

Seyed M. Marandi: Hormuz Toll, Strike On Kuwait, Israel Decline & Iranian Nuclear Bomb?

Prof. Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. Prof. Marandi discusses how Iran's toll booth is already operating, why Iran hit Kuwait, the decline of Israel & the suspicions that Iran will now acquire a nuclear weapon for deterrence. RECORDED June 5, 2026. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: 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 Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back to the program. We are joined again by Professor Saeed Mohammed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. I'm very glad you had the time to speak today because there seem to be a lot of developments going on, both with the war, the possible diplomatic path, and also the speculations about Iran — if not developing a nuclear weapon, then showing its capability to do so. Again, I want to ask how much is speculation, but maybe we start at the beginning. So, how do you see the current state of the war? Because we now see that the U.S. appears to be stepping up against Iran, and at the same time we see Iran having struck Israel. So how can we best understand what's happening at the moment?

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, ever since the ceasefire began—supposed ceasefire—the United States has effectively, almost immediately afterwards, a few days afterwards, begun siege warfare against Iran, which is an act of war. But it's a double-edged sword because the global economy is crashing as a result. In addition to that, every now and then the United States carries out some sort of attack on Iranian territory. Iran has never initiated any ceasefire breach; it's always been the United States. And it's interesting that when Trump says, "In that part of the world these things happen"—no, it's just the United States and its allies that are always breaching ceasefires. No one else does that. The Iranians, though, every time when the Americans would attack, they would retaliate. But this time around was different. The Iranian retaliation was very harsh.

And two things could have happened. Either the Americans could have again carried out further strikes in sort of retaliation, even though they themselves started this, or they could have stopped.

And so far, they've stopped. And I think that shows that the Iranian escalation was something that the Americans did not want, at least at this stage. And this comes almost simultaneous with what happened in Lebanon. Right before this latest incident, as you know better than I, and your viewers obviously know better than I, the Israeli regime decided to flatten Beirut, especially the southern part of Beirut. And they've been saying it openly. They don't say it much in the Western media, obviously, because of compromise. But the Iranians said that if the Israeli regime starts bombing civilian infrastructure in the capital, Beirut, it will fire missiles at northern Israel.

And that caused this conversation between Trump and Netanyahu, where this completely discredited Axios put out a quote of Trump, which in this particular case may indeed be true. But ultimately, the Israeli regime refrained from bombing Beirut, which would indicate that at this moment, at least, the United States does not want escalation at any cost. And that could be because, or is probably because, the global economic situation is, as we've been discussing for weeks now, moving closer and closer to the cliff. And we are indeed now very close. Experts that you know, again, better than I—energy experts, oil experts, economists—have been saying that the month of June will be a turning point with regards to the economic crisis because the strategic reserves for oil will be depleted or close to depletion.

And of course, the shortages of all the other goods that are missing now on the market because of the siege on the Strait of Hormuz, such as helium, all the different petrochemicals, and LNG, as well as fertilizers—all of these things, interestingly, from what I've read, a lot of these different goods, these commodities, they too will be in very short supply during this period, June, July. So there's a lot of overlap in the shortages and the different commodities that are going to be experiencing shortages. In any case, I think that probably the United States is very fearful of escalation now because they know that if there's escalation, then there are no negotiations, and there will be no more messages being sent back and forth.

Of course, when I say negotiations, I mean written messages that go back and forth. This is basically what is going on between Iran and the United States. The Americans send a written message through Pakistan. It goes to Iran, they read it, they write a response, and they send it back through Pakistan to the United States. So when you look at the harsh Iranian response in the Persian Gulf region, the reason why they struck Kuwait and Bahrain was because these two regimes were deeply involved in the American strikes on Iran. So the harsh Iranian response in the Persian Gulf and the major threat that it made to the Israeli regime to refrain from bombing Beirut—in both cases, the United States has, for now, backed down or forced the Israeli regime to back down. And I think that says a lot.

