed

Well, this is something that actually the march of Ayatollah Khamenei was also pursuing. But I think what the Iranians are now thinking, and what Ayatollah Seyed Mujtaba Khamenei is now thinking — and this is the third time within this short period of time that he's spoken about neighbors and the need to have improved relations — the thinking is now that since this war, these countries have recognized that the United States is not doing them any good, that following the United States has done enormous damage to their image, to their infrastructure, and to their economies. And so now perhaps is an opportunity to convince them not to change completely, because these are countries that are, you know, their leaders are proxies, and their families, they go to the West, they study in the West, they spend their vacations in the West.

I'm sure there are a lot of videos of their family members doing things that they shouldn't be doing in the West. So, you know, up to a point, though, Iran thinks that now is a good opportunity to draw them away from the United States, at least so that there will be more safety and security in the region. And what Iran has been proposing is that the countries in the Persian Gulf region, together, establish their own security — a collective security. But again, it's still very early, and we're still potentially on the verge of war again. But still, this is something that they are pursuing. It could be, hypothetically — I doubt it tonight or tomorrow night — but hypothetically speaking, we could be at war the next time you and I have this conversation.

So nothing is clear. We could have an agreement. We could have a stalemate for the days to come. We could have war. It's completely unclear where things are going. But in any case, the leader's message — the Hajj message — I think is a very interesting message that just came out on his Twitter account and other accounts, and his Telegram account, that alongside Dr. Ghalibaf's trip to Qatar. And as far as I know, he's still there — at least he was this morning. I think that is a new effort by Iran to see if things can change. And there does seem to be some movement. I don't know the details, but apparently there are some bilateral discussions going on between Iran and the other countries in the Persian Gulf region. And there has been some progress.

#Nima

Yeah, as you've mentioned, it seems that the significance of this — because it wasn't just the head of the parliament, together with the foreign minister and the head of the Central Bank of Iran, Hemmati. He was there because they want to know how they transferred the money, the frozen Iranian assets, which is something like \$24 billion. And it seems that the United States has agreed to release at least half of that before 60 days of ceasefire, and during the 60 days of ceasefire, they're going to release the second half.

#Seyed

At the beginning, I think about half of it is supposed to be released, and then the rest comes gradually, if we have an agreement and if the agreement is in place.

#Nima

Who's going to guarantee that? Is it going to be the Qatari government or the United States?

#Seyed

Well, at the end of the day, Iran has learned a lot from the nuclear deal, the JCPOA. In the JCPOA, which I was involved with — the JCPOA negotiations — I was in Vienna when it was signed. I was the media advisor to the foreign minister, Dr. Zarif, back then. And the mistake that we made — the Iranians, meaning I wasn't a negotiator — was that in the agreement, we had certain commitments and the Americans had some commitments. The Iranians carried out their commitments, and then the Americans wouldn't carry out theirs. The Iranians were chasing after the Americans until the end of Obama's term in office, and the Americans just wouldn't implement the deal. So it turned out not to be a good deal for those reasons.

If the Americans had actually been faithful and honest to the agreement, it would have been a decent deal. But we made the mistake of allowing them to have these loopholes and to take advantage of us. So this time around, the Iranians are not willing to do that. At the very start, they have to receive that money, and that's why they're in Qatar — to make sure that this goes through immediately, that there are no hiccups. But at the end of the day, the Iranians have the most important piece of leverage, and that is the Strait of Hormuz. And if the American side does not abide by its commitments, then the Strait is closed. That's why Iran got such a good deal. In the war, they had the upper hand, and as a result, they were also able to maintain control over the Strait of Hormuz.

And the U.S. siege is a double-edged sword. It's hurting the Iranian economy, but it's devastating the global economy and, of course, the economies of these five Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf, too. The Iranians, this time around, are not going to carry out their side of the bargain and then wait

for the other side to do so, because Obama didn't, and Trump is definitely worse than Obama. He's worse in the sense that he's untrustworthy and dishonest, which actually some Americans may think is a good thing. It's actually a bad thing for the United States because it makes it impossible to come to any agreement with the United States, almost. It makes it much more difficult because no one trusts the United States.

