

Nima R. Alkhorshid: ROUND 2: US & Iran Meet in Switzerland

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#Nima

#Guest

Hi, everybody. Today is Sunday, June 21st, 2026, and I'm here to talk about the latest sort of events concerning the United States and Iran, the ongoing talks between the two sides in Switzerland. As we speak, we were informed by Iranian media that the first round of high-level quadrilateral talks between Iran, the United States, Qatar, and Pakistan has now ended. What is happening right now, basically, in these negotiations and the basics of these negotiations—I think the most important issue, first of all, is the case of Lebanon. And just moments ago, Donald Trump tweeted, threatening the Iranians when it comes to Lebanon.

He says, again, coming back to the same sort of way he was talking about the Iranian position, how he can put pressure on Iranians. And here is what he put out. He posted on his Truth Social: Iran must immediately stop their highly paid proxies in Lebanon from causing trouble. If they don't, we will hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, and only harder. This is, you know, looking at the first clause of the MOU, it basically says the two sides—the United States and Iran—have to refrain from the threat and the use of force against each other. So he's basically crossing the red line of the first clause of the MOU. Back again, I don't know what the dynamic is in Washington.

Is he receiving a lot of pressure from Israelis? And the only negative point about what's going on in Switzerland is Steve Witko and Jared Kushner. Again, they're back on the scene. They want to negotiate. I don't know what the role of these two guys is. They were negotiating before, and Iran has no good memories or good sort of understanding of the participation of these two. One of them is Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and still with his friend, one of the closest friends to Donald Trump. But they're basically pursuing the Israeli agenda in the talks. And we have J.D. Vance as part of the negotiations as time goes by.

On the part of the Iranian side, what they're basically talking about, considering the Iranian media and the Iranian officials, the way they were talking—the head of the IRGC, army officials, the Iranian president, the head of the Security Council in Iran, and the head of parliament—he is right now in

Switzerland to talk together with Araghchi, the foreign minister of Iran, and the head of the Central Bank of Iran, Hemmati. They're all there to negotiate. They're basically preparing for everything, considering sanctions and maybe frozen assets, because when you see Hemmati as part of the delegation, I would basically say that is related to the way the United States is trying to facilitate the release of the frozen Iranian assets.

It's gonna be in Qatar, maybe Qatar is part of these negotiations, and it's gonna be in the UAE. That's the whole point. But when it comes, the other point is that from the Iranian side, what we've learned is that the head of the IAEA, Rafael Grossi, is there, but the Iranian side said, we're not going to consider him as, you know, in this round of negotiations, because there is nothing to be negotiated right now at this stage about the Iranian nuclear program. Because the very first issue mentioned in the MOU, in the document, is the case of Lebanon. And the use of language, by the way—Donald Trump just crossed that road, I just read it for you.

And he doesn't care about the first line. The first line basically is talking about the ceasefire in Lebanon and putting an end to the war on all fronts. As we know, in the last 48 hours, Israelis were trying to get somewhere in the southern part of Lebanon, which is basically a strategic point for Hezbollah. It's Ali Taher Hill, some sort of fortress, and Hezbollah has some sort of headquarters there. They tried to capture it, to invade it, but they failed. No, they failed five times before. This was the sixth. And so they failed again. They took casualties. Four Israeli soldiers were killed.

One of them, it was 24 hours before, 12 hours before. We learned one more soldier was killed, 13 soldiers were injured in that area. One of the Merkava tanks was burning, and they couldn't bring out the soldiers. And last night they were trying so hard to get one of the commanders—an important commander of Israel—who was in that tank. And it seems that they were burning inside the tank. They couldn't help them, they couldn't save their lives. So they tried to bring those killed soldiers in that tank back to Israel, and we had some reports that it wasn't successful. Then later on, we learned they could bring them back to Israel.

So basically, the fight—the reason I'm telling you this—is the fight is going on in Lebanon, in the southern part of Lebanon. And what has happened, because Israel was somehow escalating the war, is that Iran used the Strait of Hormuz. They closed the Strait of Hormuz in the last 12 hours. They said no one can use the Strait of Hormuz as long as Israel is attacking Lebanon, is using force, or bombing cities and villages in the southern part of Lebanon. Then you see the ceasefire coming. You remember, more than 10 times, in my opinion, they said, we have a ceasefire, we don't have it, right now it's in place, right now it's not in place. Finally, by putting pressure on the United States, by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, they have achieved that. So Iran, since the ceasefire was in place, tried to open up the Strait of Hormuz little by little.

