

Iran's Moral Foreign Policy? Mohammad Marandi Challenges Western Narratives

Mohammad Marandi joins us to discuss the future of the US-Iran conflict, the prospects for peace, and the rapidly changing balance of power in West Asia. In this interview we discuss: • Is peace finally within reach after months of conflict? • Why the end of the Gaza genocide may be essential for any lasting regional settlement. • The growing relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia and its implications for the future of the Middle East. • How the war will influence Palestinian resistance and the broader Axis of Resistance. • Why Western analysts often interpret Iranian foreign policy through the lens of realpolitik while ignoring the moral and ideological dimensions that shape Tehran's worldview. Marandi argues that the region is undergoing a historic transformation, with traditional Western influence facing unprecedented challenges and new regional alignments taking shape.

#Iran #Gaza #Palestine #MohammadMarandi #Israel #MiddleEast #SaudiArabia #USIran
#Geopolitics #WestAsia #Resistance #IranWar

#Mudiar

Hello and welcome to another episode of India and Global Left. If you are new to the show, please hit that subscribe button. Also, consider becoming a YouTube member, a patron, or donating a small amount using the link in the description box. Without further ado, let me welcome our guest tonight, Professor Mohammad Marandi. Professor Marandi is from Iran, and he teaches at the University of Tehran. Professor Marandi, welcome back to India and Global Left.

#Mohammad

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

#Mudiar

So the U.S. administration is saying that it has called off its strikes on Iran and that they're very close to a deal. My question to you is, is this moment any different from all such occasions we've had in the past 100 days or so?

#Mohammad

I really can't answer that question. It's impossible to say. What has happened is that, as you know, and I think you and I discussed this before, the Iranians and the Trump regime were getting close to an agreement where the principles of that agreement were that in the first stage, the U.S. would end the genocide in Gaza and end the war and the genocide in Lebanon. And they would end the

siege on the Strait of Hormuz. They would lift sanctions on, or waive sanctions on, Iranian energy exports for the duration of the deal. And they would also... I forgot the fourth one. Iran, on the other hand, would allow energy to flow from the Strait of Hormuz, or ships to go through the Strait of Hormuz like before the war. But the Iranians would continue to control the Strait.

Iran is not going to agree with the United States on anything about its control over the straits or fees or anything like that. That will remain as before. And Iran will also declare that it will not pursue nuclear weapons, which is something that the Iranians have stated many, many times over the decades. Then, if this continues for two months, the United States will release stolen Iranian assets, because they've stolen \$24, \$25 billion of Iranian assets over the years. So they would release half of that immediately and the other half by the end of the two months. This would be the first stage. And then, over the two months, the two sides would negotiate over the lifting of sanctions and Iran's enriched uranium and, of course, the nuclear program.

So the real differences have been put off for after this initial stage, the first stage. Now, for the Iranians, it is key that the genocide in Gaza and the genocide in Lebanon end. And it's quite stunning that in this entire world that we live in, the only country that is forcing the United States to do something about Gaza and Lebanon is Iran. And all these other countries, regional—Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, the Saudis, and others—they do nothing. And, of course, beyond the region, when these countries do nothing and are complicit, what expectations can you have? But the Iranians want the money up front, the stolen money, half of it returned up front as a sign of goodwill.

And of course, the lifting of the siege, because the Iranians know that the Americans are very dishonest and they always lie. They're serial liars. And it's not just Trump. Trump is more crude in his dishonesty, and he's more crude in his imperial ambitions. But Obama, in the 2015 deal, he lied just as much. The mistake that the Iranian side made in 2015 was that it gave too many concessions. But the real problem was that the deal was devised in a way where the Iranians would carry out their obligations, and then the Americans would carry out their obligations. And the Iranians did carry out their obligations, and the Americans used that as an opportunity not to carry out their own because they saw that the Iranians made their concessions.

So they no longer had the incentive to normalize, for example, to allow Iran to benefit from, to be able to link up, for example, its banking system, to link up with the global banking system. The Americans refused to do that. And until the end of the Obama administration, the Obama regime increased sanctions against Iran. In other words, they violated the spirit of the deal all the time. And they violated the specific obligations that it was supposed to carry out systematically. And so that, for Iran, has been very important. And of course, Trump tearing up the deal — the behavior of Obama, Trump, and Biden have taught Iran a lesson.

