

Seyed M. Marandi: Iran Strikes BACK – Missiles Hit Kuwait & U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain!

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Saturday, June 6, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Professor Seyed M. Marandi, is here with us. Welcome back, Professor. Hi, Nima.

#Seyed

Thank you very much for inviting me. It's always a great pleasure being on your show. Every time you say the date, you sort of look as if it's the first time you're seeing it. I don't know, you're like wondering, what day is it today?

#Nima

Yeah, exactly.

#Seyed

Ever since the war began, that's how it's been for me. Sometimes I don't know what day of the week it is.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Seyed

Because everyone's like, on...

#Nima

Doing the same thing 24 hours a day, every day. Yeah, because when it's day six during the month of six, 2026, it's going to be the repetition of six, six, six. That's why I tried to change it to 2026, not 2026. Professor Marandi, let me start with what happened last night, the new sort of attacks on Iran. At 1:30 a.m. last night, we learned that, based on what the IRGC announced, in the statement of the IRGC, they said four oil tankers tried to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Then they warned them. None of these tankers listened to the warning.

They wanted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Then one of them was hit by an Iranian missile, and the other tankers turned back. Later on, at 2 a.m., there was an American drone attack on a communication tower in Qeshm, then a port in Sirik was attacked with two missiles by the Americans. Later on, we had the Iranian response on Kuwait and Bahrain. From what we've seen so far, at least the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain was hit, because there is footage coming out of Bahrain. What happened last night, and what do we know about what is going on there?

#Seyed

Well, first of all, I think, Nima, we should always keep this in mind. The United States has been lying from the very beginning. From the very beginning of this war, when it comes to its strikes on Iran and with regards to Iranian strikes on U.S. assets, it's been lying. During the past few days, it keeps saying that all the Iranian missiles and drones have been shot down, which is nonsense. The Iranians are striking their targets with high efficiency, and they can't hide it. And during the last two strikes, the Iranians have been hitting the Americans harder in retaliation than in the past. So it's somewhat disproportionate. The Americans carry out a small strike, and the Iranians hit much harder. That's another element that we have to keep in mind.

So during the past few days, the Iranian retaliations have been more severe. Another thing that the Americans have been saying, or at least Western media have been saying, even media opposed to Trump, they've been saying that over the past few weeks, Americans have quietly been able to get tens of tankers and ships out of the Persian Gulf and through the Strait of Hormuz. That's completely untrue. It's all fake. And it's probably part of the whole manipulation process to keep the price of oil, energy, and other commodities down. If the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal or any other media outlet can just give the names of four or five of those ships that passed through the Strait of Hormuz, they must be missing.

So there's nothing secret about it. If those ships are no longer in the Persian Gulf and they're outside, then everyone knows who they are because they were stuck there for over three months now. So they can name the names of the ships. They can say this ship carrying this oil or this amount of crude oil or this cargo. But they won't. They'll just say tens of ships, 40 ships, 70 ships. But it's all made up. Last night, the Americans once again tried to get a number of ships through the Strait of Hormuz, and they failed, and the ships had to turn around. And one, of course, explained what happened to them. Without Iranian permission, they can't leave.

So the Americans, again, in their anger, struck a couple of empty areas, but they also, I think, struck a tower, which is Iranian-made. They can replace it swiftly. And then the Iranians fired on American bases in Kuwait and in Bahrain. So this is basically where we are. The Iranians are hitting back hard, proportionally speaking. The Americans have had no success in getting any of these ships out of the Persian Gulf. And we are where we are. If the United States tries to do this again tonight or in the following nights, we're going to see the same sort of response. And if the Americans strike the Iranians, then the Iranians will strike back even harder.

When the Americans hit an Iranian tanker a few nights ago, the Iranians hit back very hard against Kuwait and the Bahraini regime and the U.S. bases, the U.S. base there. So the Americans back then also said that nothing happened, but satellite images clearly show that the opposite is true. So it's not as if the Americans are in any kind of commanding position, but Western media wants to present the situation as if the United States is having some success. Even the media that is hostile towards Trump, and even the media that is attacking him for his failures in the war, that media, when it comes to psychological warfare, they're still cooperating fully with the U.S. military and the State Department.

#Nima

I'm sure that you watched what General Mohsen Rezaei said to CNN. He said the next phase of the war, if the United States tries to escalate, they're going to push the U.S. forces to the Indian Ocean. And when it comes to the confrontation, what is the assessment on the part of the Iranians? Do they see that the United States is seeking some sort of escalation, or do they want to stay with this sort of conflict, just sort of bugging Iranian forces, bugging Iranian ports and islands, and putting pressure on the Iranian economy? What is the assessment on the part of the Iranians?