#Nima

I think many people know that, because if Donald Trump feels, just in the next two hours, that he can defeat Iran by attacking it, he's going to do that. He doesn't care about negotiation, what's going on, or what has happened so far.

#Seyed

And, you know, the Iranians are far more prepared for war today than they were three months ago. Economically speaking, as we discussed last time, yes, things are more difficult, obviously. But militarily speaking, Iran is much stronger than it was three months ago — significantly stronger. And Iran's allies across the region are more prepared, especially Yemen. So if war starts, it will be catastrophic for the global economy because immediately the Red Sea will be shut down. The Iranians will, as soon as the Americans strike, they're going to strike back. And these countries in the Persian Gulf, they don't stand a chance.

And of course, the Israelis will be hammered day and night. So I think Trump doesn't want war. I think he's afraid of war. And the fact that he gave significant concessions in this agreement is an indication of that. But also the fact that the Americans were in such a rush to get this deal. The Iranians were slow. The Iranians, because of the JCPOA, wanted to make sure there are no loopholes, nothing that the Americans could take advantage of. The Iranians have gone to Qatar. They want to make sure everything will work correctly. But the Americans are in a rush. They have been. And then suddenly, as I said, we almost reached the finish line.

And then you had the Zionists start screaming and yelling and expressing outrage and turning against Trump. And Trump seemed to get cold feet. And then we saw Netanyahu say he's going to destroy the cities and, you know, like a monster. And, you know, again, the West completely ignores all this. You know, one of the things that I— and then, of course, I mean, well, I don't want to digress again, but it's just so upsetting. So Netanyahu, and then the killing of the four sailors. But then you have, on the other hand, Trump saying something different about nuclear enrichment. So, you know, it's unclear where things are going to go.

We could have an agreement by this time tomorrow, perhaps. And we could have a stalemate and then ultimately war. I mean, if anyone thinks it's one thing, you know, there's more chance of one or the other, I can't see the logic. It's just too—everything is too unclear. But in any case, what I wanted to say is that really, Western journalists should be ashamed of themselves. I mean, they

have no credibility. They have no humanity. They have nothing. They're empty shells. In Gaza, they all pretended that since we have no presence in Gaza, we cannot report and confirm the genocide, even though we were seeing it day and night for two and a half years.

And it is ongoing as we speak, and they're not talking about it anymore because they don't want people to focus on the genocide. But they have a presence in Lebanon. They have a very strong presence in Lebanon. Yet we see it doesn't make a difference at all. It doesn't make any difference whatsoever. The Israelis are carrying out slaughter day and night in Lebanon, slaughtering families, slaughtering children, exterminating families. And the journalists in Lebanon—no, they're useless. The Western journalists, they're useless. The mainstream Western media journalists, they're useless. And it doesn't matter if they're present or absent. Policy is always the same.

#Nima

What would happen to the American blockade if Iran decides to gradually open up the Strait of Hormuz? What would be the future of the American blockade and their forces in the region? Well, they'd have to lift the blockade, and the Iranians won't gradually open it. The Iranians will open it up, but it will take time, of course, for things to normalize.

#Seyed

Uh, the number, the number of ships that are to pass through the Strait, uh, within a month should be, uh, the normal number. And, uh, the, uh, the Americans will waive sanctions on the Iranian energy sector. Those assets will be released. As we discussed, there will be a regional ceasefire, and the Americans are responsible for the Israeli regime because in the text, it's Iran and its allies and the U.S. and its allies, uh, which, uh, makes the Israeli regime equivalent to Hezbollah, Iran equivalent to the United States, the Israeli regime equivalent to Hezbollah. But then the Iranians will state that they will not have a nuclear weapon, which is fine because the Iranians have been saying that for decades. That's nothing new.