It's not totally open right now, and Iran is trying to manage the whole case of this trade. And based on the data that we've seen, mostly those tankers and vessels that are using the Strait of Hormuz—basically, most of them, I would say something like 80%—are Iranian vessels and tankers that are

using the Strait of Hormuz. So this is the case of the Strait of Hormuz. When it comes to Lebanon, which is the basis of this negotiation, I think without the case of Lebanon, they're not going to achieve, they're not going to go to other causes of the MOU. So Israel—the Israeli position—is important to be taken into consideration, because Israel is... When it comes to the case of Lebanon, usually the United States negotiates with the government in Lebanon.

But the government has nothing to do with what's going on in Lebanon. They have to negotiate with Hezbollah. That's the main problem right now. And Hezbollah, just moments ago, released a statement mentioning that they don't care whatever the government in Lebanon is doing—negotiating, going to Washington, talking with officials in Washington, talking with Israelis. That's not going to change the reality of what's going on in Lebanon. This is the position of Hezbollah. This is the problem. And when it comes to the Israeli position, what they want—they put out some conditions, something like three conditions for accepting the US MOU between Iran and the United States.

The first one is the withdrawal of all Hezbollah elements north of the Litani River. And here is the Litani River here. Let me zoom in here. Here's the Litani River, right to the southern part of... This is Lebanon. And in the south, you see the Litani River. They don't want Hezbollah to be south of the Litani River. So... and this is almost impossible. The first line is impossible. You cannot go. Because what does it mean? Does it mean that you want to stay in the southern part of the Litani River, to the south of the Litani River? Are you going to stay there? And what would be the agenda of you, little by little, going, you know, crossing the Litani River? You know, this is the first point.

The second point is complete dismantling of Hezbollah's infrastructure in the areas south of the Litani River. So they're basically asking Hezbollah, without fighting, you know, because this is not the outcome of the battlefield. This is the way that they couldn't defeat Hezbollah, so they want, by negotiation, to put that into an agreement, into some sort of annex to the MOU, that Hezbollah has to withdraw from the southern part of Lebanon. What does it mean? Is that going to be, you know, this buffer zone that they are seeking? Now, what does that mean for Lebanon as a country? This is important. We have to consider that.

And the third point, it says granting Israel full freedom of movement and military actions to thwart and eliminate any future threats, which includes ground and aerial operations. So they're basically talking about, let's put these three points out to legitimize our occupation of the southern part of Lebanon. This is the outcome of what Israel is asking for. They want to put it on paper, on a document, to legitimize their occupation, to say, so we have each and every right based on that letter. We have an MOU, we have some sort of annex to the MOU, the Israeli conditions, which is basically officializing the occupation by Israel. Nobody would consider that, by the way. It's not logical.

And the whole reason that Hezbollah is fighting back, basically, is this behavior of Israelis forcing them to accept these basic lines, these three points, by force. They were not successful so far in

achieving that on the battlefield. That's why they're trying to do it this way. I mention this to show you the position of Israelis. There is no way for the Trump administration to accommodate or to help Israel to make some sort of common ground with Israel vis-à-vis the agreement or any sort of deal between the United States and Iran. MOU, by the way, because there are many opinions about MOU. They're saying MOU is totally in favor of Iran, Donald Trump was defeated totally by MOU, this and that.

The document itself doesn't mean anything. This is a document that two sides agreed on to de-escalate. And the de-escalation is the goal. You have to de-escalate, then talk about the next step. This is important. If the two sides are serious enough to talk about it, which doesn't seem that the Trump administration, Donald Trump himself, is not serious. Looking at the posts that he's—what is the necessity of posting that about Iranian support for Hezbollah? Is that going to help him at this particular moment? He knows what's going on. He said, maybe he said to Fox News, maybe in the future I'm going to be in charge of the Strait of Hormuz, I'm going to bring the toll system to that strait.

I'm going to charge everyone in that strait. So this is the mindset. The guy is somehow living in an alternative universe, and he feels that he has the upper hand. He can do this and he can do that. I don't know how much of what he's telling us is related to somehow showing his public, to improve his public figure considering the perception on the part of Israelis and the Zionist entity in the United States. Because that is always the case. He is negotiating, but he has to show everyone that he is in charge. He's doing this. He's forcing Iran into negotiations. He can, anytime he decides, capture the Strait of Hormuz. He can do whatever he wants in that strait and control the whole region.

This is the perception that he wants to create within societies in the United States, outside of the United States, in Europe, maybe other countries. But who's going to buy that? It depends on the reality, how we see the reality of the region. The reality is that the United States couldn't open up the Strait of Hormuz by force. It wasn't just the United States. Donald Trump was begging in those days, "Europeans, please come here, do something for us. Bring everything you have." They saw that he literally exhausted each and every option from his point of view. He started the war against Iran. Then the Strait was closed. He tried to open up the Strait of Hormuz.

