

Seyed M. Marandi & Larry Johnson: Iran Demands Lebanon Withdrawal

Follow me: Substack: [https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?](https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?utm_campaign=profile&utm_medium=profile-page)

utm_campaign=profile&utm_medium=profile-page X (Twitter): https://x.com/Dialogue_NRA

Patreon: [https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?](https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?utm_medium=unknown&utm_source=join_link&utm_campaign=creatorshare_creator&utm_content=)

utm_medium=unknown&utm_source=join_link&utm_campaign=creatorshare_creator&utm_content=

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Saturday, June 21st, 2026. And our dear friend... Sunday. Sunday, right? Yeah, you're right. I was wrong. Yeah, today is Sunday, June 21st.

#Seyed

Actually, actually, it's Monday, 1:30 a.m. Monday. And Nima has dragged me online at 1:30 a.m. to do a show. I'm half asleep, but he's just ruthless.

#Larry

He's ruthless. Mr. Irresistible.

#Nima

Yeah, let's talk about Mr. Irresistible, which is Donald Trump.

#Larry

Oh boy.

#Nima

Let's start with, as we talk, the negotiations that seem to be going on in Switzerland somehow. Because Iran has somehow—we had some sort of news that Donald Trump today did something amazing. I don't know what was the reason for that, what was the necessity for that post on Truth Social. Just imagine, you send your vice president to Switzerland, then you post, "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, only harder." This is merely crossing the line of the first clause of the MOU. And that was the main point for Iranians to walk out of the talks or

negotiations in Switzerland, Professor Marandi. And what we've learned since then—because there are various news reports coming out—some say that Iranians walked out, some say Iranians are still in the talks between Iran and the United States. What do we know about what's going on in Switzerland?

#Seyed

Well, I must admit, I haven't been following the news closely because I was out at one of these rallies tonight. And before that, I was at Al Mayadeen doing an interview, which I did, I think, last night with Larry. But actually, there's another Truth Social post of his where I think he sort of threatens the negotiators—threatens to kill them. So yeah, that's Donald Trump. But I don't know where this is heading. The fact that it was about to fall apart and then it didn't, maybe the United States is becoming flexible. We're hearing some reports.

Again, this is all online, and I don't know if it's true or not. But we're getting some reports that the Israelis are talking about some sort of partial pullback. How credible this is or not, no idea. And I have no communications with anyone in the Iranian delegation. As I said, I haven't even been following the news. What I can say is that right now, the Iranians are not going to be flexible for a host of reasons. One is that they have a deal, and the MOU—well, they have an MOU, and it's been agreed upon, and there is nothing more to negotiate about the substance of the deal.

The only thing to negotiate is about implementation—how to get to where they want to get—and therefore there shouldn't be too much trouble. So they're not going to be flexible for that reason. But another reason is that in Iran right now, there is a divide, and there's a segment of Iranian society that believes that we've been too flexible. And there's another segment that has no problem with the current path or road that the chief negotiator is pursuing. So there's been some controversy over the last two, three days, and you can see the divide on the streets. You can see it in the media. You can see it even on Iranian national TV that there is a divide.

And so I think that is going to make the chief negotiator even more cautious about being seen as flexible in any way or form. So even though I didn't believe that he was Dr. Ghalibaf, the Speaker of Parliament, I didn't think that he was planning on being flexible. But I think that under these circumstances, with the extra scrutiny that we're seeing in the general public on what's going on with the delegation, I think it's going to be extra tough. So it's very important, this meeting, ultimately. It was supposed to be some sort of technical meeting, but since the Israelis refused to end the genocide and to end the occupation of Lebanon, and the Americans have also refrained from removing Iranian oil exports and energy exports from the sanctions regime, and they've also refrained so far from handing over Iran's stolen assets.

This would, I think, be a key moment. In other words, by tomorrow, we should figure out where things are heading. Are we moving back to greater tensions, to war, to siege warfare, or are we going to limp along forward? Personally, I think that Trump, despite all the threats and despite the

fact that Lindsey Graham came out and said he's going to do... if the Iranians don't submit effectively—what he was implying was if Iran does not accept a deal, not this deal, some alternative universe deal—that there will be war. I personally find it hard to believe, though, that the United States will move to war because the global economy is in such bad shape. And remember, the Strait of Hormuz is open—or, well, it was closed briefly again—but still, even when it was open, the ships that are going through are very few in number. The mines are still there.