And that is that at the negotiating table, you have to be very careful, very tough with Americans. And you have to make sure that they carry out their obligations before you carry out your obligations, because they will refrain from doing so. And as an empire, they believe that they have

special privileges and special rights and that you are not their equal. In a sense, Zionism and American exceptionalism are very similar — that they are superior human beings and we're subordinate human beings. Zionism is, of course, worse. They consider everyone else to be subhuman and unworthy of life. But American exceptionalism is not far behind.

#Mudiar

Yeah, I've been reading this book, a new book by Ramzi Baroud. I'll discuss that on the show. It's heart-wrenching but also an inspiring history. Beit Daras, a place in Gaza — it used to be a vibrant village before settler colonialism came in and started destroying it, even though that ethnic cleansing never happened the way they wanted it to. But yeah, as you spoke about the evil of Zionism, some of those stories came to my mind. Anyway... I was struck when you said that within the feasibility of a workable deal, you mentioned the end of genocide in Gaza and also Lebanon. I mean, my own sense was that...

Out of all the issues that we've been discussing, let's say for simplicity, the issues that are relatively internal to Iran — talking about stolen assets, the frozen assets, sanctions, the uranium stockpile — I felt that those are relatively easier issues to be dealt with. And if there is an agreement, a deal for two months or whatever as a first phase, those are the things, or even straight up or most likely, those might be the issues around which an agreement might be struck to begin with. And then the regional issues that involve Lebanon and other allies in the region, the U.S. bases — very importantly, that Iran insists should go — I felt that those are difficult issues to have an agreement on, and those things would be decided more by the force of history as they progress on the ground and as the balance of forces tilt against each other. But you said that the end of the genocide is very primary. Can you explain?

#Mohammad

Yeah, so as I said earlier, up to two weeks ago, we were narrowing down the differences. And it's not because the United States is inhumane or sane or normal. The political elite in the United States are utterly evil. And let me be very clear about that. It's not just Trump. It's Obama. It's Netanyahu — he is the president of the United States — but it's Obama, it's Biden, and it's the senators. It's the entire political class and their overlords. So, you know, the force of history, if it's allowed to, without Iran's intervention, the force of history would necessitate the extermination of the Palestinians and the extermination of the Lebanese, because that's what they're doing.

The Israelis are exterminating the people in southern Lebanon as we speak. The casualties are just beyond belief. And the West, of course, fully supports this. Western journalists fully support it. Western journalists in Beirut are very desperately trying — mainstream journalists, corporate media journalists — are desperately trying to justify the atrocities. Like, they speak about Hezbollah targets and Hezbollah strongholds, and on social media all you see is dead families, slaughter, and massacres of people under the government, just like in Gaza.

So Iran has said that, you know, under no circumstances will we have a deal without Hezbollah. Now, in the case of Gaza, it's a bit more difficult than Lebanon because unfortunately, with the complicity of Jordan and Erdogan and the Arab regimes of the Persian Gulf and Egypt and others, and other regional leaders and leaders from across the world, Trump imposed a fake ceasefire. And these people all gathered in Egypt to whitewash his genocide and also to endorse his ceasefire. And since then, almost 1,000 Palestinians have been slaughtered, and the Israeli regime has crossed that unfairly drawn yellow line, and they're taking more and more territory.

So for Iran to get something done in Gaza is more difficult than in Lebanon because the Americans are saying, we already have a ceasefire endorsed by Erdogan and Sisi and all these other complicit leaders. But still, the Iranians are determined to bring about some sort of change in Gaza. And Iran has promised Hamas that they will not, regardless of the price, relinquish that aim. And, of course, the same is true with Lebanon. So until a couple of weeks ago, the gap between Iran and the United States had decreased substantially, and we'd reached a text. But then the Americans suddenly added some new provisions to their text, and the Iranians said, we're not even negotiating.

So the Iranians stopped negotiating. And then when the Americans added this, immediately afterwards, the Israelis started bombing. They began to threaten Beirut, and then they bombed Beirut, and then the Americans began to attack Iran at night on multiple occasions. And the Iranians just said, no, that's over, we're not negotiating. And Iran, as you saw, its responses were increasingly assertive, both against the Americans but also against the Israeli regime. And the Israeli regime ultimately had to back down. And the Americans and the Iranians, until last night, were hitting each other harder and harder.