#Seyed

Well, militarily speaking, the Iranians are stronger today than they were before the war. And their missiles are larger in number. Their advanced missiles have increased. And even now, they're getting rid of the older missiles in these exchanges. If you've noticed, some of the older missiles are still being fired off so that they can empty their underground missile bases of the older missiles and focus on the newer missiles that are being rapidly produced. And the same is true with the drones. So Iran's missile and drone capabilities are greater today than before. Iran is working on precision, even greater precision than before.

They're working on other elements, on other fields, to make sure their missiles get through any defense shields. They're working on their drone capabilities. They're moving and advancing technologically, both qualitatively and quantitatively. And all of Iran's underground bases are now ready for war. Iran has increased the number of decoys again because the Americans and the Israeli

regime bombed literally thousands of decoys. I don't know how many thousands—two, three thousand—but huge numbers. And they've wasted billions of dollars hitting these cheap decoys, which are very good. I mean, the Chinese-made decoys are very good.

Some of the decoys are Iranian, but the Chinese-made decoys are very, very good. And so the Iranians are prepared for war. And next time around, we've discussed this before. What General Rezaei said is nothing new to you or to me. We know that, and we've been saying that next time around, the escalation will—Iran will move much more swiftly up the escalation ladder. And so will its regional allies, especially Yemen. Yemen will be playing a much bigger role next time around, and they have prepared themselves. They've been building up their capabilities and using this period of quiet to expand their missile and drone capabilities, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

So I think the Americans know that. I don't know what goes on in the mind of Trump, obviously, but he is more cautious both in his tone and in the way in which his military acts on the ground. In these last two cases, for example, the Iranians hit back very hard and the Americans didn't respond. Last night, Iran's response was more painful than the American strike on Iran. And the Iranians, again, succeeded in preventing any ships from leaving the Strait without permission. But yet we didn't see any U.S. response. So I think for now, at least, Trump doesn't want to escalate militarily. But is that going to remain the case?

Who knows? We have the situation in Lebanon. We have Netanyahu. We have today's attack and the murder of a senior military officer in Lebanon by the Israeli regime, ironically, right after the Lebanese president, who was installed by the Americans, spoke out against Iran and the resistance. And he clearly has always hated—I mean, one of the, you know, I'm sorry, I'm sort of digressing—but the Lebanese president and prime minister have been preventing refugees from moving to different parts of the country. They sort of trap them. And the Western NGOs and Western embassies are encouraging them not to allow the supporters of the resistance to seek refuge in different cities and different parts of the country that are controlled by factions and groups that are not sympathetic to the resistance for the most part.

And the Saudis and the regimes in the Persian Gulf are doing the same with their proxies. And they are also telling them not to let these refugees, who are predominantly Shia, leave areas that are predominantly Shia. So the Saudis, the Qataris, the regimes in the Persian Gulf, the Western NGOs, and Western embassies are all cooperating with the president, the prime minister, all of them, to create this wall to prevent people from moving around in their own country. I can't think of any other country that would ever have done such a thing to its own people. And then they're preventing Iran and Iraq from sending aid—not military support, any aid. They're preventing ordinary people who are gathering money in Tehran from sending that aid to Lebanon because they want the morale of the supporters of the resistance to crumble.

They want them to go hungry, to be humiliated. So the president of Lebanon is a truly sinister person. So is the prime minister. He's a proxy of the United States. And so they went, and against

the constitution, they carried out negotiations with the Israelis. And of course, they rejected Iran's position to force the Israelis to accept the ceasefire and to retreat, basically encouraging the Israelis to violate the ceasefire. And then they carried out these direct talks and gave this huge concession. The talks themselves are a huge concession to the Israeli regime, at a time when the rest of the world is turning against the regime, and they got nothing in return.

And so they signed an agreement with the regime the other day, and then the president speaks out against Iran. And what does the Israeli regime do? They went and murdered a very senior military officer and two of his companions as he was going to one of those areas that was discussed for the ceasefire between the government and the Israeli regime. So the president effectively humiliated himself. He gave everything to the Israeli regime, got nothing in return, insulted the people who support the resistance or the majority. I mean, in the last parliamentary elections, his supporters got like one-third of the votes of the alliance that supports the resistance. But in any case, we are where we are.

And the point is that Netanyahu and Trump may not want to expand the war, restart the hot war, but we have to see what developments take place in Lebanon. We have to see where Netanyahu pushes this and what forces are at play with regard to the internal politics of the Israeli regime. Because I personally think that the Axios—and I said this last time—that the Axios revelation of Trump's phone conversation with Netanyahu, I think it, even though there's no doubt that there's no divide between Washington and the regime in Tel Aviv, but I do think that there are people within the elites in the United States, the powerful elites, the Zionist elites, who probably want Netanyahu to go, because this was a humiliating...