#Glenn

Yeah, so to summarize, the U.S. continues these probing attacks until the Iranians push back. We continue to see the global economic situation go from bad to worse. And I've heard the same thing, that this month could be a very difficult turning point. But Trump, though, his whole approach to

this—he's become the boy who cried wolf. That is, on day one, he talks about how close they are to peace with the Iranians. On day two, he will destroy Iran. Day three, he goes back to being really close to a deal. So it's a bit back and forth. And again, his motivations—well, there are many of them: some signaling to the Iranians, his own public, the stock market. There are a lot of considerations here.

But in terms of actually reaching something that looks like peace, how possible do you think it is? Because, as Iran says, Lebanon has to be included in a ceasefire, in a peace deal. That is, they can't simply stop the fighting with Iran and then start plowing through Lebanon and essentially bombing Beirut to the ground. And at the same time, the Strait of Hormuz, well... what do the Americans demand there versus what the Iranians can deliver? Because from what I understand, the Iranians are already essentially operating a tollbooth there. That is, the new realities are already in place, and they don't seem like they're willing to walk this one back. So, you know, is Trump trapped in this conflict now, or do you think there's a pathway to peace through diplomacy, that is?

#Seyed M. Marandi

You're right. Iran is receiving fees at the Strait of Hormuz, and this will not go away. This is going to be a permanent feature of the Persian Gulf in the future. And that is, of course, something which the United States and the Israeli regime should blame Trump and Netanyahu for, because Iran never had such an ambition before. But more important than the fees that they get at the Strait is the fact that many ships will no longer be able to pass through—meaning U.S. military vessels, but also ships that are linked to the Israeli regime will no longer be able to use the Strait of Hormuz. You may be surprised to know that among the, I don't know, 1,500 or so ships that are stuck in the Persian Gulf, quite a few of them—I don't want to give a specific number, I've been told over 200, but I'm not sure if it's true—have at least partial Israeli ownership.

And they don't necessarily take goods to and from the regime. For example, they may take goods from Bahrain to Kuwait or from Iraq to the Emirates or something like that. So in the future, ships affiliated with the regime will no longer be able to use the Persian Gulf or the Strait of Hormuz. And again, the people in the regime or in the United States can blame Trump and Netanyahu for this catastrophic change of circumstances. With regard to peace, that's difficult to say because, of course, two key issues exist that the Iranians are not going to compromise on.

There are a number, but one is, of course, the siege on the Strait of Hormuz, and the other is the end to the war in Lebanon and the full retreat of the Israeli regime from Lebanon and Gaza. The killing, the slaughter in Gaza has to end, and the ceasefire in Gaza has to be implemented. That's something that the Iranians have said. If anyone looks at the text, they write across, there has to be an end to the wars across the region. But the particular focus has been on Lebanon because the genocidal attacks on Lebanon now are even worse than what we see in Gaza these days. So it

includes Lebanon. There must be a full retreat in the case of Lebanon. And these are issues that are very difficult for the United States. Trump would like to see Lebanon removed from the agreement and to have the Israelis destroy Lebanon.

Uh, but Iran won't have that. And as I said, Iran is also saying that the ceasefire... because the problem with Gaza, Glenn, is that countries in our region helped Trump put Gaza in this horrific situation. Erdogan, Abdullah of Jordan, Sisi, the despots in the region, Aliyev in Azerbaijan, and rulers from across the region and across the world went to Egypt for that fake ceasefire celebration of Trump's. Not only did they whitewash his genocide, but they gave a stamp of approval for that. See, there is a ceasefire in Gaza where the Israeli regime controls more than half of it in accordance with that ceasefire. But we've been seeing slaughter ever since.