It's still... many of the ships are not prepared to move. Insurance companies have not given most of these ships insurance yet. So I find it very hard to believe—well, hard to imagine—that Trump will feel comfortable to strike, because we're moving closer and closer towards, because of the few ships that are passing through, we're moving closer and closer towards an energy crisis. And if he engages in battle, then I think the fate of the global economy is sealed. We will have a global depression, not a recession, a depression. So I find it hard to imagine that he'll go in that direction. But then again, it's Donald Trump, and you can't rule out anything. And if Netanyahu—if he is unwilling or unable to rein in Netanyahu, I mean unable, meaning that he's unable to use his immense power and leverage to force Netanyahu to back down—then we're heading for troubled waters.

#Nima

Yeah. Larry, let me read the first clause of the MOU, which is important, by the way, in the case of Lebanon and in the case of what has happened today. It says: "The Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America and their allies in the current war, by signing this MOU, declare the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon, and undertake from now on not to initiate any war or any military operation against each other and to refrain from the threat and use of force against each other, and to ensure the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon." This is basically what has happened in the last 48 to 72 hours. You see Israel crossing the line or destroying the first line, and they're just ignoring the fact of the MOU, and Donald Trump today doing the same. Go ahead, Larry, your understanding of what has happened today.

#Larry

Well, we have to go back and ask what led Trump to do his 180-degree turn last Monday. And now I think we've got the answer with even greater clarity. It's all about oil. It's about the Strategic Petroleum Reserve that the United States started in 1983. It has grown to a max capacity of oil—it's supposed to have 740, almost 800 million barrels in it. It has been drawn down steadily. There are now only 340 million barrels left. And you say, well, that sounds like a lot, but here's what people don't understand. The caverns—these are salt caverns that are on the southern coast of the United States—were built specifically to store the oil.

If you get below 20% of capacity, the structural integrity of those caves is threatened. And apart from the fact that once those are gone, you don't have any kind of reserve—you've spent your life

savings. Now, why is that important? Because the United States military, I'm told, has basically blown through its jet fuel reserves. So now they have no more reserves per se, so they're drawing on the global market, what's coming out of refineries as fast as it can. And this means the Trump administration made a choice last week. They were going to support the Americans that need diesel to run trucking fleets as opposed to the jet fuel that runs F-35s, F-18s, F-16s, A-10s, etc.

So the United States right now, because you have to keep a 20% reserve in those caverns, it's not 340 million barrels, it's roughly 190 million barrels. And when you consider if the U.S. refineries were to rely just on that, to take what they could out of the reserve, we're going to be out, and, you know, if it's drawn at a rate of 16 million barrels a week, then we're looking at 14 weeks, and we'll be out. It may be quicker than that. So, you know, that's what the United States is running up against. They would desperately like to get control of Iran, get control of the oil. But even if they get control of the oil, that time-distance problem comes back. The time it takes for oil to get out of the Persian Gulf to its final destination can be anywhere from three weeks to nine weeks.

#Nima

I think that's related totally to the Strait of Hormuz. And what is the status of the Strait of Hormuz, Professor Marandi, as we speak? Donald Trump says it's open.

#Seyed

Well, again, I haven't been following the news today that much. But the Strait of Hormuz was closed yesterday. Before that, the number of ships passing through was limited. The Iranians have told the captains of the ships that in order to leave the Strait, they have to use a particular route. And they've warned that if they disobey, they'll get into trouble. So the number of ships that pass through has been limited ever since the opening of this Strait, and they're not nearly enough to satisfy global economic needs. Now, Vance went on television and was gloating.

I think he said that yesterday, 17 million barrels or 18 million barrels of oil were exported from the Persian Gulf. I'm not quite sure what number. That is almost all Iranian oil, because yesterday Iran sent 10 tankers out of the Strait of Hormuz. So most of the oil that was leaving the Persian Gulf, both yesterday and the day before, is Iranian oil. So the Iranians are getting ahead of the game a bit. And so Vance, by gloating, he's gloating about the money that the Iranians have made. But I don't know if the Strait is open now, but if it is, because the Iranians, after the Israeli regime stopped the killing last night, the Iranians early this morning reopened the Strait.