#Nima

I don't know if you saw the agreement between the Lebanese government and the Israelis. It's just laughable looking at the terms they agreed on. It's about Hezbollah not attacking Israel south of the Litani River and declaring Hezbollah as the enemy of the state in Lebanon.

#Seyed

What is that? And how can you... Yeah, well, the president of Lebanon and the prime minister, they care much less about Lebanon than Iran does. That's just a fact. And they care infinitely less than the resistance and its supporters in Lebanon. And they're collaborators. They were installed by foreign powers. We remember how they were installed, both the president and the prime minister. They have no real political base in the country. They do not command the majority of the people, the popular support. They showed that in the elections. But just like elsewhere in this region, you have a collaboration between NATO and regional proxies for the sake of Israeli interests. It's quite clear. We saw the same in Syria, and we saw the same in Yemen.

It's just how it is. The empire uses its proxies, its regional proxies, just as they use them against Iran. They're using the same proxies against Lebanon. They use the same proxies against Syria. They use the same proxies against Yemen. Remember, during the American war on Yemen, bases in the Persian Gulf were being used to bomb Yemen and to coordinate operations against Yemen. The Persian Gulf regimes were all a part of it. Those bases were used. And when the Israelis were attacking Iran with American full support—and without the Americans, the Israelis couldn't have even lasted 12 days—but the bases in the Persian Gulf again were being used. So for anyone to think that these regimes would do anything different in Lebanon, they would be very naive.

#Nima

We had Michel Aoun saying that Iran is using Hezbollah as a bargaining chip. And looking at the relationship between Iran and Hezbollah, I talked with many of our experts on this podcast.

#Seyed

Let me just add one thing. It's actually the exact opposite. The Americans are more than willing to end the war. They were willing to have the ceasefire if Iran would just give up Lebanon and just say, you know. And Iran is saying, no, we will not accept an agreement without Lebanon included. So Michel Aoun or anyone else who says this sort of thing knows that they are being dishonest. But they are under a lot of pressure from the United States, just like Turkey is, just like Qatar is, just like the Emirates are.

You know, when the Americans do their arm-twisting, these countries obey. And these officials in Lebanon obey. They get threatened by the Americans to be put on a sanctions list. That would mean that they would lose access to their assets. They would lose access to their bank accounts. They cannot travel to other countries. And not all people are willing to make that sort of sacrifice. So people who one day, you know, take one stance would the next day take a different stance in order to justify that stance. They'll have to say things that they know are not true.

#Nima

So this is the first time, Professor Marandi, I think you will accept that we haven't seen in 46 years, you know, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution. This is the first time Iran is coming out and saying that if you attack Lebanon, if you attack Hezbollah, we're going to respond. This is a new strategy. This is a new sort of attitude that is coming out of the war because of the reality of what has happened so far and how they have used it. We know what has happened in Syria. Syria was a very different case because Bashar al-Assad somehow gave up, and he decided not to fight back, not to help. You remember we talked about Syria and how Iran wanted to help Syria, but they didn't want it. Bashar al-Assad didn't want it.

#Seyed

Not because Iran was a fan of Bashar al-Assad himself. Iran couldn't care less. And this is something that those sectarian proxies of the United States and the Qataris and the Saudis, those who are on the payroll and who have TV channels and who have think tanks and who have institutes and things like that and have been working for the empire and against the government in Syria during the last decade and a half, they were trying to make this a sectarian issue because they wanted to justify their cooperation with the empire. And just like in Lebanon, when Michel Aoun speaks about Iran or others, they're trying to justify a position that they know is not moral and not correct.

So these sectarian people, they know, you know, that their politics are to the benefit of Israel, to the Israeli regime, but they have to justify it. And so they would say this is sectarian for Iran. Assad, it didn't matter at all what his sect was or what his religion was. What Iran knew was that the attempt to overthrow him was a CIA-led operation, and it was approved by Obama. And so Iran stood against it. And when they brought in ten Western intelligence agencies, brought tens of thousands of foreign fighters—ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Jaysh al-Islam, and all these other Takfiri extremist groups—Iran stood against them because they knew that the intention was to destroy Syria, to destroy Iran, the axis of resistance, and that the regime that would benefit would be the Israeli regime.

That's why Netanyahu considers what happened in Syria a great achievement. And imagine if they did not carry out this dirty war in Syria, if the US proxies in Qatar and elsewhere did not play the role that they did, and if these people on the payroll did not cooperate the way in which they did, and all those foreign terrorists, if they had not been in Syria—imagine what the situation would have been today. The resistance would have been much more powerful. The Israeli regime is already overstretched. It would have been much worse. But now look at the situation.