Almost 1,000 Palestinians have been murdered since the ceasefire. Women and children. If the Israeli snipers shoot into tents where kids are having class and kill the kids—they burned kids alive just a couple of days ago in their tent—I mean, this is not something directed towards Hamas. Even though in a ceasefire it doesn't matter if it's Hamas or Islamic Jihad or anyone else or Hezbollah or anyone—when you have a ceasefire, you have a ceasefire. But in any case, since there is a ceasefire in place, in the case of Gaza, Iran can only demand so much, because that ceasefire was agreed to by Hamas under great pressure from these regional regimes that did nothing for them, unlike Iran in the axis of resistance.

So, unless the Israeli regime is forced to leave, which is going to be difficult. But the resistance in Lebanon has been very effective. I mean, the Iranian threat has played a major role, but Hezbollah is performing exceptionally well. And I think a lot of your viewers, if not all of them, have seen images of drones striking Israeli regime targets across southern Lebanon and even northern occupied Palestine. So it's difficult to achieve with these sorts of differences. It's not impossible. And Trump needs an agreement. The Americans have had a greater sense of urgency with regard to an agreement with Iran than we've ever seen before, especially in recent weeks.

#Seyed M. Marandi

But the counterforces are very strong. Just one thing, Glenn, and that is, I think that the statement that came out from Axios, reporting that Trump insulted Netanyahu, I think that this was actually intended to weaken Netanyahu, and that it's not just Trump. I think that even Zionists who are, I mean, Israeli-firsters in the White House, very powerful Zionists in the United States, may be concluding that Netanyahu should gradually be removed from power. Because unlike in previous cases where Axios did a lot of fake news on differences between the U.S. president and Netanyahu, we are approaching the anniversary of the Blitzkrieg attack on Iran last year, the 12-day war, where we had the same sort of news—where Netanyahu and Trump had differences and Trump wanted to give negotiations more time—and then they attacked Iran.

It was obvious that it was a lie, and it was just basically to deceive the Iranians or help deceive the Iranians. This was about now, last year—three, four days from now, last year—when probably this Axios article came out. But in this case, it's different, because Netanyahu has been humiliated at home, and he's being attacked by his opponents, but also by his political allies. This is very different from previous Axios so-called revelations. And it's also bad for the Israeli regime, because to have Trump say everyone hates Israel and so on, and to have even Fox News repeat this—at least I saw it on its Twitter account—so I think that there is probably an attempt to bring an end to Netanyahu's reign, which will have elections in a few months. But again, this is just speculation only.

#Glenn

Well, whenever I talk to people like Professor Mearsheimer, he always makes the point that while the U.S. and Israel are, well, joined at the hip, if the key strategic interest of the United States is threatened, this could be kind of the moment where the U.S. will essentially elevate U.S. interests above Israel's. That is, if it's a peripheral interest, it will put Israel first. But if it's the core interest of the United States, then... you know, reality will have to be respected. Again, speculation, or a thesis at least.

But it is interesting that it's not just the core interest of the U.S., but also part of the Israeli, because again, from the Israelis' point of view, they often, I think, seek more strategic depth to enhance their security. So essentially seizing territories and sowing some chaos in neighboring countries along the lines of Syria. I assume that's what they're going for in Lebanon as well. But what you're talking about, though, if Trump is trying to rein in the Israelis, aren't we talking about essentially ending the greater...

#Seyed M. Marandi

Israel project here—well, I'm not sure if it's so much Trump, rather than forces more important than Trump. And those who—I'm not quite sure if Trump himself said, "Put this into Axios," or people around Trump said, "Maybe it's time to put such a quotation or quote in Axios." Whether it's accurate or semi-accurate, it doesn't matter. What the public has been fed, and the widespread impact of this quote from Trump, has had a huge impact. I think that the Greater Israel Project is going to be about the destruction of Israel. And I think that this whole two and a half to three years of genocide that we've seen has pushed the Israeli regime towards its ultimate destruction.

Because the greatest threat to the Israeli regime is not the armies of neighboring countries. It is the delegitimization of the regime in the eyes of the world. So, two and a half to three years of genocide, which is ongoing. And then, in addition to that, the global economic hardship that the regime is imposing. Because across the world, people are saying, I mean, for example, let's look at India. The Indian government has shown, unfortunately, a lot of support for the Israeli regime for the last couple of years, since the genocide.