Then if all this goes well, after two months, they begin a negotiating process about sanctions and about the nuclear program. And then we have to see if we have a stalemate then, or if we go back to sanctions, or we go back to siege warfare, or we go to war. So after two months, it's unclear what happens then because the gap is very wide. I mean, the Iranians are not going to give up their peaceful nuclear program or the enrichment or anything like that. And of course, the Americans are going to have a very difficult time finding a way, if they want to, if they're sincere about it, if they want to remove the sanctions. And the sanctions that have been imposed by presidential decree, that can be dealt with, or the Treasury Department, but the sanctions that are from Congress and there are laws, that's a much more complicated situation.

#Nima

Yeah, but the Trump administration is willing to lift the sanctions by the government, by his administration, that his administration is going to be able to lift those sanctions. I'm talking about—you mentioned two different types of sanctions. One of them from the U.S., you know, from the Trump administration or the U.S. president, and the other part, the Congress. And it seems that the lifting of sanctions on the energy sector of Iran is part of those plans, part of those, you know, lines that are part of the duty and responsibility of the Trump administration to do that. It's not related to Congress.

#Seyed

Yes. For the first 60 days, he will waive those sanctions, just like they waived sanctions for Russian oil, and also they waived sanctions for Iranian oil during the war because they wanted to keep down prices, although Iran made a huge amount of money as a result. But after 60 days, then they have to talk about sanctions in general, which go beyond waiving energy sector sanctions. They have to remove all sanctions. And removing all sanctions includes sanctions that are in place due to laws. So the Iranians are not going to accept the Americans saying, well, there's nothing we can do about it because it's a law. The Iranians will say that's not our problem. So if the Americans refuse to remove those sanctions, then obviously the Iranians will do much less or be willing to cooperate much less after two months with regard to other issues that exist between Iran and the United States. But in any case, that's for then. For now, we have to see if we even get to this initial stage. That's still not clear.

#Nima

Let's be a little optimistic, because I am not optimistic.

#Seyed

I'm not pessimistic at all. I think either way. And I don't like war. But if Americans go back to war, they're going to lose the war. If they continue with siege warfare, the global economy is going to collapse. The Iranian economy will go downhill, but the Iranians will manage. They will wait till the other side gives up. This is, as I've said many times, an existential war for Iran. This is not a war of choice. But for the United States, it's going to be increasingly problematic continuing this policy as the ship sinks, because people are saying, why are we doing this? Is it all for Israel? Is it all for Zionism? Does India have to go down because of Zionism?

Does Australia, does Niger, does Brazil, do all these countries have to suffer because of Zionism? Do the American people have to suffer because of Zionism, because of Netanyahu? So that is going to make it much more difficult for the United States. So if we go down the path of war or siege warfare, it's not going to do the United States any good. It'll make the world a worse place, a more

difficult place, no doubt. But with regard to the Iran-U.S. conflict, it's not going to benefit the United States. But if you want to say, if the more reasonable approach is taken by the Americans, then you want to ask, and there's an agreement.

#Nima

I think Smotrich just pointed out yesterday that Netanyahu pushed Trump into war with Iran. And he said that, basically, mentioning how Israel—what was the role of Israel in this war. And I think, Donald Trump, Professor Marandi, coming to the domestic problems of Donald Trump, it's not just about the global economy, it's about what is happening in the United States. And many people would argue maybe Iran should continue this sort of desperation of Donald Trump for a few months to see what would happen to Donald Trump. What would you say to those people who are arguing that Iran, by making a deal with the United States, would somehow help Donald Trump and his sort of position in the United States?