The Syrian government is cooperating to try to shut the border with Lebanon to strangle Hezbollah, the resistance. And you see all those pro-ISIS and al-Qaeda people in London and in the West and elsewhere, these pro-Syrian activists, they're all quiet. They're looking away, looking at the clouds and the nice weather. They're not going to talk about the collaboration of Jolani with Trump because they know what that means, and they know that they had a key role. They all are complicit in what happened, and thus they're complicit in whatever successes the Zionist regime had.

#Nima

I think that's the main reason for Iran to come out and talk about the situation with Lebanon. Because you know what is going on in Lebanon. They want to make some sort of civil war in Lebanon. And when the chaos comes out, it's the same scenario as we've been witnessing in Syria. Today it's the same way. They're trying to make some sort of civil war, with people fighting each other, different sects of society fighting each other, and then you go in and you capture more land. And this is the same sort of playbook for... And again, they want to do this in Lebanon. What has changed right now is that Hezbollah is capable of fighting back using drones, using FPV drones and

rockets. So when you're not capable—Israelis are not capable—to fight back, they want to hit Dahia. Here comes the Iranian sort of new strategy, which is so important, in my opinion, that I have mentioned. We haven't seen this before. Iran says, if you attack Dahia, if you level Dahia, we're going to level the northern part of Israel. This is new.

#Seyed

Exactly. And again, for anyone to say that Iran is sacrificing Lebanon, Iran is basically saying that we are going back to war for the sake of Lebanon. They know that they're talking nonsense. And they know that the government in Lebanon is not capable and is not willing to take a stand against the Israeli regime. The government in Lebanon has never even sought the ability to protect their people against the Israeli regime. But these people are bound to the West. It's the same thing as we see in Kuwait, in Bahrain, in the Emirates, and elsewhere. These are regimes that are bound to the West. These are leaders that are bound to the West.

Their allegiance is to the West. Even in Europe, you see how the European leaders are bound to the United States, let alone these weak nations, proxies in West Asia or North Africa. But in any case, Hezbollah, by the way, it's not just the drones or the rockets, it's also the ambushes. They've been carrying out a very sophisticated and effective war against the Israeli regime. And of course, as you rightly point out, the Israeli regime in its rage goes and bombs apartment blocks, and the West is quiet about it. I mean, just yesterday we saw, I think, a seven-month-old infant shot in the head by the Israeli regime in the West Bank.

And we saw how it was either ignored in the Western media or they tried to justify it. It's really despicable what the Western media is. I've unfollowed any Western media with that legacy media outlook. I don't get my news from them at all anymore. I don't waste my time on them because they're just propaganda. But Israel is not going to win in Lebanon, and ultimately it's going to fail. The question is, how long will it take? Just like the U.S. war against Iran and the siege warfare, the United States wants to strangle Iran and it wants to outwait Tehran. Yes, it can continue trying to do that. But at the end of the day, the United States is going to fail.

And it's only going to create greater harm to the global economy and the U.S. economy. And the U. S. has much more to lose than Iran does. So Iran will definitely outwait the United States, no matter how difficult things are in the months ahead. And Hezbollah will outwait the Israeli regime, no matter how difficult things get in the weeks and months ahead. And I think that Netanyahu is in very serious trouble. And as I said earlier, I think Axios—Axios has zero credibility—but the Axios report on the phone conversation between Trump and Netanyahu, I think there's more in there than meets the eye. I think this was perhaps intended to weaken Netanyahu in the upcoming election.

#Nima

I think the new report on NBC News says the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency has raised the threat level of Israelis spying on American officials to the highest level.

#Seyed

What was it before? Like 99.99% is now 99.9999%. Like, what has changed? I mean, I think...

#Seyed

John Kiriakou somewhere said that they already have, like, I think he said something like this: they already have 99% of all the information in the United States. There really isn't much that they don't know. They apparently listen in on the president's phone conversations.

#Nima

Yeah. But the reason I mention this is that the war is not going well, so the blame game is starting. Who's to blame for this disaster that has happened? Is it going to be Benjamin Netanyahu? Is it going to be someone in the Trump administration, Pete Hegseth, Marco Rubio? I don't know who's going to be to blame because this is—when you're winning, everyone is just, they're all coming together. But this is right, and what's going on, as you mentioned with the case of Benjamin Netanyahu, I think he's in the process of learning that he's going to be responsible for what has happened in the Middle East. And Donald Trump is not going to accept the responsibility for this disastrous war of choice against Iran. Again, I'm speculating, but Hegseth isn't important, nor is Rubio.