This particular administration, Prime Minister Modi's government, yet the Israeli regime has shown complete disregard for the interests of the people in the war against Iran and what's happened in the Strait of Hormuz. So the hardship in India or in Uganda or in Argentina or wherever is going to be blamed on Trump and Netanyahu, and is being blamed on them. And according to colleagues in India, the mood in that country has become—the majority are opposed to Trump. They dislike Trump now. And of course, the same is true with the Israeli regime. The mood has changed. So when a place like India has this shift, then you can imagine how it is elsewhere. I think this is the greatest defeat of all.

Also, I think that right now, this is the Iranian strategy. I think that for weeks, this has been the Iranian strategy—to increase the pain on the Americans until they reach an agreement and continue down this road until the United States comes to the conclusion that they have to prioritize their own interests over the Israeli regime. So the siege which the Americans have imposed, which again is a double-edged sword, is striking the global economy, and it's hurting Iranians, no doubt about that. The economic difficulties in Iran are clear. But the Iranians will see this through. However, whatever pain is inflicted on Iranians, Iranians know that this is a fact.

So what the Iranians are attempting to do is not to wreck the global economy. That's not an Iranian objective at all. But they want to continue down this course of action until the United States reaches a point that if we continue with this siege and with this policy, it will wreck our economy. And so we have to make a decision that prioritizes the United States, the interests of the United States, over that of Israel. This is, I think, similar to what Professor Mearsheimer was speaking of. And I believe, personally—and I have not seen anyone else say this, so it may just be inaccurate speculation on my behalf—I believe that that Axios report could be seen within this context, even though I believe that the Israeli professors put that forward.

In other words, even those who are Israel-firsters in the United States are gradually becoming fearful of what is happening to the United States because of the way in which that will impact the move towards the Israeli regime. And so I would imagine that quite a few Zionists and powerful people in the United States would be saying to themselves, look, Netanyahu, Israel is becoming deeply unpopular in the United States. I think 60% now of Americans look negatively at the regime. And so if this continues, it becomes more entrenched and worse.

And maybe if we remove Netanyahu and put someone else, some other genocidal monster, in his place, we can say that the genocide and everything was Netanyahu, and this is a new government, and so on. Even though, you know, according to polls and according to their own public statements by these opposition figures in Israel, they're just as genocidal. But in any case, this public relations—uh, they could have a public relations opportunity to try to change the mood in the United States. So I think that what Iran is doing is basically what Professor Mearsheimer was also talking about: to push the United States towards greater economic hardship, to a point where the United States has to say, must conclude, that we have to prioritize ourselves now rather than the Israeli regime.

#Glenn

I think the United States is at least slowly coming to the conclusion that they can't win this war militarily. But I'm wondering to what extent the U.S. can accept peace, though. I mean, they can't do war, but they can't accept peace either. I say this because, well, if I was Iranian and holding on to the Strait of Hormuz, I would not just have a toll for rebuilding. I would use this instrumentally to enhance my security. That is, I would put a little bit higher toll on countries that sanction Iran, because I would create economic incentives to remove these sanctions. I would put a bit higher toll on countries that threaten Iran by hosting U.S. military bases.

Again, putting some incentives to have them scaled down or removed altogether. And again, you can also put a higher toll on countries that sell their oil in U.S. dollars to essentially put an end to the petrodollar system that links U.S. security interests so closely to the region. Again, not advocacy. I'm just, you know, if I was Iranian, I'm assuming that it's not just for reparations and rebuilding. So I guess these thoughts have also occurred in Washington as well. To what extent do you think Iran would use the threat of Hormuz instrumentally like this to also enhance its economic and military security? And to what extent does it become possible for the U.S. to essentially accept peace under those conditions?