But my understanding is that the number of ships that will be passing through in the coming days is going to be small because of insurance. And this is, you know, we've discussed this before — the insurance companies and the problems that have to do with the Strait of Hormuz and so on. And

then gradually, when new ships come into the Strait of Hormuz — and many ships are not all that interested in coming into the Strait of Hormuz for the time being, especially with all the threats that Trump continues to make — that prevents countries in the Persian Gulf from producing new oil.

Because if there are no ships, then they can't — there's no reason to produce the oil. They don't have any capacity to store it. The global economic situation is going to get worse. And as Larry pointed out, U.S. reserves are depleting, other strategic reserves are depleting, and the last couple of hundred million barrels of oil in the U.S. reserves are not easily removable because of the structure of where they're held. So there really isn't much left. And then the reserves of the private sector, of major corporations, they too are running down. And it's not just, by the way, oil. And it's, of course, overwhelmingly heavy oil, which is particularly important because diesel is key to the global economy.

And diesel comes from heavy oil. And the only place in the world where they have lots of heavy oil, except for in the Persian Gulf, is Russia. And that is another sanctioned country. In fact, an interesting fact is that when Larry was saying that U.S. strategic reserves have been emptied, they've been emptied for two reasons: one, because of the Ukraine war, thanks to Biden, and now thanks to Trump because of the war with Iran. So these two wars together have combined to empty U.S. reserves and put the United States in this critical situation. And the other reserves of U.S. allies, the reserves of U.S. allies across the world, they follow suit.

So during the Ukraine war, they emptied their reserves to keep down the price of oil, and now they've been doing the same, and now they have really almost nothing left. So it's a very bad situation. And the fact that so few ships are going through the Strait of Hormuz means that U.S. vulnerability will continue to be high. And if the United States intensifies the hostilities with Iran, well, they can close the Strait or they can slow down the pace of ships passing through the Strait. It's just a horrible situation for Trump. And that's why his harsh behavior right now, unless there is some flexibility tonight that we're not hearing about yet, is going to do, if he carries through, enormous damage to the United States.

#Nima

Larry, Israel put out three conditions in order to abide by or agree on the MOU between Iran and the United States. The first one is the withdrawal of all Hezbollah elements north of the Litani River. And just getting to, starting with the first point, they're talking about north of the Litani River. Is that going to be possible for Hezbollah to agree on, this first one?

#Larry

No, not at all. And let's emphasize again what's going on for the United States with the oil front limits its military decisions. Because right now the United States is at a watershed moment where they're going to have to choose: do they keep producing enough diesel fuel to run those trucks that

haul food and household appliances and things that people need from point to point to major distributors, stores like Costco or BJ's or Price Club? Or do they use that oil to make jet fuel, which then supports the U.S. combat aircraft? What Trump has been told—and this friend of mine who's an energy analyst summarized it this way—he said the strategic warning is that the United States cannot assume it can fight a major fuel-intensive conflict to protect the domestic economy without trade-offs.

Military jet fuel, commercial aviation fuel, diesel, heating oil, and marine fuel all draw from the middle distillate portion of the refined barrel. Refineries can bias output, but they cannot instantly maximize every middle distillate product at once. The risk is not that every truck or aircraft stops at once. The risk is that a forced fuel priority decision creates cascading shortages and price shocks across logistics, aviation, agriculture, construction, and the consumer supply chain. So what it's basically saying is the United States has got to make a choice—guns or butter. If we're going to fight a war, then domestic consumers are going to be hit, and hit hard, in the United States and in Europe.

If we come to a negotiated settlement, however, there's a way to maybe avoid some of those shocks by, you know, abiding by the specifics of that MOU. So this is Trump. Trump continues to exhibit very erratic behavior. He's all over the issue. You know, he claims that he talked to Iran today. I've seen no record of that, other than him claiming that he's talked to the Ayatollah. You know, someone has suggested that what Trump's staff is doing is they're recruiting somebody with a good Iranian accent from the United States, and they're putting him on the phone with Trump. So Trump thinks he's talking to the Iranians, but not really. You know, it's letting him play at being president.