#Seyed

These are just, you know, pawns that can be thrown in the bin or the trash can. But I think that if—I mean, the Israeli regime is despised. What Axios has attributed to Trump is the fact that everyone hates Israel, the Israeli regime, and everyone hates Netanyahu. So if I was a Zionist, God forbid, if I was a monstrous human being like a Zionist, I would want to remove Netanyahu and I would want to put someone in his place who's just as sinister and evil, because the opposition to Netanyahu is just like Netanyahu. They're genocidal. They too want Dahiya and Beirut to be flattened. They too want genocide in Gaza. I mean, they're the same thing. But if I was a Zionist in the United States, I would be very worried about the future. Very worried. Because the world hates me. And the world hates my ethno-supremacism.

And so what I would do is I would try to put the blame on someone like Netanyahu. And I would try to get rid of Netanyahu. And I would try to replace him with someone just as sinister and evil, but pretend that it wasn't him and that, you know, the Western media can then collectively say that this is a new beginning and the excesses or whatever, because they can't say genocide, the excesses of

Netanyahu and the crimes committed by, or the controversial Netanyahu, his, you know, his exit from power is a good thing. And it shows that the Israeli people are reasonable people who don't want genocide. It's all lies. But this is what I would do. I would try to get him removed. I would try to make sure he loses the next election and that a coalition is formed without Netanyahu.

It could include his current allies with his opponents, or elements from within his allies and elements from within his opponents, or just his opponents, depending on the results. And then I would try to give the Israeli regime a facelift and perhaps back down on some of these fronts, like in Gaza or Lebanon, and probably preserve what I gained in Syria or something like that. So again, this is just sheer speculation, but if I was, God forbid, a Zionist, that's what I would do. And I think that this whole, you know, NBC report or the Axios piece, all of this sort of fits into this. Something is wrong with the Israeli regime. And of course, it's not Zionism. But I think it all helps to weaken Netanyahu.

#Nima

You've mentioned, Professor, that Iran is using older missiles. Still, they're using them in the recent attack on Kuwait and Bahrain, because the footage coming out of Iran shows that Iran has used a MOT missile, which is an MRBM, a medium-range ballistic missile, instead of using an SRBM, you know, a short-range ballistic missile. Is that part of the plan—to use older, less accurate missiles in this sort of response to the United States, since they're not that important? It's some sort of response to the United States, but why do they need to use medium-range ballistic missiles? Why not, since Kuwait is so close to Iran? Why is that?

#Seyed

Well, for a number of reasons. One is that they want to rid themselves of older missiles. Second is that they're testing the air defenses, and they're testing their own missiles to see how they would perform against air defenses. So all of these are factors that they use. For them, it's important to see what capabilities these regimes have, because if the war is restarted, Iran is going to start pounding these regimes. They'll use different missiles, they'll fire from different parts of the country, they'll try to preserve newer missiles and use up their older missiles. They can't keep those missiles forever.

And in a few years, they'll just be useless. So during the war, they prioritized these older missiles, and they used them during the first few weeks. During the first couple of weeks, they were basically using old ones. So yeah, it's part of their strategy. The Iranian missile numbers are so huge now, and they're so large in number that in some places, they just don't have enough space for the older missiles. And drones—the same is true with drones. The Iranians now have a lot more drones than they had at the beginning.

#Nima

There is something we talked about. By the way, they're building new underground bases.

#Seyed

As we speak.

#Nima

Yeah. Before coming to this live, we were talking about it because there are people—we have to talk about it because there are people right now talking about Iran. You know, some reports are showing that Iranian President Pezeshkian told his counterpart in Pakistan that Iran is going to get out of the NPT. Iran is going to, if the escalation happens, Iran is going to, you know, they're going to do some sort of experiment of a nuclear bomb, a nuclear explosion in Iran, somewhere in the desert, to show the United States that Iran has the capability of using nuclear weapons if they are attacked by nuclear weapons from Israel. And what is your understanding of that? And how do you see the whole case of Iran pursuing nuclear bombs or pursuing nuclear weapons?

#Seyed

You know, Nima, there are some things I know a lot about, and there are some things I know a little bit about, and there are some things I know very little about. So, for example, when it comes to some Iranian politics and Iranian foreign policy, I know some things. I don't claim to be an expert. And when it comes to military matters, like drones and missiles, I have connections. I know a thing or two about Iran's missile capabilities, its drone capabilities—the general things, not details. I don't want to know details. I don't want to know anything secret. But when it comes to the nuclear issue, I don't know anything that's secret.