The Iranians were being very assertive during the last few nights. And then last night, we saw what happened. The day before yesterday, the Americans, through the Qataris, sent a message to Iran that they had withdrawn those added provisions or those added demands to the text. So, in other words, we've gone back to two weeks ago. And the Iranians said, okay, now we can study. But then last night, Trump made all those threats and said he was going to destroy Iran in order to create this, you know... Well, on Wednesday, the Americans sent that message, and then on Wednesday night, they attacked Iran.

And last night, they threatened Iran in order to create this image that if there is a deal—this is my interpretation—that if there is a deal, the Americans are coming into the deal as being made from a position of strength. Because the Americans, in fact, have retreated. They've withdrawn those new demands. And so Trump, if he signs a deal now, will feel weak. So he had to bomb Iran the night before last, which Iran responded to. And yesterday he was making all these threats about striking Iran hard last night and today and so on. So basically, what has happened is that the Americans have retreated.

And now we have a text where the two sides are very close to agreeing with regards to that text. But we don't have an agreement yet. And, of course, the implementation of the deal is one thing. The durability of the deal is another thing. And then the negotiations that will take place over sanctions and the nuclear program are yet another thing, because Iran is not going to accept the U. S. position that we cannot remove sanctions. That's not an option. And the Iranians are not going to accept the end to enrichment and the end to Iran's nuclear program. And it's definitely not going to negotiate its missile program or its alliances with countries across the region.

#Mudiar

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ismail Bagheri said to Iranian media that a document is now being discussed which is closer than ever to being approved. So I hope it includes some of these grounds that you just stated can be the first round of agreements on which something can stand, and then we'll have to see what follows subsequently. Just a clarification about my use of the phrase "force of history." I didn't necessarily mean without the intervention of Iran. What I meant was things like the end of U.S. bases in the region will not be signed on a white or red paper, because that would be like the end of the empire, like at just one stroke.

But that would happen gradually as a larger restructuring of global finance and the global economy takes place. For instance, as the dollar weakens, as the importance of the petrodollar declines, or as the ability of the UAE, Qatar, and other Gulf states declines—as their ability to buy U.S. weapons or invest in U.S. stocks declines—the basis would leave. That's what I meant by saying that larger forces on the ground, or even in Palestine or in Lebanon, I didn't mean without the intervention or support of Iran. What I meant was that that would not be accepted as an agreement, just as one might hope to get something about the nuclear stockpile or the end of sanctions.

#Mohammad

You're absolutely correct, and I understood completely. I was just trying to point out the nature of the empire and the Israeli regime. Of course, the U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf region will never return to what they were before for two reasons. One, because they were so easily destroyed by Iran, and during the last few nights have been even more badly wrecked by the Iranians. And the second reason is that—well, there are three. The second is that the Iranians will continue to control the Strait of Hormuz, and they will not allow the U.S. military to use that strait anymore. And the third reason is exactly what you said, that even if we move forward and the war does not restart again, the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf will never be like what they were. They are permanently weakened.

The Saudis, the Emiratis, the Qataris, the Bahrainis, the Kuwaitis—the regimes—they are permanently weakened. And therefore, the United States, which has been so badly hit, does not have the financial incentive. Because all of those bases, all the American bases—and they are far

bigger and more costly than people imagine—all of the costs are paid for by these regimes. The United States, all of the costs—it's not just free land or free electricity or free water supplies—they pay for everything that is done. And so this is not a model that is sustainable. Rebuilding these bases would be very costly. And of course, Iran will destroy them again if anything happens. And the money simply—the money is not going to be there like it was in the past. So you're absolutely correct. The forces of history are going to change the region to the detriment of Zionism and the United States. But it's a process.

#Mudiar

I wanted to ask you a little bit about Saudi Arabia in particular, because some people are drawing a distinction between Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states—the UAE in particular, but also Bahrain, Kuwait, and let's say Qatar. And the analysis is that there might be greater room for cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia than between Iran and the UAE, partly because Saudi Arabia has more openness to other parts of Asia through Pakistan.