He had the blockade on Iran. He tried to invade Iran with that attack in the southern part of Isfahan. He tried everything. He tried the regime change, the so-called regime change with, you know, sending arms, the protests in Iran and the riots in Iran, putting economic pressures on Iran. So there is no option out there for Donald Trump that he has not considered before. So he did everything. It wasn't just the United States, by the way. It was the United States and Israelis. And in June 2025, when Israel attacked Iran, that was the first point for Donald Trump to shape or reshape his understanding of Iran. Israel attacked Iran, and he saw how Israel was able to manipulate the Iranian society from within, how they used the drones, for example. They had a huge network of drones inside Iran.

They used it against, basically, commanders in Iran, the buildings, and civilians, because they went to the civilian areas of Iran. Most of these commanders that were killed, they were killed in their homes. Their houses were destroyed by these drones somehow. And it was all from inside. The fighter jets of Israel didn't do any of this. You know, this duty was totally managed from inside. You know, the drones, the whole network that they have created for more than 20 years in Iran. I was somehow amazed by that because that was a huge network. So Donald Trump saw what was happening, how Israel, a combination of both the operation, the Mossad agents underground in Iran, and from outside attacking Iran. Then he had the case of Venezuela, toppling the regime in Venezuela, capturing the oil of Venezuela.

It's not just Iraq. Remember, for many years, the United States is receiving the Iraqi oil, is selling the Iraqi oil. The money goes to New York, and then they give something to the government in Iraq. It's something like, you know, it's humiliating looking at what's going on with the case of Iraq. But they're doing the same in Venezuela. The same formula is working in Venezuela, basically the government in Venezuela giving the oil and the energy to the United States, selling that and putting the money back in the American banking system and financial system, then giving something to the Venezuelan people.

So they thought Donald Trump said, if Israel is able to do that, I'm going to go, I'm going to get in, I'm going to bring something bigger. I remember those days, sending aircraft carriers to the region — one, two, three, somehow we got four aircraft carriers, 15 destroyers being there, and they were preparing everything. They put a lot of fighter jets in Jordan. They were using, you know, Diego Garcia. They were prepared for all of that. So he thought that he could do something. And the reason that I'm mentioning all of this is because I want to remind you, he did everything. I would argue he even thought about the use of nuclear weapons. Is that going to bring? Because during the war, it came to a moment that he saw that there was nothing there. They were basically running out of targets.

They didn't know what to do. That's why you see them hitting hospitals, universities, schools, bridges. This is desperation. This is not the way you fight. And you may argue that this is the same strategy that the United States used in Iraq. But basically, the Iranian case was different because when you attack pharmaceutical plants, this is something new. This is something new. And a school, the first day of the attack. So I think the perception on the part of the United States and Israelis, they know if they go nuclear, I don't know what that is, because based on the media, based on the public, you know, what is available from the media, from the officials, on the part of Iranians, statements of the Iranian officials, the way that the United States is talking about the Iranian nuclear program.

Israel is the same way, but the perception is somehow, deep down, Donald Trump understands that Iran can respond to any escalation. That is his perception. Going to nuclear, the use of nuclear bombs — I think they reached that point. That's why they tried to de-escalate. What's going on basically with Donald Trump coming out and bragging about, "I'm doing this, I'm going to do that"

— those days are gone. Nobody's going to be intimidated by this sort of posturing. Maybe he's trying to influence the Western audience. That's totally fine for Iranians, but it's not going to influence the Iranian decision-makers. He said to Fox News, "Last night I called them, I told them, 'You open up the Strait of Hormuz or I'm going to destroy your country.'"

They're dead. And nobody knows if he's right or he's wrong because he basically, you remember, he said, I called during the fight between Hezbollah and Israel. He said that I called, Bibi, I called Israelis and Hezbollah. I talked with them. They both agreed that they're going to back down. They're going to accept the ceasefire. And we know that didn't happen, for example. No call between the United States and... He said, I talked with Hezbollah. He's making things up. He may send some sort of messages to Iranians to inform them. He may send messages to Iranians by sending that to the Pakistani government or Bahraini government. That could be the case, but he's talking to Iranians this way. It's impossible. That didn't happen.

He may, but after all, for the Trump administration, Iran has perceived two options in the case of Lebanon. One of them is to attack the northern part of Israel to put pressure directly on Israelis. Because looking at these three points that Israel is asking for, it's impossible. Whoever knows the Iranian position, whoever knows the region, knows Hezbollah's position is not just about the Iranian position. It's about Hezbollah. It's about Lebanon. And Iran — they're basically following what is going on with Hezbollah, with Lebanon, based on the policies of Hezbollah. It's their part of the conflict. They're fighting Israelis. Iran wants to facilitate, to help them, to bring back the sovereignty of Lebanon.