#Nima

Professor, who's talking to Donald Trump in Iran?

#Seyed

It's not me. I have nothing to do with it. I think that, ironically, Trump is, by dragging out this whole situation, bringing the United States economy to the brink. The war, of course, itself led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, obviously. But after the war, we had that ceasefire after 39 days when the Iranians effectively won. And then we were supposed to have a ceasefire, and then Netanyahu, back then, carpet-bombed Lebanon. That caused the collapse of the ceasefire. And those ships that belonged to the Saudis and the Emiratis and the Kuwaitis and the Bahrainis and the Qataris that were supposed to go through the Strait, they were blocked.

And we've had stalemates since then. And then Trump, of course, imposed a siege on Iranian ports. So during this period of time, they prevented the closure of the Strait. And then Trump, by constantly saying, "It's almost over, we're going to have a deal," and by using the strategic reserves, he prevented, I think they say, consumption destruction. And so instead of the price going up and

people consuming less, the price didn't go up that much and consumption remained high. So what does that mean? That means that the pace of consumption remaining high brings us closer and closer to a crisis.

If he had not manipulated the markets for so long, the prices would have gradually gone higher and higher, and consumption would have been reduced. And this could have—the crisis, well, it would have hurt the global economy, but the crisis would be a bit further off. But he's effectively brought about a situation where people are just consuming fuel, consuming oil, consuming energy as if there's no cliff lying ahead. So he's made the situation worse. And now, at this juncture, where he was forced to do a deal because of this crisis, he is still, by making these threats, making it more difficult for insurance companies to insure ships. It's making ships decide not to come to the Persian Gulf.

It's creating fear among ship owners who have ships in the Persian Gulf from making a move. And that's besides the Iranian government saying that we may shut down the Strait or may slow down the pace of ships passing through. So he's constantly shooting himself in the foot. And of course, Netanyahu doesn't care about the US economy, nor do the Israelis. But I think that this is going to have an impact on the entire negotiation process. Let us assume that the negotiations don't collapse tonight, which is a possibility. Although the fact that they— I mean, I can't see the news because I'm using my cell phone.

If there's any breaking news, let me know. But the fact that they're still negotiating means that they're talking about something, obviously. So it may be that there is some sort of progress. But let us assume that there is progress and that the Israeli regime begins to retreat partially, and then the United States begins to hand over Iranian assets, and then they remove the sanctions. During the next two months, the energy crisis is going to get worse. So throughout these two months, Iran has more and more leverage.

So the first month, obviously, the amount of oil that leaves, and energy and helium and LNG that leave the Strait of Hormuz or leave the Persian Gulf, is going to be less than the consumption. So the crisis is going to get worse. And the second month, even if it gets better, it's not going to be normal. But also, Iran can, if the negotiations don't go well, always cause trouble. They can always tell the ships to slow down. They can always say there's a mine out there that we failed to find or that's gone missing. They can slow down the ships. So the Iranians have leverage for the negotiating process as well.

#Larry

Let me just add one other thing in there. The relationship between Qatar and Israel is pretty extensive. And Qatar—no, not Qatar, I mean the United Arab Emirates—is very extensive. Yeah, UAE. Yeah, and so with the UAE, let's call it a money laundering center. Oh, yes. Pardon? Pardon? Yes, they are the money laundering center of the world. Yeah, so I received information yesterday,

and this ties into Ukraine and Russia. Apparently, Zelensky's uncle is traveling every week from Kyiv to Dubai with bags of cash, U.S. money from U.S. aid that was sent to Ukraine. And so that money makes its way down to Dubai. It's put into all the major UAE banks. So we're talking millions of dollars every week. Then that money is... Is this new CIA money, or is this from before?