So I cannot go out and categorically make any statement about Iran's nuclear program based on some knowledge that I have, which is non-existent. What I can say is that if Iran wanted to develop a nuclear weapon, it would have developed it years ago. This is not me saying it. This is Dr. Kharrazi saying it. He was martyred, of course, during the war. For eight years, he was the foreign minister of Mr. Khatami, and then he became the leader's foreign policy advisor, one of two foreign policy advisors, him and Dr. Velayati. And he ran an important think tank before he was martyred.

He said that Iran could—he said this in public a couple of times at least—that Iran could have built a nuclear weapon a long, long time ago. And he said this a few years ago, like two, three years ago. So yes, Iran could easily develop a nuclear weapon through its own indigenous capabilities. It's not difficult for Iran. It's not a problem. And now Iran is more technologically advanced than it was years ago. So, you know, that's not a problem. And, of course, Iran's missile program is—you know, we see how effective it was. They defeated the United States and the Israeli regime in two wars. So that's not a big issue.

The issue, and of course, the issue is what Dr. Larijani, who was also martyred in this war, and a person who I personally knew and liked a lot, a very, very good man. The same was true with Dr.

Kharrazi, but people always spoke highly of him. But Dr. Larijani, I knew personally more than I knew Dr. Kharrazi. Dr. Larijani, before he became the chair of the Supreme National Security Council, said on television once that, if I'm not mistaken, this was a couple of years back, he said that Iran has no intention of developing a nuclear weapon. But if—I think he said something like, and I think maybe Dr. Kharrazi said something like this too—I'm growing old and I forget. So people will have to look this up.

But he said something like, if Iran faces an existential threat, then Iran would reconsider its nuclear posture. I don't see Iran facing an existential threat at the moment, right? So that's A. I cannot comment on what the Pakistani official said to our friends because I know that Larry and Pepe are two very honest people, very serious analysts, and they would report what they say with great accuracy. And I'm sure the person they spoke with is a person who must have some credibility or some status in Pakistan, which makes them take him seriously. But I don't know that person, and I don't know what the motives are for him to say this. All I can say—and so I can't say it's wrong because I don't have evidence—so what I can say is this: first, an introduction. Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, gave a fatwa against nuclear weapons.

And this has a history. His predecessor, Imam Khomeini, Ayatollah Khomeini, gave a fatwa against chemical weapons at a time when the West gave Saddam Hussein chemical weapons to use against Iranians and killed many, many people and maimed many, many people. And of course, these Arab regimes that are complicit now, back then they funded Saddam's war machine. They helped with the chemical weapons program and other such programs, and the means of delivery for those chemical weapons. So back then, the West was trying to prevent Iran from even purchasing gas masks. So back then, they went and told Imam Khomeini, Ayatollah Khomeini, that we need to develop new chemical weapons. And he said no. He said, deal with this monstrous enemy—I'm saying this—in any way you can, but you can't have weapons of mass destruction.

You can't have chemical weapons. They're inhumane. So Ayatollah Khomeini, his successor, the next leader, he gave a fatwa against nuclear weapons many years ago. And that stands. Now, in Shia ideology, there are some differences with Sunni jurisprudence. In Shia jurisprudence, or Ijtihad, the gates are open. In Sunni Islam, the gates to Ijtihad are closed. They've been closed for well over a thousand years. But for the Shia, the gates of Ijtihad are open. And so that means that time and place are key components in the decisions made by the mujtahid, the jurist, the senior scholar of Islamic law. So, for example, based upon his knowledge and, you know, just like a senior scholar in any field, his knowledge of Islam and jurisprudence, he has to take the factor of time and place into consideration.

So his ruling about whatever religious law in Brazil may be different from in India, and it may be different from in Iran, and it may be different from South Africa, right? So place has an important role to play—context, because the society they're in, circumstances, is also a factor. What was appropriate for the 19th century is different from the 20th century, is different from the 21st century. Again, it is founded in that knowledge of Islam and jurisprudence, but these factors have a

role to play. So that's what makes the gates to Ijtihad being open make the rulings dynamic while preserving those core essences of Islamic values. So, the ruler now, the person, the leader now, is another person.

It is the third leader, Ayatollah Sayyid Mujtaba Khamenei. He is also a jurisprudent. He is also a mujtahid. He can give his own ruling based on time, place, and his knowledge of Islam, and the circumstances that he sees that surround the nation or the issue that's under discussion. He can produce a different fatwa. It could be different from Ayatollah Khamenei's fatwa. Ayatollah Khamenei's fatwa stands, but he can have a different fatwa, and he is the leader now. But I don't see any indication of that. I don't see any indication in the public sphere that the state, that the government, wants to shift policy. Because until now, all that I've seen over the years is the government trying to tell the people that a nuclear weapon is not a good thing and why we do not want a nuclear weapon.

