

Seyed M. Marandi: Iran Just Changed the Rules in Lebanon. Immediate Warning to Israel

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What happened last night were new sorts of attacks on Iran. At 1:30 a.m. last night, we learned that, based on what the IRGC announced in their statement, four oil tankers tried to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. They were warned, but none of these tankers listened to the warning. They wanted to pass through this radar zone. One of them was hit by an Iranian missile, and then the other tankers turned back. Later on, at 2 a.m., there was an American drone attack on a communication tower on Qeshm Island. Then a port in Sirik was attacked with two missiles by the Americans. Later on, we saw 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?

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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. So 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 and 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 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. 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 replaced 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 unprovoked a few nights ago, the Iranians hit back very hard against Kuwait and the Americans.

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 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, is still cooperating fully with the U.S. military and the state.

#Nima

Yeah. I'm sure that you watched what General Mohsen Rezaei said. He said the next phase of war, if the United States tries to escalate, they're going to push the U.S. forces to the Indian Sea. 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?

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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 they're even now 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 are working on their drone capabilities. They're moving and advancing technologically as well as both qualitatively and quantitatively. And all of Iran's underground bases are now ready for war. And Iran has increased the number of decoys again because the Americans and the Israeli regime bombed literally thousands of decoys. And I don't know how many thousands, two, three thousand, but huge numbers. And they've wasted billions of dollars on 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, 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. And 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, this is— 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've sort of trapped 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're 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. They went and, against the Constitution, 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, he gave, 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 regards 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 revelation.

#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.

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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 you have, just like elsewhere in this region, 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. That's how 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.

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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.

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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 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.

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So this is the first time, Professor Marandi, I think you will accept that we haven't seen in 46 years since 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 Assad somehow gave up and 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 Assad didn't want it.

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Not because Iran was a fan of Bashar 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, were trying to make 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 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. I said 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 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 the West and elsewhere, these, you know, these pro-Syrian activists, they've all—they're all quiet. They're, you know, looking away, looking at the, uh, the clouds and the nice weather. You know, 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.