#Larry

This is money from USAID as well as money from the Europeans. Then that money is flowing. It's washed through some, I'll call them Ponzi scheme condos, real estate deals. And then the proceeds from those deals, so they make it look like the money that was generated from real estate sales, that's then wired to Israeli banks. And then from Israel, that money goes to people like members of Congress, the biggest vocal supporters of the Israeli war. They're getting paid that way. And they also turned out being big supporters of the war in Ukraine. So that's one way the money is flowing. It's also flowing, you know, it's giving Israel another source of cash. But what has happened now over the course of the last 14 weeks is that relationship is now threatened, because the UAE was counting that they would be able to put enough oil out through Fujairah, the port on the Gulf of Oman, and therefore avoid the weight of the Gulf being closed off.

That's gone now. So they've got a real cash flow problem. And that's why the UAE seems to have been, you know, it may be lip service, it may be an illusion, or it may be real that they went down, sat down for talks in Tehran, you know, on the 9th of June, so now almost two weeks ago. They're trying to keep themselves afloat, and they're hoping to cut a deal with Iran that would ease that pain. Again, the problem is the UAE is so heavily compromised with Israeli Zionist firms that are operating in Dubai and in Abu Dhabi. So this is, you know, you've got this corruption angle that's going on. And the longer the Strait of Hormuz stays closed, or they can't get normal traffic flowing, the worse it is for the UAE.

#Nima

Yeah. Professor Marandi, let me ask you, with what we've said so far, you described the situation with the Strait of Hormuz, how effectively that is putting pressure—the closure of the Strait of Hormuz is putting pressure on the United States. What is the calculation on the part of the Iranians? Is that sufficient for Iran to put pressure on the United States, then on the Israelis? Or are they still considering an operation on Israeli soil, some sort of sending missiles and attacking?

#Seyed

The Iranians were about to fire missiles a couple of nights ago. And if you recall, they cleared the airspace of Iran, and then ultimately they decided not to do so. So I don't know what the calculation is now. I think that when they shut the Strait of Hormuz and the Israelis immediately, or almost immediately, accepted or carried out a ceasefire, I think that shows that the situation—the energy crisis—is so bad that Trump immediately put some sort of pressure on the Israelis. So the Iranians

have said that they are prepared to carry out military strikes on the Israeli regime if shutting down the Strait of Hormuz is not enough. But actually, as I said earlier, they reopened the Strait of Hormuz after a few hours when the Israelis carried out the ceasefire.

So I sort of think that the Iranians are telling the international community and business that, look, we don't want to shut the Strait of Hormuz. This is not our intention. But the other side is forcing us to. So that's why immediately after the ceasefire, or hours after the ceasefire, they reopened the Strait. In order for Iran to be able to justify this, they have to have a good reason. And I think that the Iranians intentionally opened the Strait of Hormuz as soon as the agreement was signed, contrary to what the Americans did, so that they could be seen as the side that's carrying out its side of the bargain, it's implementing, it's carrying out its obligations.

And then if the other side doesn't do so, they can more easily go back to restricting travel through the Strait of Hormuz. Of course, Iran, if it shuts the Strait of Hormuz, I don't think it's going to shut it for all shipping. It's definitely not going to shut it for its own ships. And Larry would know much better than I. I don't know if U.S. ships are currently in place to continue the siege. They probably are not far off. But I'm not sure if it would be easy for the Americans to flip the switch and start a siege without a couple of days' notice. I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong.

#Larry

My understanding was that what used to be 24-hour, seven-day-a-week crisis action teams that were operating at MacDill Air Force Base for CENTCOM and others at the National Military Command headquarters in the Pentagon and in other locations, they've all been told to stand down. So they're not on 24/7, which means they're not doing the kind of planning and activity that would normally accompany a planned military strike. So we can say that's on hold, or at least they're starting to withdraw air assets. And they don't do that overnight because they have to plan.

You know, you think if you get a squadron of F-35s out of Jordan and fly it back to the United States—let's just say you got 10 aircraft—each of those aircraft has to be refueled after about 400 miles in the air. And so they're going to need multiple refuelings just to get back to the continental United States. And to get ready for that, you've got to pre-position tankers all along that route. And I think each tanker can do one or maybe two refuels on a total of six planes, so really servicing 12 planes. So that's a pretty onerous logistics trail.

#Seyed

And that's a lot of fuel at a time when the United States is running low on jet fuel.