For such a long time, the Israelis are occupying Lebanon. So one option would be attacking the northern part of Israel while negotiating with the United States. The other one would be what they used last night — to close the Strait of Hormuz. Closing the Strait of Hormuz puts tremendous pressure on Donald Trump. The main reason he tried to negotiate with Iranians to bring some sort of document, like an MOU, Memorandum of Understanding, was basically the Strait of Hormuz. Because he said, we are four weeks away from our oil reserves being totally depleted. So Iran understands that part of the argument. So, do we need to attack Israel right now? Maybe in the future we have to do that.

Maybe in, I don't know, in the next two days. But they're part of the IRGC in Iran, part of the government, part of the IRGC. They believe that the only way you put Israel in its place is by the use of the military. And you have to hit them, and you have to hit them hard. But the whole outcome, the political system in Iran right now, didn't reach that point — to attack Israel. That could happen any moment. Maybe right after this podcast, they're going to attack Israel. If Israelis try to attack Lebanon, to attack villages and cities in the southern part of Lebanon again, simply breaking the ceasefire. We don't know these calculations, but from what we've seen so far, the estimation, the understanding on the part of Iranians is basically using the Strait of Hormuz.

So the negotiations are going on as time goes by, and Iranians, and you may be wondering what is going on with the Qatar government. Why are they there? What is the meaning of having the Pakistani government there? The Pakistani government has played a very important role between Iran and the United States to bring the two sides together. And today, J.D. Vance said Asim Munir, he was basically playing a very important role. He didn't mention the prime minister of Pakistan. He said Asim Munir, you know, the military figure of Pakistan, playing a very important role. When it comes to Pakistan, I think for those people who don't understand the region, Pakistan and Iran, they have their differences.

They have a deep friendship, a strategic friendship, because they understand the border between Iran and Pakistan always has these sorts of terrorist activities. Sometimes you see Iran attacking some regions in Pakistan to target these terrorists in Pakistan. But we have never seen, you know, we've seen the Pakistani government condemning the Iranian attack, but they have never responded to Iranian attacks on these terrorists because they know the main goal of the Iranians is not—they don't have any sort of ambition toward Pakistan, toward the territory of Pakistan, or against the Pakistani government. And that's why I'm telling you that the ties between the two governments are so deep. It doesn't come from, you know, the last 40 years or 50 years.

It's a huge cultural connection between the two sides, not geopolitical, but cultural. I don't know how many of you are aware of the cultural connection between Iran and Pakistan and even going to the northern part of India. Because from the 11th century to the 19th century, basically the northern part of India together with Pakistan, their official language became Persian. It was used because of the capture, because the Muslim dynasties in that region, with the Mughal Empire coming from Iran, conquering Iran, then going to Pakistan and India. They basically conquered Iran, but they adopted the Persian language as the official language of the Mughal Empire when they went to India and Pakistan.

So the Persian language went to Pakistan, to India, to the northern part of India. They're so much culturally connected. And even the Taj Mahal is one of the most important, you know, locations in India. Whoever goes to India goes to the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal basically is Persian architecture, and that shows how deeply these cultures are connected. So coming to today's Pakistan, they know for centuries, you know, in 1837, it was the British Empire that removed the use of the Persian language. They said, we're going to remove the Persian language, you're going to use this language. Even Urdu, the official language of Pakistan today, has something like 40% to 60% Persian influence.

They're using Persian words, something like 40% to 60% in Urdu. It shows how deeply these two countries are tied together. And coming back to the current situation, the Pakistani government is trying to reshape the region in favor of peace and prosperity, in my opinion. Their understanding is this: we don't want conflict in the region. That's why they're trying to do everything to bring the

United States and Iran together. And Iran sees this. The Pakistani government is a good player, by the way. That's why they trust the Pakistanis. You remember in the first two rounds of negotiations, it was all about the Omani government. In Oman, they were talking in Oman and everything.

We had the foreign minister of Oman mediating. But when it comes to Pakistan, the good point is that Pakistan has a good relationship with Iran, with the United States, with China, with other countries. They basically have a military agreement with Saudi Arabia because Saudi Arabia wants some sort of nuclear umbrella. And who are they afraid of? They're afraid of Israel. The basic understanding of the region is this. And the Qatari government, I think the situation with Qatar is somehow different, because they were hugely influenced by the war against Iran. One attack or two attacks from Iran, 17% of their LNG disappeared from the scene. Still not back.

Their estimation, on the part of—I don't know if you saw the article on Bloomberg—the prediction is at least two or three months it takes to get it back on track, to repair or prepare the LNG production in Iran. Qatar. This is the recipe for Qatar. It's the recipe. Are they going to continue? Do they really want the continuation of the war? Nobody wants that. And they're hugely dependent on the Strait of Hormuz. Qatar is not Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has the connection, the pipeline, which goes to the Red Sea. And these days you see the UAE talking the same way. They want to build a new pipeline to the Red Sea to somehow not be that much dependent on the Strait of Hormuz. But in the case of Qatar, that's impossible to happen.