Its close links and security agreements with Pakistan, and thereby a possibility of proximity with China, given the close link between China and Pakistan, but also for economic reasons—because partly Saudi Arabia is trying to bring in more investments and compete with the UAE, which largely gets investments hooked into the Western circuit. And they are seeing Saudi Arabia is finding enormous strain on its fiscal budgets, and they are unable to keep up their stock market, Tadawul, as it is said. Largely, their overreliance on Aramco and petroleum-based businesses is not being very fruitful. So they are looking for... Thank you very much.

#Mudiar

As the war has changed the landscape of West Asia, with Iran becoming a more powerful actor than before in the region, and Saudi Arabia being important in its own ways, unlike the smaller states of Kuwait, Qatar, or the UAE, do you see greater cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia to bring the region outside the ambit of the West and Western imperialism?

#Mohammad

Yes. First of all, the Iranians are in talks with all of these countries. And we saw how, when Oman did not participate in this murderous war, the Iranian-Omani relationship grew even stronger, and Oman has benefited immensely from this. There were a couple of false flag operations carried out against Oman at the beginning of the war, but the Omani government knew that it wasn't Iran. And these other countries paid the price for their complicity in the onslaught against the Iranian people. But negotiations with these countries have had different degrees of success.

And as you've seen during the last couple of weeks, when the Iranians have been hitting the Americans very hard in the region, the Iranians did not strike Saudi Arabia. And there is a reason for

that, obviously. And so the Iranians are trying to draw Saudi Arabia away from the United States because it's to our benefit to have good relations with the Saudis, to everyone's benefit for the two sides to have better relations. And Iran wants to weaken the presence of the empire in West Asia. The belief in Tehran is that the empire is the real problem in the relationship, in all the relationships in the region.

And so, yes, I think if the United States does restart a war, and if it strikes Iran's critical infrastructure, all these countries, because of their complicity, will pay the price. But the Iranians don't want that. And even in the recent attacks against Iran the night before last, when the Americans targeted water reservoirs for 20,000 people and destroyed them in the heat of summer, in a very hot and humid part of Iran alongside the Persian Gulf, the Iranians did not retaliate by destroying the water resources in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. Iran doesn't want to go there.

But if the United States systematically goes after Iran's critical infrastructure, Iran will have no choice. And, you know, during this war, the Iranians were very careful not to kill civilians. I checked on DeepSeek, and these countries in the Persian Gulf have said that their collective casualties were 20. Twenty people died during the 39 days of violence, whereas in Iran it's 3,500. But if you look at the damage to these five Arab regimes, the damage is enormous. So it just shows that the Iranians are much more careful about not killing civilians than, of course, the Americans and the Israelis. They thrive on slaughtering civilians.

#Mudiar

I want to end by asking you a little bit about the impact of all this on the resistance, particularly in Palestine, given Israel last night not only bombed Deir al-Balah in the Gaza Strip, completely rendering this so-called yellow line, the occupation of Gaza, partial occupation of Gaza, in many ways meaningless because that has no sanctity—the so-called ceasefire. In the occupied West Bank, they are destroying farmlands. They are poisoning farmlands in large parts in Bethlehem and Jericho.

It's also storming into refugee camps in the towns around Nablus and elsewhere. And settlement blocks are increasing. Two days ago, 62 new settlement blocks were legally sanctioned. And the story just goes on. One of the things said by Palestinian scholars in particular was that the start of the war with Iran meant that the global focus that was razor-sharp on Palestine and on Israel got deflected. Do you think, or in what ways, if this kinetic war between the U.S. and Iran ends, how would it influence the resistance against occupation in Palestine?

#Mohammad

You know, for people to better understand, they have to better understand the religious ideology that lies behind the resistance. Shia Islam, as we've discussed before, is a very powerful component in the ideology—how it perceives religion, how its worldview is constructed, or how its worldview

exists is through this concept of supporting the oppressed and standing up against the oppressor. And the Palestinians are, for the Iranians, key to this worldview. You know, over the past few decades, powerful countries in the region have used sectarianism to demonize Iran and the Shia, with disinformation, lies, and slander.

Why? Because they want to preserve their regimes, obviously. They don't want people to look to revolution and so on for inspiration. And the second is to hide their complicity, or to justify their complicity, because people are saying, well, why is Iran doing this, but Turkey is transporting oil to Israel? Or why is Hezbollah doing this, yet the Egyptians are watching—the Egyptian army is watching children being slaughtered in Gaza and doing nothing? Why is Yemen resisting, yet the Emirates is trying to destroy Yemen, or the Saudis trying to destroy Yemen? So the best way is through slander.