#Larry

Yeah, it's going to burn up more fuel that we don't have, or the assets are very short. So I don't know if that has started yet. I believe it has. And when they said, at least the Navy did lift the blockade, the United States has complied or fulfilled that. But again, you had more truths posted by Trump today, again violating the first section because he's threatening Iran with violence. And he was supposed to stop that and didn't.

#Nima

Professor Marandi, these three conditions by Israel, they put out to be part of—it seems that they're asking the United States to put them, or to annex them, to the MOU or whatever comes after the MOU, which is—let me read the three conditions that the Israelis are talking about: the withdrawal of all Hezbollah elements north of the Litani River, the complete dismantling of Hezbollah's infrastructure in the area south of the Litani River, granting Israel full freedom of movement and military actions to thwart and eliminate any future threats, which includes ground and aerial operations. Basically, they want to achieve whatever they couldn't achieve on the battlefield by using these three conditions. Is there any way anybody in Iran is accepting these terms?

#Seyed

No, but, you know, the Israelis, if ultimately they're forced to leave, they're going to obviously do it in a way to minimize the humiliation. So they will say that, you know, we're withdrawing. I mean, if they do this—I don't know if they will—but ultimately, if Trump does force them, I mean, if the deal is going to be implemented, this is going to have to happen. So Trump is going to force them, let's say, to leave. And then what will they do? They'll leave in stages, but they won't say that we're leaving because of Trump's orders. They'll say that we're withdrawing from this area. This area is secure now. We no longer feel threatened.

And then they'll say, we'll stay in the rest of the territory until whenever we deem necessary, and then they'll withdraw again, say this area is no longer of concern to us. And they'll frame it, or they'll say that there's an unwritten, let's say, agreement that Hezbollah will no longer be in the south of the Litani, and we've destroyed all their infrastructure. I mean, if they're forced to leave, they're going to make it look as much as possible as if they left from a position of strength. That, I mean, that I think is inevitable. But ultimately, the Iranians are not going to accept any of this, nor is Hezbollah. The Israelis have overplayed their hand. They're in a bad position. So is the United States.

And if they remain, it will be very costly because of the Strait of Hormuz, but also because of Iran's missile capabilities. And Iran is, as we speak, rebuilding its capabilities. It's repairing all the underground— I mean, it's finished now, but from what I heard, Iran has far more missiles than it had before the war, and they're using new technology, better, you know, in order to pass through air defenses. They're developing their capabilities, and they're reviewing their strikes and learning from their experience in the war. Remember, the Iranians performed much better in this war than in

the 12-day war. Why? Because in the 12-day war, for the first time, they waged war with missiles and drones and air defenses.

And so they learned a lot about their strengths and their weaknesses. Well, they're doing the same now. So it won't end well for the Israelis. And I think that ultimately they'll have to withdraw. I may be wrong. It is Netanyahu. If Netanyahu withdraws, that's the end of his political career, I would imagine. Already, if you've seen the polls today, his approval rating has collapsed, and Israeli society overwhelmingly believes that Iran won the war. So this is not good news for him, and if he's forced to withdraw under duress, then I think—I mean, I don't know Israeli politics well—but I would imagine that would be the final straw. I mean, that would end his political career, I would assume.

#Nima

Larry, these three conditions are so important. And what Professor Marandi just said is important as well, because he described the Iranian position considering these three conditions, points by Israelis. What would be—how far can they put pressure on the United States at this particular moment? As Professor Marandi said, 92% of Israelis believe that Iran won the war. A new poll came out today by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Agam Institute, and it says 82.9% believe Israel's long-term security has been weakened as a result of this war. Among Netanyahu's own right-wing voter base, 93.1% say Iran came out on top, and 63.2% oppose the U.S.-Iran agreement, with only 12.1% in support of the MOU. Larry, go ahead. What is the leverage on the part of Israel to put pressure on the United States to accept these terms?

#Larry

Well, can Israel produce oil? No. So unless they come up with a magical source of oil, particularly for diesel, and as Professor Marandi noted, the major suppliers of that kind of heavy crude are Russia and Saudi Arabia, then Canada, Mexico, Venezuela. Well, the United States has great friction now with the Canadians. Canadians are dealing increasingly with China. So again, Israel could try to put money and try to make threats, etc., but they really don't—you know, it's going to be the economy that's going to rule who does what to whom going forward now.