So they're trying to find a solution. The conflict—the two sides, the Pakistani government and the Qataris—are part of these negotiations, and Iran is much more comfortable. You know, Iran is very cautious when it comes to negotiations. They see Qatar differently. This is not something new. Since the war started, the Qatari government and the Saudi Arabian government were basically in contact with the Iranians. In those days, they were talking about how Qatar was supporting the war against Iran, and Saudi Arabia was providing everything. They were using Saudi Arabia, by the way—all Qatar and Saudi Arabia—against Iran. But the governments, they were not willing to help them, and they don't have the upper hand.

The reality of the region is they don't have it. When you have the Americans based on your soil, they can use it. You remember Donald Trump, when Spain said, "You cannot use our territory or the Spanish bases to attack Iran." He said, "I'm disappointed with the government in Spain. But if I decide to use it, I'm going to use it. They're not going to do anything about it." The same thing happened, in my opinion, to the GCC countries at some point. Maybe not when the war started, maybe after a week, because they perceived that nothing good was going to come out of this war. The war was going too far and was too devastating for their economy. That's why they tried to negotiate, to come back to talk with the Iranians.

And in those days, in the mainstream media, you see people talking about, in the mainstream media—New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg—they were all talking about how Saudi Arabia was pushing for the continuation of the war. They said to the United States, end everything.

Go as far as you want to go. Go and end it. Put an end to the government in Iran. But they perceived that in the initial days of the war, they were communicating with the Iranians. So the Iranian officials knew—at least they knew—that the sentiment or the understanding on the part of the Saudi government was not the way the mainstream media in the West was reporting it.

This is the complexity of the region, because when you have, as by the way, during those days, we saw no statements from the government in Saudi Arabia confirming or rejecting the reports in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, you name it. And so we thought that they were doing this if they were not rejecting that. But they were doing this behind the scenes, talking with the Iranians. We didn't know about it. This shows how they're under the thumb of the United States, how deeply they're under the thumb of the United States. You cannot come out and reject that, but you're communicating with Iranian officials behind the scenes.

So today, as these sorts of talks are happening, there are people who are pessimistic about the United States and the future, the behavior of the United States in the region. Nobody would rely. Even the Supreme Leader of Iran said two days ago—and he has a different sort of mindset from, you know, the Iranian president, for example, who signed the MOU—he sees that things are not going in the right direction. But he gave permission because he feels that if the government, if the officials in Iran, feel that they can get something out of this MOU and this sort of negotiation, go ahead and get it. Basically, he said that Iran has no positive experience with the United States since the revolution happened in Iran.

In each and every talk they had with the United States, they helped the United States in Afghanistan. They were trapped in Afghanistan, and Iran helped them a lot in those days because it wasn't just about helping the United States. The Taliban was the main problem in those days, and the Iranian perception, Iranian policy in those days was, what can we do with the Taliban in Afghanistan? So when the United States came in, there were moments that Iran helped them a lot. But right after the help Iran gave to the United States, you see George Bush coming out and saying, Iran is the axis of evil. This is the betrayal that Iran has experienced for many years.

You may argue that the Iranian leadership—and we have the conservatives, we have the reformists in Iran—but they both, all of them, agree that there is no way to trust the United States. There is no good history behind them to believe that the United States would behave in a proper manner. So, it would be normal, you know, for two sides to talk to each other and understand the position, the situation of each other. It's of particular importance. The whole diplomacy, the process of diplomacy, the talks, is not about conceding or receiving or gaining. It's about all of them together. It's about negotiation, a win-win situation. This is the way that negotiations work. The zero-sum game is gone.

The United States cannot achieve that in the Middle East anymore, because basically they were seeking—the whole game against Iran was always a zero-sum game. Zero-sum game. You're going to do this, or we're going to hit you with more sanctions. You're going to do this, or we're going to hit your... Every sector of the Iranian economy was influenced by the American sanctions, by the

way. Just imagine the people being hit by these sanctions. The economy was hit by these sanctions. They were putting all these American bases around Iran, militarily putting a lot of psychological pressure on the Iranian army, the Iranian IRGC, while they're saying IRGC is this and that, IRGC is a terrorist organization, and basically, you're surrounding the country.

You're feeling that this game was the game of the United States for such a long time. So what is the reaction on the part of Iranians? Iran has come out of those chains that were somehow built around it—the chain of sanctions, the chain of military power and American bases, the chain of psychological war on the Iranian people. They said that this is the greatest superpower in the world. Are you going to go against the United States? The mindset was this. And are you going to... because not only the United States, Israel is going to come out, and all these GCC countries are going to be part of that conflict. Europe is going to back the United States.