For example, in Syria, the reason why Iran defended the Syrian government from 2013, when tens of thousands of ISIS fighters were brought in by Western, Turkish, and other intelligence agencies to the country, is not because of the government being bad or the president being an Alawite. It had nothing to do with that. It was because Iran knew that this was a conspiracy by the empire. And that's why Hezbollah also entered. And we saw that the empire undermined it and now installed an ISIS-Al-Qaeda proxy who's doing the bidding of the empire, trying to close the border between Syria and Lebanon so Iran cannot smuggle in support for Hezbollah.

And he and his people will do nothing to take back the territory in southern Syria at a time when the resistance in Lebanon is putting so much pressure on the regime because Hezbollah is doing an extraordinary job battering the Israeli armed forces. And that's why the regime is constantly slaughtering families and destroying cities in their rage. So here in Syria, they said this is sectarian, whereas it was anti-empire. I mean, the whole project, the whole axis of resistance has been created to help the Palestinian people who are Arabs and Sunnis. Iran is not Arab, and it's Shia Islam. But, you know, the way they target Iran is always inconsistent.

So, for example, in Afghanistan, although the Taliban was created by the Americans and Pakistani intelligence and the Saudis and the Emiratis, after the Taliban was overthrown by the Americans and the Americans occupied Afghanistan, Iran gradually began to communicate with the Taliban, and a new leadership in the Taliban emerged that was not genocidal like the first wave. Still, we don't agree with them on many, many issues — the way they treat women, preventing them from going to school, or their intolerance toward different ethnic groups and different sects and languages. But still, they've changed. They've evolved. And the Iranians supported the Taliban in overthrowing the U.S. occupation. And in Afghanistan, many of the Shias and many of the Tajiks and many of the Uzbeks and many of the liberal Pashtuns were collaborating with the Americans.

And they accused Iran of supporting the Taliban. And so, well, this is the exact opposite of the accusation being made in Syria. But the reality is there's a consistency in the Iranian community and the resistance position, and that is that the ultimate evil is the empire. It is the empire that creates

extremism and terrorism and pits countries and communities against each other to maintain their authority and power. So, in Afghanistan, I would argue what Iran did was the morally correct position. And in the long run, it benefits everyone. What Iran did in Syria and what Hezbollah did in Syria was the morally correct position. And those who promoted sectarianism and racial hatred and so on in Syria were basically doing the bidding of empire.

And many were on the payroll — I mean, the payroll of Qatar and Erdogan and others. And they continue to be on the payroll. So obviously, they have a vested interest in all this. But those people, while they are more than willing to kill Syrians, never do anything against the Israeli regime. In fact, they do the exact opposite. So over the decades, while the West demonized Iran, that narrative was effective across the world because they had a huge influence over the global media. Western media was where a lot of the information came from for local media across the world. And so they were very effective in demonizing. And also, these Arab dictatorships in the Persian Gulf, through their immense wealth, were able to demonize the resistance in the eyes of their own population.

When the genocide in Yemen, for example, took place — the genocidal war — Al Jazeera, the government in Turkey, the Qataris, everyone was on board. They were supporting the genocidal attacks. And it was only when the divide between the Emirates and the Saudis and Qatar led to the siege on Qatar that Qatar moved away from this policy. And, of course, Turkey, because of Erdogan, because of his financial interests in Qatar and strategic interests due to Qatari wealth, also shifted away.

So, the point is that when this was happening, Ansar Allah, which became the heroes of the region and beyond, as the Israelis were carrying out genocide in Gaza, we have to remember that just a few years earlier, many people were hostile towards them because of Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya and the hundreds of media channels that these governments fund — religious channels and other channels. They have a huge, huge network. They fund mosques across the world, cultural centers across the world, media. Many of them are not owned by them, but they are under their influence because of the dependency on their money.