Even though some MPs, members of parliament, some people would go out, or clerics, or I don't know, other public figures would say we need nuclear weapons, the state, high-ranking officials, military officials, all of them would go out of their way in public to say that we did not need nuclear weapons. So before the 12-day war, as I recall, it was roughly 50-50 usually in polling in Iran—like half the people wanted nuclear weapons, half didn't. And that was, of course, the state or the government and people were saying we don't need them. After the 12-day war, the government position didn't change, but the polls that I saw after the war clearly showed the majority of Iranians wanted a nuclear weapon. I would imagine, and I have not seen polls since this war began, and I'm sure no polls have been taken.

I don't know if this question was among them, but I haven't seen any poll results. I would imagine that even a larger majority of Iranians believe we need nuclear weapons. And my anecdotal experience says that, because when I'm on the streets and I'm shopping or walking or doing something and people approach me, usually they say we need a nuclear weapon. But the state has not moved in that direction at all. I have not seen any indication whatsoever that the government, the state, the armed forces, and of course the Supreme National Security Council and the leader have shifted their position. And I don't see a reason at the moment why they should, because I don't see Iran being under some sort of existential threat, especially after the results of this war.

So I don't see why Iran would need to even explode a nuclear weapon. I mean, what would be the need? With the technology that exists today, simulations work very effectively. I don't think there's a need for anyone to even waste a nuclear weapon, if they really need one, on such an experiment. So I don't see any evidence of this, but I continue to watch Larry Johnson. He's one of the few people who I would watch if I have very little time during the day and I want to watch someone. He's one of the people who I want to watch. And of course, the same is true with Pepe. And for me, they're extremely credible. And I cannot say that what that Pakistani person claimed is incorrect because I'm not in the know. And if it's not correct, it doesn't reflect upon either Larry Johnson or Pepe Escobar.

#Nima

Yeah, but we know there are serious discussions in Iran about the NPT. What is the meaning of the NPT if we are attacked, if the Bushehr nuclear power plant is attacked and the enemy doesn't consider any sort of limits for what they do?

#Seyed

Yes, but just one thing, and I know you know this, and I know much of your audience knows this, but if Iran leaves the NPT, it is as leverage, it is to punish the United States and the West. It doesn't mean that Iran will develop a nuclear weapon. It will make it more difficult for them to understand Iran's nuclear program. What does it mean? Someone recently, I think it was Channel 4 News or someone, said—I think it was them a couple of weeks ago—they said, why has Iran produced enriched uranium at 60%? I said, well, you have to remember the history. There's a context to this. Iran signed a nuclear deal in 2015. It gave many concessions. The Americans under Obama cheated Iran. Under Trump, they tore up the deal. For two years, Iran continued to abide by its commitments while it was under maximum pressure sanctions, in full violation of the deal.

The Europeans and Americans were all imposing maximum pressure sanctions. And so after two years, Iran renewed its nuclear program. And in order to put pressure on the West to come back to the negotiating table, what did they do? They increased the degree to which uranium is enriched to 60%. So it was for leverage. It was to force them to come back to the negotiating table and to get concessions. When the other side has sanctioned you, what do you put on the table to force them to remove sanctions? You put something on the table. One of the things that Iran put on the table is enrichment of uranium at 60%. So if Iran leaves the NPT, it doesn't mean Iran wants to build a nuclear weapon, but it wants to make life more difficult for the West.

So the smart thing for the West to do is to accept the fact that—except what Kagan, Robert Kagan, and you told me about his interview a couple of days ago, which you promised to send me a link to after the show—I haven't seen it, but I did read his article in *The Atlantic*, in the monthly, where he said the United States lost, accept defeat, you know, accept Iran. Going back to the book **Going to Tehran** by the Leveretts, which I talk about a lot. And then you can normalize, you can have a different situation. Is that going to happen? No, of course not. Not with this U.S. regime, and not with these current elites. But the world changes. Look at Iran and the Soviet Union. We had terrible relations. In their rallies, the Iranians would chant "Death to America" and "Death to the Soviet Union."

And of course, it's not literal. No one should take it literally. They're referring to the empire and imperialism. It's just like saying "he bit the dust"—it doesn't mean he ate the dirt. But in any case, they used to say the same for the Soviet Union. And then after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan and their policies changed, people no longer chanted that in their rallies. And of course,

later the Soviet Union collapsed, and relations with Russia today are infinitely better than back then. So it's not as if this hostility towards Iran's tormentors will be forever if those tormentors are gone and decent people replace them. You can have the sort of relations between Iran and the United States as we have today between Iran and Russia and Iran and China. That's a hypothetical. We're nowhere close to that.