#Seyed M. Marandi

I'm sure the Iranians are thinking that. I mean, as we speak, they are taking fees, and they will continue to do so, and they will restrict certain ships from enemy countries or unfriendly countries from using the Persian Gulf. And they may indeed have a double, a two-tier system, or they may have preferable rates for friends and not so preferable rates for unfriendly countries. That, I think, is something they would definitely be—they've already been talking about, I'm sure. I find it very difficult to believe that the United States can come to any peace agreement with Iran. This United States, this government, this state, I understand.

Even if there is a ceasefire agreement, even if there is an agreement signed between the two sides in the coming days—I doubt it's days, but in the coming weeks—I find, because it will be in two stages as we all know. The first stage will be ending the blockade, ending the genocidal attacks on Lebanon and retreating, and of course Gaza, and the return of Iranian stolen assets, and the waiving of sanctions for Iranian oil and energy exports for the duration of the agreement. And in return, Iran will promise not to develop a nuclear weapon, which it has done hundreds of times. No big deal. And the ship data formulas will go back to normal—the number of ships that pass through. But that's the first stage. The second stage would be the removal of all sanctions on Iran. Many of them are in law.

These Trump can't remove. And the House and the Senate, I find it almost impossible to imagine them doing such a thing, to remove those sanctions. And then, of course, the Iranian nuclear program, which the Americans want Iran to put aside—and that's not going to happen either. So what sort of agreement would they be able to agree upon? All of that—these are big questions, and

I find it almost impossible for Trump to be able to come to some sort of long-term agreement with Iran. So I'm not even sure if we're going to have—I mean, I'm really not sure. It's still, for me, 50-50 whether there will be an agreement. And if there is an agreement, I think it's highly unlikely the second phase of that agreement will ever reach the ultimate results that either side is seeking.

#Glenn

Now, at this point, it seems, I guess, more probable that it will be an extended ceasefire under continuous negotiations of the terms. Again, it's hard to say, but again, this is not a stable situation, especially pointing to the global economy. I have read lately, though, a lot of speculation about Iran's nuclear weapons. I'm not going to say nuclear weapons program or that it has nuclear weapons, but the assumption has often been that Iran would position itself as a threshold state. That is, if, for example, Israel would strike Iran with nuclear weapons, the Iranians would be in a position to quickly pass across that threshold, assemble some rudimentary nuclear weapons, and then retaliate. This would essentially be its deterrent—that is, having nuclear deterrence without becoming a nuclear power.

Again, you can assume Japan or other countries would do something similar. But others have speculated that Iran might try to send a powerful message by having a nuclear test or something along these lines. I was wondering, how do you see this? Because on one hand, that would be a powerful deterrent. On the other hand, it would perhaps turn much of the world against the goodwill of Iran. So again, I'm not sure what to make of this. So I thought, you know, who better to speak with than a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team?

#Seyed M. Marandi

I have great respect for him.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Larry Johnson and Pepe Escobar, he too is a very good friend of mine, and I have great respect for him. I know both of them personally. We've been together, and their information—I listen to what they have to say on different issues because they have a lot to offer. In this case in particular, I don't have any information on this front, on this issue. Until now, the Iranian policy has not been to pursue nuclear weapons, and it's been stated in public. There's a fatwa.

#Glenn

And fatwas are very serious things in Shia Islam, in particular.

#Seyed M. Marandi

In Shia Islam, of course, the mujtahid, the highly qualified expert, the jurist—for him, in Shia Islam, the gates to *ijtihad*, or the gates to jurisprudence, are open, unlike in Sunni Islam. So time and place have an impact on religious laws and regulations. Laws can change. Of course, the foundations of... it's not relativism. But laws are also influenced and impacted by time and place. So Norway would maybe have—there would be different laws in Shia Islam in some respects than in Brazil or in Tehran or somewhere else in Iran. And the different eras are different.

So the 21st century is different from the 20th century. So time and place are important. The context is important. Ayatollah Khamenei, his ruling, his fatwa was clear that there would be no nuclear weapon. But even at that time, we did have Dr. Larijani, who was martyred in this war, who was the chair of the Supreme National Security Council. He said this actually before he was the chair of the council, but he was an advisor to the leader, that if there is an existential threat to Iran's existence, Iran's nuclear posture would change.