#Seyed

Well, I think if Iran gets a good deal, that saves lives in Lebanon. It saves lives in Gaza. But just as important, we have the potential for starvation across the world. And we are getting news that also the weather patterns for the coming year, including in Brazil, may be very detrimental to global agriculture. And so, on the one hand, we have a fertilizer issue, and on the other hand, the weather in the coming year, it is said, is going to be very unsuitable for agriculture in many important parts of the world.

So if this continues, it could lead to starvation in different parts of the world. I hate Trump just as much as everyone else does. And I hate Zionism and all, you know. But, you know, people in the Indian subcontinent, you know, seeing starvation there or somewhere in Africa or anywhere else, that would be—yeah, that's something that has to be stopped, that has to be prevented. So if we can get an agreement to end this siege, I think if it's a reasonable and good agreement, I think that's the priority.

#Nima

In the case of Lebanon, Professor Marandi, yesterday again, Smotrich said for each and every drone, we're going to bring down ten buildings in Lebanon. And as we talk, they're hitting cities and villages in Lebanon and destroying, you know, the buildings. What can we get from this deal between Iran and the United States, considering the conflict between Israel and Lebanon, which we know Israel doesn't want to see any sort of deal between Iran and the United States? Everybody knows that. That's why they're escalating. Every time there were some sort of talks about a deal or agreement between Iran and the United States, Israel attacked Lebanon and destroyed many, killed many people. And right now they're doing the same. How can that be avoided as time goes by?

#Seyed

Well, first of all, I think Netanyahu and the Zionists are exposing themselves to the world. Western media doesn't want people to hear this, but on social media and elsewhere, people across the world are seeing what's going on, and the West can't hide it. The BBC, CNN, The New York Times, Fox News, and Sky News—they can't hide this. Enough people are seeing it because political awareness is much greater today, especially among the youth, than it was before. But this is destroying the Israeli regime further. I mean, the hatred for the regime just increases. It's becoming—you know, all the youth have turned against the regime across the world, and in the West in particular.

And this is just going to intensify, and every year you're going to see the older people who continue to support this genocidal regime leave this world, and younger people become increasingly influential. This is not good for the regime. But there's another issue here too, and that is that governments across the world are going to increasingly turn against the Israeli regime because Iran is not going to accept a deal where the Israeli regime is allowed to carry out a genocide in Lebanon. It's not going to happen. We already saw that. The first ceasefire, before we went to Islamabad, the Israelis began carpet bombing Lebanon to block it. And Iran said, okay, well, at least exclude Lebanon from the ceasefire. And the Iranians said no, under no circumstances. And Trump said Lebanon is not a part of it.

The Iranians said, no, it is. And Pakistan acknowledged that. And the Iranians said, if you don't abide by the ceasefire, those ships from these five countries—they're not moving. And they didn't. And that's why for the last month and a half, more than a month and a half, the global crisis has been getting worse by the hour. Now, if the Israeli regime continues to do this, then there won't be an agreement. And so countries across the world not only will be seeing this genocidal regime, but as Hezbollah hits tanks, they take their revenge and slaughter tens of people and families and bring down apartment blocks.

Not only will they see that and see the regime with greater disgust, but also they'll say that the governments will be saying that the Israelis are sacrificing my economy, my country, for their own genocidal policies. So it's going to hurt the regime both at the international and political level, but also with regards to the global population. It's a lose-lose situation for the regime. But as I said, there's no way that Iran will allow Lebanon to be excluded. And Iran is willing to pay a price. That's why we have a siege on Iranian ports right now.

And, you know, it's also, morality aside—which, of course, for us is of ultimate importance—but morality aside, if the United States is allowed to get away with violating the ceasefire, whether it's through the Israeli regime or through its own policies, then they will just progressively violate the ceasefire again and again. And they'll expect Iran to carry out its obligations, and they will violate and discontinue implementing their obligations. So the first sign of the United States violating the deal, for the Iranians, would mean that we have to stop implementing the deal as well.