And, uh, Israel, Israel doesn't—they're not in a strong position. They're dependent upon the flow of oil via Turkey, and the oil that comes through Turkey, that money's going into the pockets of Erdogan and his family. Now, Pakistan has been making some inroads with the Turks. As I recall, they had another sort of summit today—I believe it was Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. So they're trying to coordinate, and this is consistent with what Pepe and I were told by this one source, that Pakistan, working really in tandem or sort of as the front guy for China, is pushing this new initiative—let's call it a regional military alliance of Islamic and Arab countries.

So you wind up with Egypt, you end up with Turkey, the Saudis, Iran—Iran gets in there. So that, you know, this is more of a mid- to long-term change that's coming down the pike. The source had

reported a week ago that Qatar was going to tell the United States, you've got to close Al Udeid and be out in nine months. Well, have you seen—did you see the film clip where J.D. Vance, the Qatari rep, walks in and Vance tries to shake hands with him, and the Qatari guy just ignores him? I thought, oh boy, that's significant.

#Larry

Are you muted?

#Nima

Yeah. Here is Professor Marandi. Foreign ministers of Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan met in Cairo to discuss regional developments and to review the U.S.-Iran agreement implementations. And what do we know about the position of these countries coming together? We know that Pakistan is totally in favor of the agreement between Iran and the United States. And what is so strange, Professor Marandi—I don't know if your understanding is the same—my understanding is that Al-Jolani is somehow better than the prime minister of Lebanon when it comes to an understanding of the region, because he said we have to negotiate with Hezbollah. Hezbollah is part of Lebanon. Hezbollah, we cannot ignore them. And he said today we are not going to do anything militarily against Lebanon to destabilize Lebanon. And this is not the case when it comes to the Lebanese prime minister and president; they are basically against Hezbollah. Well...

#Seyed

Jolani has more than enough trouble as it is. Huge amounts of territory have been taken by the Israelis, and he's shown no intent to try to take it back. Also, the economic situation in Syria is catastrophic, and in some areas they say it's close to starvation. And also, we have something happening in parts of Syria, and that is that the Americans have been striking some senior figures in Al-Qaeda and these Takfiri groups. Some believe that Jolani is cooperating with the Americans to kill some of his former allies in order to consolidate his own power and also to strengthen the U.S.–Trump–Jolani relationship. But he has more than enough trouble on his hands, and the Iraqi resistance has also warned him that if he tries to make a move towards Lebanon, they will enter Syria.

And I have no doubt that if he tries to attack Lebanon, then Iranian drones and missiles will target him. If the Iranians can deal with Americans and Israelis, they can easily deal with them. So he does not have the incentive to go into Lebanon, but he is trying to shut the border. And he has been cooperating with Israelis and Americans to make sure Iran cannot smuggle in weapons or food or money or any supplies to the resistance. That I do know. So he knows he has no army. He doesn't have the money to even create an army. Thanks to him and the Israelis and Americans and Erdogan

and Qatar, the Syrian army is destroyed. The air force is destroyed. The air defenses are destroyed. Everything is destroyed. It's just a bunch of Al-Qaeda groups, which are not even united. They are like different factions.

And there are some parts of Syria that have no protection, and the local mafias are in charge. And my Syrian friends who—I don't contact my friends, but when they do send me messages—they say that security is horrible, that there's a lot of infighting between the groups themselves, or the different police groups, or the different security groups, because there's no real united force. They're just different factions that work as a sort of coalition. It's a horrible situation right now in Syria. He's in no position to project power beyond the borders of the country. And the whole world is cheering for Hezbollah, and people see Hezbollah as the only force in that part of the world that is fighting against Israel and defending Palestinians who are Sunni. And so it won't look good for him at all if he goes beyond a certain, you know, a certain amount of obedience.

#Larry

I was just going to say, also, Jolani does not have a professional army, number one. And to invade Lebanon, you're going to need a professional army. They don't have the logistics. You're not seeing miles and miles of trucks carrying fuel, loading up to follow tank columns and armored vehicles. Yeah, so Jolani basically said, I'm taking a pass on that. Thanks for the invite. We'll be doing other things.