Dr. Harrazi, who was the foreign minister for eight years under Khatami, during Mr. Khatami's presidency, and he too was an advisor to the leader—both of these men were martyred in this war, foreign policy people anyway—he too said that Iran could have made nuclear weapons years ago, but Iran chose not to do so. And I think he also said that if there's an existential—he may not, I don't remember, I'm not quite sure—but Dr. Larijani did say this. But Dr. Harrazi said that Iran could have made nuclear weapons many years ago. So it has that capability, and it chose not to do so. And I think he said again that if Iran's under existential threat, its nuclear posture could change. So even under the *marja* of Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran had that position.

And the leader now, Ayatollah Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei, he would have to—the current fatwa stands—but if he were to make a different fatwa, he would be entitled to do so, because as I said, he's a different person, and he would have his own fatwa. And in Shia jurisprudence, time and place—the gate to Shia jurisprudence is open—so time and place matter. But I don't see any shift in public statements, in the mood among senior figures in government and in the state. I don't see that shift. I don't see this sense that Iran is under existential threat, first and foremost, at the moment. Though public opinion has changed. Before the 12-day war, a year ago, because the state was always saying, and the government and senior figures were saying, we do not want nuclear weapons, they would always stress the fatwa.

Back then, the mood was almost 50-50 among ordinary Iranians. After the 12-day war, most Iranians wanted a nuclear weapon, according to polls. And I would imagine after this war, although it's still ongoing, probably the majority is even greater. And my anecdotal experiences on the streets of Tehran, when people approach me, are, you know, "Why don't we have nuclear weapons?" I mean, I think the majority—I would imagine that a strong majority now wants that. But I don't think the state at this moment wants that. I've listened to what Larry has said, I've listened to what Pepe has said too, and I can't—I'm not privy to that sort of information, and I'm absolutely certain that they are correctly reflecting what has been told to them by people who have good sources. But there are a couple of things I would imagine would be unlikely.

One is to test a nuclear weapon. I don't see why—let's say if Iran were to, at some point in the future, under, let's say, existential, you know, if we're approaching a sort of existential threat situation—why would Iran test a nuclear weapon? I don't see the necessity of doing so, especially nowadays with the technologies and AI simulations and so on. You don't really need—I don't think they need, anyone needs—to do so. Why would they waste a nuclear weapon, let's say? So I have no information. I cannot reject what they say. I don't see the logic of testing a nuclear weapon. But I don't see any sign or indication among Iranian officials that the country is moving in that direction. I don't feel that the country is currently under existential threat.

I think that the defeat of the United States on the battlefield was decisive. Iran's upper hand during siege warfare is clear. And I think so far, at least, I may be wrong, but I think that the United States does not want to continue a war with Iran and is looking for a way out. They also believe that probably many Zionists, for their own Israeli forces, think probably de-escalation is better for the Israeli regime. Now, in fact, you know, I've said this on your show before. I think that the Zionist regime is the biggest loser in the last two and a half, three years. And this war has been a big loss to them too. They've delegitimized themselves in the eyes of the world. They've weakened the United States, which is the country they need the most. They've created dislike towards the regime in the United States.

#Seyed M. Marandi

So I think that...

#Seyed M. Marandi

Martyr Zionists for the sake of the survival of the regime, they would probably want to see Netanyahu removed and the Israeli regime backing down to allow the de-escalation to continue between the United States and Iran. And that would, of course, include Lebanon. Not that they are not genocidal. They're just as genocidal as others. But I would think that some of them are more pragmatic, and they would see the dangers that are approaching. But I think that Iran has the upper hand. Iran has its peaceful nuclear program. Iran is technologically advanced. I think we saw that on the battlefield. I don't see any indication of what they are to do. Very good for us. Say a quote that's visible for me. It's not visible to me.