Basically, Iran is fighting against the whole world. It's not the whole world, but the whole West—the collective West, as we can put it. So, this was the mindset on the part of Iranians. The war has opened new ways for the Iranian people, for the Iranian government, for the Iranian military to deal with issues vis-à-vis the relationship between Iran and the United States. The United States attacks Iran to destroy Iran, and Iran comes out of this war stronger than it was before. The Strait of Hormuz is in the hands of Iranians. There is no way, I can assure you, based on my understanding, because I totally—when I communicate, I'm not part of, you know, I didn't study political science or something like that. My field is engineering. I talk with numbers. I see the numbers. I see the outcomes.

And when I look at the scene, I see no reason, no sign that the United States can capture the Strait of Hormuz. No, there is no point. The ultimate solution for the United States would be the use of nuclear bombs. I think Iran is prepared for that. With every day passing, as time goes by, I am becoming more confident that Iran has sent those crucial signs to the United States that we are prepared even for a nuclear bomb. Because when you are in a war, in an active war against two nuclear powers, one of them a superpower, they have huge military bases, and you're not afraid, you're not intimidated, you're fighting back. They're escalating, you're escalating more than them. They're hitting one target in Iran, you're hitting four targets. So it means that you have something.

This confidence is not coming out of nowhere. You know, they have something behind it. They know the escalation. They have been preparing themselves for these sorts of escalations against the United States. Because sooner or later, the United States is going to come, and they're going to attack Iran. This is what's going on in the mindset of Iranians. And as time goes by, I think the new Supreme Leader of Iran is not going to be different from the former Supreme Leader of Iran. He basically knows each and every angle of Iranian policy and the difficulties, the complexity of the Iranian political system and military system. And he was, in my opinion, running the whole system or was part of a substantial part of the administration for 15 years.

And he knows the complexity of the issue. He knows well how to deal with the West. He didn't change. He's not optimistic about the West because of that letter, that statement that we've seen. And basically, his position is to bring these differences in Iran all together to unite the country. I think so far, from what I have seen from this statement from him—we haven't heard him talking to us on video—but from this statement, he's basically managing perfectly the political system in Iran, to my understanding. Basically bringing all of them together, managing the situation in Iran, unifying the Iranian political parties, different parts of the government together to achieve the goals. The goal—what is the goal?

The goal is not about Iran dominating West Asia. Iran has never—I would say, Iran would never want to be the emperor or the empire of West Asia to run everything. Because basically, in the West, they say that Iran has become the fourth superpower in the world because of the Strait of Hormuz. Right now, they can run, they can do this and that, put pressure on GCC countries. This is not the game. This is not the goal of the Iranian government. They want to make a new security structure in the region. This is the key point for Iranians. You're going to be part of the region, or you're going to be part of the enemy. You cannot play with both sides.

You want to be in the region. You want to make the region more peaceful, more prosperous. Then you have to make mutual agreements with the Iranian government. Your territory cannot be used against Iranians as an outcome. They have used all of these GCC countries to attack Iran. So Iran coming out and saying that you're not going to be able to do that is not illogical. It's rational on the part of the Iranian political system. We have to do this. It's not about dominance. It's about communication. It's about the leverage Iran has to communicate well with GCC countries. So with Pakistan—Pakistan is still one of the most important allies of the United States in the region.

I would say not only Pakistan, but the Omani government. Look at Oman. What has happened with the case of Oman? Did Iran attack Oman or the American base in Oman? No, because their perception was that the Omani government was not that much involved or didn't let the United States use the base in Oman. And they have a very good relationship with the Omani government. I think that could be the case for Qatar, for Saudi Arabia, for the countries in West Asia, for GCC countries. And this is, I think, what is happening in the minds of the decision-makers in Iran. Basically, they don't want war; they want to end the war.

Iran, in the Iranian government and Iranian people, the reason they want is, looking from outside, you see the way that people talk about attacking Israel and putting Israel in its place by the use of force, by attacking Israel. It's not because of the... Their understanding is that if we don't put an end to the war right now, this is going to bring huge difficulties to us in the near future and in the long run. This is the perception on their part. And are they going to—is this memorandum of understanding capable of bringing some sort of sanity to the region? It remains to be seen. You can be optimistic; you cannot be optimistic about that. But after all, the United States has no option.