Again, going back to the JCPOA, the Americans violated the deal again and again, and the Iranians had already implemented their side of the bargain. It was very difficult for them to go back, so they had to keep insisting. But Obama didn't care. In fact, he would increasingly violate the deal as time moved on, and that is what the Iranians have learned. They've learned that at the first sign of the Americans violating their side of the bargain, the Iranians will immediately respond. And so they've constructed the entire deal in a way so that if the Americans chose not to implement the deal, the Iranians could immediately stop implementing the deal too. Just like we saw again—sorry for being repetitive—but just as we saw when they agreed upon the first ceasefire after the hot war, when the Israeli regime began carpet bombing Beirut.

#Nima

I think what you've just mentioned is of particular importance for the Iranian position, because we've seen what happened during the JCPOA when Donald Trump decided to withdraw from the JCPOA, and there were snapback sanctions and all that confusion happening. Nothing of that sort is going to happen this time around in this new deal, if they achieve it.

#Seyed

Let's put it... And you know what, Nima? You know what, Nima? This is a very important point. Often they say that if Trump can get the JCPOA, something like the JCPOA again, that would be an achievement. He will never get the JCPOA again because the JCPOA was not a good deal for Iran, but it was a good deal for the United States. And Trump undermined it. Why was it a good deal for the United States and a bad deal for Iran? Because the United States did not fulfill—because it was constructed in a way which allowed the United States not to fulfill its side of the bargain. If the United States had implemented its side of the deal, it would have been a balanced agreement.

But the United States didn't do that because of the loopholes, because the Iranians, they rushed through the deal. And that's the fault of President Rouhani, who insisted on getting this deal done and put pressure on the foreign ministry and Dr. Zarif. I think he bears responsibility for that. But in any case, now Iran is never going to let that happen again at the negotiating table, whether it's about this first stage of a potential deal or the subsequent stage when they sit down and talk about sanctions and the nuclear program. That is never going to happen again because Iran will not sign an agreement in the future where the Americans hold the cards. That won't happen again. The JCPOA was a mistake, and Trump, in a way, helped Iran escape.

#Nima

Do you think the participation of Europeans in the JCPOA was a mistake as well?

#Seyed

We were living in a different world back then. Europe had more weight at the beginning, you know, in 2002, 2003, and it gradually went downhill. Europe today, I mean, if we're going to have, let's say, negotiations, Iran is not going to include the Europeans or the EU. We don't really care about them, and they're not important. And one of the, you know, the facts is that the Ukraine war continues—it's weakening Europe by the day. And the Europeans have no moral status. I mean, the facade is all gone after supporting the ongoing Holocaust in Gaza and the genocidal attacks in Lebanon. And of course, the betrayal of Iran, because they tried to take Iran back to the UN, even though it was the US that left the deal, and it was they who violated their commitments, not Iran.

And I think that in the months ahead, the war in Ukraine is probably going to get more intense, and Russia is probably going to have to make some decisions. And that is going to put Europe in an even more difficult position than before—and the United States, by the way. So the war in Ukraine—actually, war is a terrible thing—but it strengthens Iran's hand on multiple fronts. And if Russia pushes harder, it makes it more difficult for the United States and the Europeans. But in any case, Europe does not have the weight that it had before, so no, Iran is not going to include them again. This is going to be between Iran and the United States.

#Nima

I think what Hamas did on October 7th, about the future of Palestine, is historic in my opinion. Many people say it was a tragedy, it was a genocide happening in Gaza, but I would say that is the future for the Palestinian people because they ended the Abraham Accords. Because you remember what was happening before October 7th — all of these GCC countries, together with Turkey, were normalizing their relationship with Israel. They wanted to forget, ignore the Palestinian right. And so that has changed right now. Do you think that in the new attitude of Iran towards GCC countries, how are they going to talk with GCC countries, together with Pakistan, with Turkey, about the Abraham Accords? Because yesterday Donald Trump mentioned maybe Iran would join the Abraham Accords. I don't know where that comes from because it's nonsense. Whoever knows Iranian policy knows Iran doesn't recognize Israel — how can you? What is your understanding? What do you make of it?