#Glenn

Well, that's going to be my running assumption — that the main reason for not acquiring nuclear weapons would be, I guess, the predictable proliferation in the region. That is, the Saudis and others would then start to look towards it, the Turks quite possibly.

#Seyed M. Marandi

But yeah, this is why I feel that... And by the way, Glenn, sorry for interrupting, this war by Trump, if anything, I mean, not only has it made Iran into a world power effectively through its control of the Strait of Hormuz, but it creates an incentive for many countries to start thinking about nuclear weapons. There are countries across the world saying, you know, we could be next for whatever reason. So what Trump has done is increased the possibility, not of Iran, but of many countries saying, well, maybe we should think about nuclear weapons.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, that's what I was getting to. The main reason to acquire one would be if you make a country fear for its existence and not only go into war with Iran, but then put in peace conditions as Iran essentially giving up its conventional deterrence — that is, its ballistic missile program, its regional allies. If a country fears for its existence, has no conventional deterrent, I mean, this is the perfect recipe for nuclear proliferation. So I'm wondering if they thought thoroughly through what they're actually demanding here. But no, it's very... it's very hard to make sense of this war, the decision that's been made. Just a very last quick question, though. In terms of the U.S. intentions — pursuing the war or seeking peace — how do you read the U.S. current force posture? Do you see them building up or drawing down or just maintaining? Because I'm not getting a lot of information on this topic.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Well, just to touch upon what you said last, when it comes to the Israeli regime, the U.S. policymakers and Western policymakers are very irrational. And so they do things that have destroyed their image, they've destroyed their soft power, and they've destroyed their economic and military capabilities, all for this little colony. And they've made Iran and the axis of resistance popular across the world. After 47 years of demonization of Iran, Iran is hugely popular across the global majority. And you may be surprised to know how many people are supporting Iran in the United States right now — online and young people and so on. I'm not saying a majority or anything, but clearly things have changed.

And so 47 years of Western demonization of Iran has crumbled because of their... because when it comes to Israel, they're so irrational and unreasonable. So this policy — this potential policy or the idea that will now grow among policymakers across the world that we have to have some sort of deterrence in the future — this has been brought about due to Western policy. But it's not just this. I mean, the rise of BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the realignments, the growth of the notion of a multipolar world — all of this is due to Western policy and imperial policy. So it's both global, but in our region with the Israeli regime, they are particularly irrational.

So when it comes to global issues, they're irrational and hegemonic, and they overreach. But in our region, they are particularly irrational. And that's what leads to Western media turning a blind eye to genocide in Gaza and Lebanon. I mean, in Gaza, Western media said, well, we don't have a

presence. And so while we were watching kids being flattened and torn to pieces every day, they would look away, saying, well, we don't have people there. In Lebanon, they have a full presence, a very large presence. But they do the same. They look away. They try to justify what the Israeli regime does. They keep saying these are Hezbollah targets while we're watching footage of dead kids and families being massacred.

So the West has undermined itself utterly. And so when it comes to Israel, there is no morality at all. Their reasoning and their logic are cast aside, and they're utterly illogical and unreasonable. So I don't think they care enough about whether this would cause other countries to pursue nuclear weapons or not. They said, we have to do this for the Israeli regime. What was your question? I'm sorry, I got so distracted. The U.S. force posture in the region — do you see them building up, drawing down, or just persevering as it is? It's more or less the same. It's a very large presence. They have not removed their assets. But from my understanding, the morale of U.S. troops is not good.

The weather is very hot and humid now in the Persian Gulf region and in the Arabian Peninsula. U.S. sailors on ships are having a very tough time. U.S. forces on the Arabian Peninsula are having a very tough time because their bases have been destroyed. And they have lots of equipment there that is not well protected. And I don't mean well protected from potential drone attacks only, but also from the hot weather and from the sand. So the damage that is being done to U.S. equipment and planes is enormous because of the humidity, because of the sandstorms, because of the heat. And so the morale isn't high. The equipment is not in an ideal environment for protection. But they are still there, and they haven't moved.