My understanding is, if they're logical in Washington, they would never attack Iran again, because they have tried everything—basically everything—and they couldn't bring down the Iranian government and the so-called regime change in Iran and changing the whole West Asia. And right now, the only solution for what's going on would be the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. They have to withdraw from southern Lebanon; otherwise, you know, there is no point for Iran to make any sort of agreement with the United States. The MOU is dead if they couldn't achieve that. And let's see what J.D. Vance—by the way, I think the complexity, talking about the complexity in the United States, is so important. And many people in Iran understand the complexity in Washington.

We have J.D. Vance and his part of the government, his faction that believes there is no point in continuing the war in the Middle East. And the other faction, which is basically influenced by Israelis and Zionists, they don't care about the United States. They don't care about Lebanese people. They don't care about Palestinians. They don't care about GCC countries, Europeans, go to the East, go to Japan and South Korea. They don't care about any of these people or these countries. Basically, the main agenda is how we can help Israel in the best way to occupy more land, to make new buffer zones, to make new security zones. They don't care about the casualties on the part of Americans. The United States can, you know, stay in this fight forever in their mind.

The recipe, because what they're advocating for basically is a recipe for an endless war in the Middle East. This is the recipe they're putting out for Donald Trump. Is Donald Trump prepared for that? I don't see that. He has changed his mind. Maybe he's bragging, he's talking tough, he's putting out these sorts of statements, but he knows when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz, those days are gone. He said, before coming to this law, he said no toll system is going to happen in the Strait of Hormuz. But basically, yeah, yeah, you mentioned that in the MOU. It's not going to be a toll system; it's going to be a fee system. It's a new system that is basically based on fees—administrative and environmental fees.

It's not considering international law. It's totally legitimate to have that sort of right for the governments who are managing the Strait of Hormuz, basically Iran and Oman. So that's gone. Is he going to get back there? My understanding is the United States is not going to get back to war. And the timeline for Donald Trump is just, he's going to have two and a half years to put an end to his presidency. And in December, we're going to have the midterm election. And he knows most of those people in the United States, basically Democrats, they're prepared to impeach him, put an end to everything that he was preaching, he was advocating for, he was doing in the last more than a year, in the last one year and a half.

So that's important for Donald Trump. This is even more important for J.D. Vance because right after the midterm elections, basically they want Republicans to stay in power in the Senate. Because in the Senate, they can impeach him. Huge difficulties are going to come to the surface for Donald Trump. He knows that. This is important. This is the way that Donald Trump goes against Benjamin Netanyahu. The economy. It's the economy, stupid. It's the Strait of Hormuz. It's the political,

domestic—you know, what is happening in the United States. The domestic dynamics in the United States are so important as well, because it's about power and how to use that power against the enemy, which would be the other party.

And J.D. Vance doesn't want that because he's thinking of 2028. December this year, December next year, are going to be preparation, and everybody's going to prepare for the 2028 presidential election. And this is the way that J.D. Vance is coming out—not only talking, but he tries to communicate with those people who were against the war in Iran. Because there are people like Megyn Kelly, Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens, and these people, and the officials who came out of the Trump administration, like Joe Kent, which we didn't know—I didn't personally, I didn't know him before his resignation—but he's very sane. He knows, he's really looking at his statements since he resigned, the resignation letter and after the resignation. You see, basically, he's an America Firster. He says, America first.

We're not going to stay in the region. We're not going to help Israel. We're not going to—you know, this is the recipe for disaster. By the way, he was in the region. He was in West Asia. He fought there. He lost his wife there. This is the guy who knows what's going on there. It's not some little guy, you know, a politician in Washington like Lindsey Graham, who doesn't know anything militarily. And he knows nothing about the battlefield, and the toughness and the hardship on the battlefield. The guy knows what he's talking about. That's why he's saying, bring everything back. We don't need to stay there. We don't need to fight for Israel forever. Because these people, the fight is not going to end. Donald Trump doesn't understand it. Lebanon.

Is anybody going to back down in Syria? Does he really believe that Turkey and the government that he favors in Syria are going to back down? No. The people are going to fight back. It doesn't matter if Al-Jolani or the former head of HTS decides to do this or that. But the people, they're not going to conform. They're not going to abide by the Israeli occupation of the southern part of Syria. That's serious. That's why Israel is talking about fighting Turkey. Turkey is the next target of Israel. Then Pakistan. So the United States, are you prepared? I think the basic question for Donald Trump today is, you go and help Israel. You put pressure on Israel to back down, to end the occupation in the southern part of Lebanon, which is a sane sort of move on his part.

If he does that, he would be hugely, hugely appreciated by his allies, by the allies of the United States. It's not about—because then it comes to Syria. Because if he goes with Lebanon, he tries to intimidate Iran: you do this, I do that, I'm going to retaliate. And Iran is not going to back down. Hezbollah is not going to back down. Hezbollah was created because of the occupation in Lebanon. The whole concept of Hezbollah was created based on the occupation. They have to put an end to the occupation. Today, they're more capable than they were before. They're more—the use of drones, the use of rockets, the way the Israeli defense system was—hugely influenced by the war.