So the point is that even many Palestinians had a negative view of Islam because of this sectarianism, because of this racial hatred, because of these narratives that were being broadcast day and night throughout the Arabic media and, of course, across the world. As I said, the Western— but despite that, the Iranians, knowing of that negative perception, continued to work for the liberation of the Palestinian people. Now we are seeing people waking up to the reality of what resistance means and what the axis of resistance means. The narrative was always that Iran was using the Palestinians to gain, but the Iranians have suffered immensely, and war has been waged against them. But the Iranians refused to relinquish the Palestinian cause. And, of course, the height of humanity, the height of humanity, is in Lebanon, because they entered the battle to draw away Israeli forces when they began the genocide, in order to prevent Gaza from being overrun.

And they knew that they would pay the price, and their families would pay the price. And they're paying that price today. The slaughter in Lebanon is not being reported. It is extraordinary. It is huge. And then you have this evil conspiracy in Lebanon against the resistance — the installed regime, the president and prime minister, with the support of Western embassies and Western NGOs and these Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf that fund their al-Qaeda, their Wahhabi and Salafi takfiris. They are preventing the refugees from the south from going to other parts of Lebanon by using religious animosity and sectarian animosity. So instead of supporting them against the Israeli regime, they're trying to surround them. And they're blocking aid from Iran and Iraq — tents, blankets, food, anything.

And then you have the al-Qaeda forces on the border of Syria surrounding them. You have the Israeli regime bombing city after city and slaughtering families and slaughtering medics and paramedics. And then you have the regime, this sinister regime in Beirut, blocking and surrounding them. Yet Hezbollah continues to resist and hits back, and its supporters remain steadfast. It's much more difficult for Hezbollah than even for Hamas, in the sense that Hamas had control of Gaza and Palestinian Islamic Jihad helped them. But in Lebanon, it is completely infiltrated by these forces linked to the West — genocidal forces like the Lebanese Forces, which carried out the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982, killing up to 3,500 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camp in 48 hours — men, women, and children.

#Mohammad

These monsters are Western allies. And then the Takfiris and the others. So Hezbollah is surrounded from the inside and from the outside, and by al-Qaeda and ISIS. But they've done this resistance to spare the children of Gaza. So what I'm saying is that after this war, and after all these years of genocide, and after what they've done to Yemen, to Lebanon, and Iran, these entities remain steadfast in their determination to support the oppressed. And that includes, of course, Cuba, but our reach is limited, Venezuela, and so on. So have no doubt that despite all the hardship that we've endured, but especially the Lebanese, the commitment to the people of Palestine remains firm, and the commitment to prevent the West from exterminating the children of Palestine and the children of Gaza is strong as steel. So, you know, through access and resistance, we will continue to support the Palestinian people, and it is determined to bring about justice in Palestine.

#Mudiar

Yeah, it is so important you stressed the aspects of morality as you ran through the logic of Iranian foreign policy. And I wanted to emphasize this, given so much of Western analysis on Iran's foreign policy. Even by people who are not necessarily seen as anti-Iran, they would put everything in the box of realpolitik, where morality has no space. So even, as you said, Iranian support for the Taliban's resistance against U.S. occupation would be called a realpolitik move instead of having a moral plank against empire and occupation and imperialism. Or people who would call the Northern

Alliance in Afghanistan liberals, as tolerant towards imperialism, women's rights, and minority rights, and so on — the same people would not care for the pluralism that Assad's government was actually committed to in Syria. And then they were backing up the Takfiri forces, and now they would say they have no space for morality. All this is to say that if you look at the scholarship within the Global South from the '30s, '40s, '50s, it was assumed that anti-imperialism created a moral universe upon which Global South solidarity could be struck.

So Ethiopian resistance against Italian occupation could energize or could make a cause for Indian resistance against British occupation or, you know, Indonesian resistance against Dutch occupation. But today, what I'm trying to say is that we are seeing something similar, as you just explained. But the Western narrative is that everything the Global South does or Iran does is just realpolitik. There is no morality involved. Everything it does is because of its self-interest. I'm not saying that there is no self-interest involved there, because when you are a state, you have to protect yourself.

You have to increase your sphere of influence as a mode of survival. But that's not everything. There is space for morality. And maybe I'm saying this because I have studied revolutions or... I mean, for instance, the Soviet Union used to send a lot of money to Indian trade unions during the Cold War, not because the Soviet Union wanted to overthrow the Indian government, but because of their ideological motivation toward trade union movements in the Global South. That's not realpolitik in the Western sense, as it is still. There are other motivations involved, and morality has a space in this kind of analysis of foreign relations, which I don't see that often. Sorry for that long comment.