And they've brought in extra troops, ground troops, and the equipment to carry out ground assaults. They are based in the Emirates, in Saudi Arabia, in Bahrain, and in Kuwait — more than Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In Saudi Arabia, they do have assets, but in these three countries, they have large numbers. They're more active against Iran as we speak in these three countries — in Kuwait, in Bahrain, and in the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are trying to sort of take a different position, and they're beginning to behave more reasonably. But again, if there is war and the territory is used, the Iranians will retaliate — there's no doubt about that. But we do see movement in Saudi Arabia and in Qatar.

#Glenn

Just a quick side note on the Western media, though. I think they trapped themselves a bit, because I noticed as well, especially at the beginning of the war, even before, if one would challenge the motivation for going to war or the likelihood of success... then one could be argued that, well, that's a pro-Iranian argument. So it's kind of dismissed. It's similar to the war against Russia. That is, if you make the point that, well, you want to criticize the motivations, that this is not simply about helping, it's a proxy war. And also, you know, we can't win this. Then, well, you know, that's a pro-Russian argument.

And it kind of disappears. So no journalist wants to essentially be seen as taking the side of Iran. The great irony, of course, is that's the source of all this self-harm. If they had been honest about, you know, that Iran, for example, sees this as an existential threat, then it could have been very predictable that Iran would be willing to absorb a lot of pain if its existence is at stake. And also, if they'd been honest about the fighting power of Iran, this would also have been quite important. But yeah, I think this is a self-harm of being trapped in these narratives. But anyways, any final thoughts? Just one final point.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Last night I was on, I mean, the British Channel 4 News is sometimes a bit different from other English media, and some journalists more so than others. I mean, Jon Snow, who used to be their lead anchor, was really, I think, a very decent person and unique in British media on television. And they sent a team to Iran, and I was on their show last night for a few minutes. I went to the streets with them, and then... in those four minutes, the host, who's, I think, one of the better journalists, said, yes, but, you know, he said, but in Iran, I see people on the streets who are afraid to approach us because there are guards around. And I didn't say it so much. The connection apparently wasn't that good at that moment.

I was saying, come on. I mean, what I wanted to say is, come on. After three and a half months of war, after all the Americans have done, it's clear where the Iranian people stand. But you still want to say that this is a police state. I mean, first and foremost, the message that you want to send to the West is... And you see all these people on the streets. If people are cautious about you, it's not because they're afraid of guards. It's because, for the most part, people don't trust you. And they think that if they speak with you, you will twist what they say and you will get it wrong because you're from the British media. But he says, I see people on the streets who are afraid to approach me.

I said, how do you know they're afraid? What do you see in their eyes? What is visible? So the problem is that that narrative is still there, even when they come to Iran. Instead of saying, well, the Iranian people, they were steadfast, they rallied around the flag, they resisted this onslaught, this unprecedented onslaught, where the Americans put in all they had, and the Europeans were with the Americans, maximum pressure sanctions, and regional countries were standing, regimes were helping them directly or indirectly. Instead of acknowledging that the Iranian people were opposed to this war, he tries to sort of fit in, put in this idea that people are afraid.

I mean, these people under airstrikes weren't afraid of standing on the streets and protesting. When their protests were bombed, they weren't afraid and they wouldn't flee. When people were killed in front of them on the streets, they wouldn't flee. But still, Western media—I'm not saying that the reporter is a bad person—I would imagine that that reporter, in order to remain relevant in the UK, would have to speak like this, to say this sort of thing, so that he would not be accused, as you were

saying, of being pro-regime or pro-Iran or repeating Iranian regime talking points and that sort of thing.

#Glenn

Apologist, that's a popular one too. Anyway, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy day.

#Seyed M. Marandi

Thank you very much for having me, Glenn Diesen.

#Seyed M. Marandi

It's always a great honor.