And the air defense system is so weak today compared to what it was before. And the ambushes in the southern part of Lebanon—no, Hezbollah is getting stronger. This is the perception of Israel

before the war started. They said that Hezbollah was somehow so weak right now, that they had been weakened because of the assassination of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and the commanders of Hezbollah. That wasn't the case. Today Hezbollah is stronger than it was before, even during Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. And the case of Syria is so serious, in my opinion. Donald Trump needs to understand the case of Syria as well. Because do they really want to sacrifice everything for Israel? Egypt? He says, I love Sisi. Israel wants to occupy Egypt. This is the next war for them. Occupying countries, occupying the land of other countries, is not the solution.

You have to put them. Israel doesn't have borders. How strange is that? They have to force them to define their borders. You cannot, every time you decide, go to Lebanon, go to Syria, the West Bank. Right now, 70% of Gaza is—this is the recipe. I think Donald Trump needs to understand it. If he wants to do something, he has to put an end to this sort of mindset of the Israeli government—the mindset, the strategy of occupation, and the greater Israel. This is the core issue to be addressed. Donald Trump needs to do that. The only country capable of doing this on this planet, by putting pressure on Israel, is the United States. No one else is able to do that politically. But militarily, they can do it in the region. I would say that that's not good.

If the United States is able to politically resolve the situation, put pressure on Israel—they receive everything from the United States. J.D. Vance said two-thirds of the weapons they use, the missiles, interceptors, everything they have, come from the United States. Two-thirds. It's huge. This is not a sovereign country. Because they say, we don't care. Ben-Gvir yesterday said, I don't care about what the United States is talking about. We have to burn everything in Lebanon. We have to burn everything. We have to obliterate the policy in the Middle East. These people don't understand anything. We have to obliterate them. We have to destroy them. Do you really want to support this? And the tragedy is not just about, because they're saying basically, no, it's Ben-Gvir, he's so radical. No, 80% of Israelis support this. This is the problem.

And let's see what will happen. I think it remains to be seen if the United States is serious about achieving that, about doing something regarding Israel. And nobody—I say this again—nobody is able to do that. Europeans, I don't see any sort of leverage from Europeans. China, Russia, Iran—maybe militarily, it's going to be a war, a continuous war between the two sides. But the United States can do this by putting pressure on Israel, politically resolving the situation. I think that could be the sort of hope that people like me see in J.D. Vance and his sort of movement, see in the next decade in the United States, because of the public opinion in the United States that is turning against Israel and its policies in the Middle East by killing people—the genocide that is going on.

These are huge issues. Those days are gone. Those days of occupations, of killing people, and not having any sort of repercussions—those days are gone. Impunity for Israel is gone. The moment Iran perceived its power in the Middle East, the impunity of Israel, I think, has disappeared from the scene. And Iran understands that. Let's see what the United States will do with Israel. This is my

take on Donald Trump. I hope I tried to explain my understanding of what's going on. And as always, great pleasure to be with you, and I hope that we are going to achieve something in Lebanon, which is so important. Because Lebanon is important.

Gaza—many people, nobody's talking about Gaza these days because of the, you know, these are not—because right now the case of Lebanon is mostly in the media, the case of the negotiations between Iran and the United States, while the people in Gaza, in Palestine, in the West Bank are suffering from the Israeli attacks. Since the ceasefire was announced, in Palestine, in Gaza, in the West Bank, more than a thousand people were killed by Israelis. And this is so deep. This is so unfortunate. This is a tragedy. And nobody seems to care. That's why the acts of resistance are so important. That's why Lebanon is important. That's why Yemen is important. That's why Iraq is important.

I think without putting an end to those fronts, putting an end to those wars, we cannot concentrate on the case of Palestine because you have to bring all of them together. And it seems that Iran is in the process, based on the negotiations, they're going to talk about the war in Palestine, in Gaza, in the West Bank. That's going to be today. We've learned that the governments in Syria, in Turkey, the foreign minister of Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and there was another country—I just don't remember what the other country was. It was four of the countries right now. They're having some sort of meeting. They're talking to each other about the ongoing talks between Iran and the United States.

But basically, it's not about the talks between Iran and the United States. Basically, they're talking about Lebanon and Palestine. Let's see what will come out of this, because the region has been drastically influenced by the war. And all these players know what's going on. And let's see, with the negotiations, with the talks between Iran and the United States and the new understanding on the part of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt, what they can bring to Palestine and the Palestinian people, which, in my opinion, is the foundation of the problem in West Asia. Thank you so much for being with me. Great pleasure, as always. Thank you.