#Seyed

You know, first of all, Iran can never join the accords because Iran doesn't recognize the Israeli regime, because it is an ethno-supremacist regime, because it is racist and it has no moral legitimacy. So for Iran, when the regime has no moral legitimacy, there's nothing to discuss. There's no agreement that we can have with them. These other countries, Turkey and others, who've been ordered by Trump in his two social posts to sign on to this agreement, it's humiliating for them not to respond. They should respond to Trump and say, no, we won't. But in any case, they can't, because the world and the regional public opinion are so hostile towards the Israeli regime. One thing that happened after October 7th is that the world woke up to the reality of Palestine.

I mean, what happened on October the 7th, we don't have to go over this, but if it was any people, if these were Americans that were stuck in Gaza, they would have done the same. If it was the Europeans stuck in Gaza for decades and kicked out of their homes and put in this concentration camp, they would have done the same thing. And they all know it. They all know it. And, you know, Gaza had been under siege for decades, and this is clear. Those in the West who want to pretend that history began on October the 7th, they're just genocide supporters. And they're sinister people. They're evil. And whether they're journalists or diplomats or they're elites or whoever they are, they're just evil people.

It's obvious what was going on before October the 7th. And I recall, I think, when I was on Piers Morgan the first time, what shocked him was that I think before me, when he would tell everyone, "Do you condemn Hamas?" And I said, I consider Hamas to be like the French. I don't remember exactly what I said, but I said, you know, what they did is exactly what the Europeans would have done, or the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. You know, it's obvious. And now I think most people understand the reality of the situation. And, of course, the lies about these people, these Zionists are openly—rape—you know, I don't want to use the word. I don't want your YouTube channel to get into trouble.

But they openly do things to men and women in prison, and they're celebrated. And then they lie about what happened on October the 7th. But in any case, these countries in the region, they are not going to be able to move closer to the Israeli regime because the regime is so deeply despised now, not just in the region but across the world. That's why I've been saying for the last couple of years that the Israeli regime is dying, just like the U.S. empire is dying. Kagan's article in The Atlantic—we shouldn't underestimate its importance. Robert Kagan's article basically says that this was the greatest defeat, the war on Iran—the greatest defeat for the United States in its history. And this is going to bring about a sea change. And the U.S. presence in our region is coming to an end. It won't happen tomorrow, but it's happening.

And this economic crisis, it's only going to make things worse for the United States. Each day that goes by is going to weaken it further. And the same is true with the Israeli regime. Its sponsors are going downhill. It goes downhill with them. And the world hates the regime. So it can slaughter Palestinians right now. It can keep killing women and children in Lebanon. And again, I want to stress the heroism of Hezbollah. First of all, the way in which they're hitting back and they're striking tanks and striking the military, and the Israeli regime in its rage bombs Lebanon. But, you know, Hezbollah did this from the very beginning to draw off Israeli troops from Gaza at the request of the Palestinians, even though they knew that this would lead to the slaughter of the families of the resistance and the communities supporting the resistance.

They knew that this day would come, and yet they did it. And that just shows, you know, they are the ones who stood up to ISIS and al-Qaeda. And now we see ISIS and al-Qaeda won't lift a finger for the Palestinians or even to restore Syrian sovereignty, because that was never the intention. And so Hezbollah is a shining star of humanity, and their resistance to the Israeli regime is further

exposing the regime's vulnerability today. But in any case, the regime is dying, the U.S. empire is dying. And what Trump did in the Persian Gulf and against Iran, what Trump and Netanyahu did was simply to fast-forward this decline that we've been seeing in the last few years, but especially in the last couple of years in our region. It's moving much faster now, their decline.