#Nima

I think one of the points that General Rezaei made in his interview on CNN was that the first step would be \$24 billion of Iranian frozen assets for Iranians if they want to start to show some sort of move that Iran gets the sign that the United States is serious. To start with, to start the negotiation, to start some sort of deal, they have to start with the Iranian frozen assets, which we know are the Iranian assets, by the way. It's not the United States'. Of course, we know that the Iranian delegation—the head of the Iranian parliament, together with the foreign minister and the head of the Central Bank of Iran—they went to Qatar, which was part of this frozen Iranian asset. What do we know about that so far?

#Seyed

Well, the issue, Nima, is clear. The Iranians are saying, we don't trust you. You're liars. And they are. We saw that in the JCPOA. Obama—he's no better than Trump. Just Trump is more crude and disgusting in his sinister behavior. Obama is more sophisticated, more hypocritical. But he too cheated Iran. At every step of the way, he cheated Iran. And in all our dealings with the regime in Washington, the United States lied to you. Always, always, from the beginning of the revolution till now. So the Iranians this time around are saying, look, we have the Strait of Hormuz. We won the war. There's nothing you can do about it. You want a deal? You first have to carry out your obligations. Show us that you're serious, and we'll carry out our obligations. It's our money. Hand it over.

If you don't hand it over, there's no deal. You want a deal? First, stop killing Lebanese children and get out of the country. You want a deal? Show us. But Iran is not going to say, okay, let's sign up and we'll do this, and then you promise to give us the money, you promise to stop killing kids in Lebanon. Of course, they won't do that. They'll wait for Iran to carry out their obligations, and as usual, they'll continue killing kids. And Western media—the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian—all of them will pretend that this is a very complicated situation in Lebanon and it's very difficult to figure out who's to blame. Killing tens of thousands of kids in Gaza, just like it was difficult to determine who's to blame and all that in the West for Western media.

So Iran knows that history will repeat itself if they don't negotiate differently this time around. So the Iranians have learned from their mistakes in dealing with the West and saying that, you know, we always carry out our obligations. You're the ones who don't carry out your obligations. You want to deal with Iran? Show us you're serious. If you're serious, we promise you the Strait of Hormuz will

be open. And we all know that Iran will open the Strait of Hormuz. Because everyone knows Iran carries out its obligations. Everyone knows it. The only nutcases are the Zionists in the United States. What's that guy's name? Levin? What was his name? The crude Zionist. Pompeo and these people. Lindsey Graham? No, no, no. Yeah, well, Lindsey Graham.

These are liars. They can say whatever nonsense they want. But whenever Iran had an agreement, Iran carried out its obligations. Too much. Iran did too much. Too much. I mean, after the US, Trump tore up the deal and the Europeans effectively carried out Trump's orders and imposed maximum pressure sanctions, Iran effectively waited two years. I wouldn't have done that. Maybe they did the right thing, but I wouldn't have waited two years. But that just shows that the problem never lied in Tehran. The problem was never in Tehran. So this time around, the Iranians are saying, you have to show us goodwill. It's our money. You have to hand over our money. And yes, we'll open up the Strait of Hormuz for most of those ships that belong to those countries that help kill our kids.

#Nima

You know, considering the two fronts, one of them between Iran and the United States in the Persian Gulf and the other between Israel and Lebanon, which one is stronger, more difficult for the United States to agree on? Iranian demands between Israel and Hezbollah, or the demands in the Persian Gulf with the case of the Strait of Hormuz? Which one is more difficult in your understanding? No doubt, Lebanon.

#Seyed

No doubt, Lebanon. Because that's what Netanyahu... I mean, the first... We had a ceasefire after the war. Before we went to Islamabad, they agreed that there would be a ceasefire and that the ships would go through the Strait, a large number of ships would go through the Strait of Hormuz, and that there would be a ceasefire in Lebanon. And then Netanyahu carpet-bombed Lebanon. And Trump then said, oh, well, Lebanon is not a part of the ceasefire. And the Pakistanis said, well, of course they are. You know, you agreed on this. And so Trump was willing to, I guess, at least up to that point, carry out other obligations, but not with regards to Lebanon. He wanted to allow the Israelis to kill kids, as they do. They're good at it. So the Iranians said no. So I think the fact that Zionists like killing kids is a big problem.

#Nima

We've heard Yemen saying that they're prepared: if they attack Dahiya, we're going to be part of the response. It's not going to be just Iran.

#Seyed

Nima, the axis of resistance is going to be very different in the next war than it was in the 39-day war. It will be very different.

#Nima

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

#Seyed

It's always a great pleasure.