#Mohammad

No, I agree, and that's why for the Iranians, what they did in Syria, and what they did in Iraq, and what they did in Afghanistan is based upon the same moral standards and not based on sectarianism. If it was based on sectarianism, the Taliban today would not be in power, but the United States occupation would. So Iran prioritizes, and that is based upon, as I said, the religious ideology that dominates Iran. I'm not saying Iran is a utopia, but the axis of resistance is indeed unique in the world today. And there is nothing like it. And that's why I have this activism, because I believe in it.

If it turns into something else tomorrow, I would no longer support it. But this inherent ideological belief that goes back to the emergence of Islam and the Prophet and his household, that ideological belief that dominates in the axis of resistance goes beyond sect, goes beyond religion. Let me be very blunt. If the situation in Palestine was reversed, and it was the Palestinians who controlled Palestine, and then there was this Jewish population in Gaza, and the Palestinians were carrying out genocide, Iran's position would be to support Gaza. Iran's position would be to remain steadfast and support the Gazans.

#Mudiar

Then the West would say this is Shia acting against Sunni because they always have that narrative.

#Mohammad

Again, look at Afghanistan. If you look online, there are lots of Shia Afghans in the West that day and night attack Iran. Why? Because their interests have been wrecked as a result of the fall of the government. But I don't wish any of them harm, and I don't wish anyone in this region harm. But the point is that, morally speaking, the occupation of Afghanistan by the United States is the ultimate evil, just as the dirty war in Syria is the ultimate evil. And those who participated in it participated in the conspiracy of the empire. Now they can say Assad is an Alawite, they can say whatever — it doesn't matter. The empire is what destroys more than anything else.

So, for example, if I had the ability to help Cuba against the empire, it doesn't matter to me if the Cuban government is communist. They are the oppressed. And the oppressed makes me responsible to support them. That's why Iran supported the resistance against apartheid in South Africa. That's why, I mean, Bosnia, when it was about to be wiped off the face of the map, no other country helped the Bosnians. Bosnians were Sunni. Iran went to Bosnia, invested in Bosnia. Iranians were martyred. The brother of one of my friends was martyred in Bosnia. His name was Nawab. Or in Arabic, it would be Nawab. Why? Because they were the victims. So, you know, the West likes to portray Iran in a particular light.

The reality is that the Axis of Resistance is highly, highly moral. And I'm not saying it's a utopia or anything like that, but that's why they hate Iran so much. And some would say, well, why did Iran not directly get involved in the war, let's say, two years ago, three years ago, one year ago? That is also not based upon selfish self-preservation. If Iran had entered the war without creating a... and it was badly damaged, any damage to Iran weakens the Axis. Because Iran is ultimately the center that helps empower the entire Axis. So Iran has to be very careful that it is not weakened in a way in which it harms the Axis. This is like one body.

These are not proxies. The West likes to call them proxies because they work. The Arab regimes, they call them proxies because that's how they work. They pay. This is a brotherhood, or if you want to speak to the feminists, a sisterhood. As a matter to us, the bonds are very deep. So the height of humanity, I think, is in this axis. I mean, what the Lebanese have done, what Hezbollah has done, is something that people across the world should study. And the resistance will continue, and it will grow, and it will grow. And Iran will not forsake the Palestinian cause, the Palestinian people, the children of Palestine, the children of Gaza. That is just beyond imagination.

#Mudiar

Thank you, Professor Marandi, for placing empire at the center of this analysis, because quite often this is done as a conflict, as if there are just two sides without any hierarchy of morality or legitimacy, and so on. And also thank you for telling us that the resistance is not just a cynical

coalition for survival against the empire, but it has things that go beyond, things such as idealism, solidarity with the oppressed, and so on. Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

#Mohammad

Thank you very much for having me. It's always a great pleasure.

#Ayushman

Hi, my name is Ayushman. I, along with Mudiar Jyotishman, have started this platform. Over the last two years, we have tried to build content for the left and progressive forces. We have interviewed economists, historians, political commentators, and activists so far. If you have liked our content so far and want us to build an archive for the left, I have two requests for you. Please do consider donating for the cause. The link is in the description below. Also, if you are not able to do so, don't feel sad. You can always like our videos and share our videos with your comrades. Finally, don't forget to hit the subscribe button.