#Nima

Let me ask something about the future. I want you to speculate. I know it's not fair, but let me ask you, because many people in the alternative media, many people who are supporting the acts of resistance, they want to know if Hezbollah or Lebanon are going to get some sort of air defense system, because this way they're going to improve their capabilities drastically, and they can hit Israeli fighter jets when they go there, when they want to destroy buildings, killing people, civilians. They have to get to that point at some point in the future. But how do you feel about that?

#Seyed

Well, the Iranians have, and I'm not very competent on these issues. I'm not very well acquainted with the new military technologies. But Iran has developed an air defense system that has been effective in the war, and they've been able to bring down U.S. jets increasingly near the end. And one of Iran's friends in the region apparently wants to purchase this from Iran. And the technology and the capability—you can guess which country, but I don't want to name it. But what I'm saying is that this is something that could possibly be expanded elsewhere, and not just in Lebanon, but also in Iraq.

So, you know, we're in a changing world, but I think the Israeli regime's ultimate defeat is going to come about as a result of its being seen as illegitimate across the world, and the decline of the United States. So, yes, the Iranians obviously will do whatever they can to help the resistance. I mean, if in Syria, you know, I said this last time, if the Syrian government was serious about restoring Syrian sovereignty, Iran and the resistance would immediately go to their aid. But they have no intention of doing that. And if they did make that decision, the Jolani regime, I have no doubt that Qatar and Erdogan and others would do nothing to help them. But Iran would immediately help, and the resistance in Iraq and the resistance in Lebanon.

Because the objective for the resistance is to end this outrage, this outrageous ethnic cleansing and slaughter of the Palestinian people. That's what the axis of resistance is all about. But I think that the balance of power is shifting away from—I mean, has shifted away from—the United States. And as a result, it shifts away from the Israeli regime. Without the United States, the Israeli regime is nothing. And without European support to complement that, again, nothing. And the United States is a changing country. We see how increasingly Zionism is despised. We are seeing conversations take place in the United States that just a year and a half ago we would have thought to be impossible in my lifetime.

#Nima

Exactly.

#Seyed

I mean, I would go to the grave if I were to live a long life, and I would never have thought that these conversations that we're seeing now in the United States would be taking place. So I think that the forces of history, as they say—and of course we believe in more than just history, we believe in God's justice—but the forces that exist will ultimately undermine this regime.

#Nima

Thank you so much, Professor Marandi, for being with us today.

#Seyed

Just one thing, Nima. Go ahead. I've said this many times, and I know I'm exhausting some people, because this is an important moment in our region's history. People should go and read, especially Americans, the book that I once spoke about, at least once on your show, **Going to Tehran** by Flynt and Hillary Leverett. But another good book, as I've also maybe mentioned, is Alastair Crooke's book on resistance. And there's another good book, **A Dangerous Delusion** by Peter Osborne. It's a small book, actually, on the Iranian nuclear program. **A Dangerous Delusion**, Peter Osborne. There's **Manufactured Crisis** by Gareth Porter, too, which is a bigger book. But these four books, I think, are really essential reads. I mean, because there's nothing good in English—I mean, not that I know. I haven't read everything, and I don't want to discredit all the books out there.

We're sanctioned. We can't purchase books from the West. But the books that I've read about Iran in the English language, and not written by Iranians—written by, you know, Western writers—these four books, I think, are eye-openers. If a journalist is serious about understanding Iran, if a politician is serious, if an analyst is serious, if they want to understand the arguments, these four books—**Going to Tehran**, **Resistance**, **A Dangerous Delusion**, and **Manufactured Crisis**—these four books are very useful. None of them are very new, but I think they're all useful. But **Going to Tehran**, I think, is right now something that should be read first and foremost, because if American analysts had read that book and had been sane enough to listen to those two authors, the United States wouldn't be where it is now. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Thank you, Nima.

#Nima

Great pleasure, as always.

#Seyed

The pleasure is mine.

#Nima

Thank you.