#Nima

Larry, today Ben-Gvir on Channel 14 said that all of Lebanon should become our playground. All of Lebanon should be our target. And they told me, wait a second, there is Lebanon and there is Hezbollah. I don't accept it. I don't accept this sort of division that they're trying to make for me, because he sees all of Lebanon as the same. And the way, you know, the government in Lebanon is trying to do the same, by the way, it says that Hezbollah is not part of us. When they're negotiating today, we know that they're going to Washington.

Today, Hezbollah announced that these sorts of negotiations between the government in Lebanon and the United States and Israel are not important for us, Professor Marandi. And I think before wrapping up this session, I want to hear—Esmail Ghaani, the head of Quds, General Ghaani, says the epic of the year 2000 will be repeated if you don't leave South Lebanon voluntarily. And is that a direct message for Israelis, or is it somehow helping the negotiation? Is it a political message, or is it something related to a military decision in Iran? I'll say yes—all of the above.

#Larry

It's intended to be a broad-based message. And, you know, the thing the United States is trying to do—they're playing strip poker. They don't have any cards. Iran really does hold the cards at this

time. And part of, you know, there's been a lot of criticism directed at Iran for not retaliating immediately against Israel. But, you know, I think what we're seeing is Iran's playing a smart diplomatic game. They are working with Pakistan, working with Qatar. Again, you know, that dissing of Vice President Vance by, I think that was the Qatari foreign minister, just blew him off.

You know, that's saying something. This is about a changed relationship. So the meeting of Egypt, Turkey, the Saudis, and Pakistan, that's not a coincidence. That's part of an organized plan that Russia and China both are backing to eliminate U.S. hegemony from the region. And again, so these countries are no longer beholden or can be blackmailed into having to adopt a particular policy because the United States is freezing their assets. Nobody's focused on it much, but it looks to me like the purchase of oil with the Chinese, that's not using petrodollars, that's using Chinese yuan.

#Nima

Yeah. Professor Marandi, we know that the head of the IAEA today was in Switzerland to talk. The Iranians said, we're not going to talk to the head of the IAEA, Rafael Grossi. And here is the latest news from the negotiations. It seems that basically Iran said, before getting to talk about the nuclear program of Iran, we have to talk about Clauses number 1, 4, 10, and 11. What is that? Clause number 1, we talked extensively about it today — Lebanon and the threat of the United States against Iran.

Number 4 is about Iranian frozen assets. Number 10 is about how the United States is going to facilitate the whole process of receiving the frozen assets, lifting the sanctions on the Iranian oil sector and energy sector. And number 11 is the sanctions. So before getting there, there would be no negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program. Is that the case? Because today, as they're talking about the differences between the two sides, the basic idea would be, let's talk about the first one, then 4, 10, and 11, then go after the Iranian nuclear program.

#Seyed

Yes, the Iranians have made it clear that until these issues are resolved, they're not going to start negotiating about the nuclear program. And what the Americans want to do is refrain from carrying out their obligations and then have the Iranians begin negotiating over the second phase of the deal, meaning the sanctions and nuclear program issue. But that's not going to work. The Iranians have been very clear about that. They're only going to negotiate over those issues that have already been agreed upon to see if the Americans are going to comply or not. If they don't comply, then they don't move on to the nuclear issue and the sanctions regime issue. If they do comply, then they can move on to that. So again, everything is stuck.

We haven't moved forward. The only thing that has happened, as Larry has rightly pointed out, is that the United States has removed the siege on the Strait. And that's because the Americans need as much oil as possible to flow through the Strait. And as I said, Vance was gloating that, I don't

know, 17 or 18 million barrels left, and this was a record. Well, almost all of that was Iranian oil. I mean, if it was 10 Iranian tankers, definitely more than half of the oil that went through the Strait, if not all of it, was Iranian oil. But he didn't want to say that. So they're just desperate to get the oil out there on the market. But at the end of the day, as I said, the Iranians can slow down the flow of ships through the Strait.

They can choose non-tanker ships to go first. They can choose many of those empty ships that bring in automobiles and other consumer goods, that are empty and want to return to other ports to take new goods. They can play with the flow of ships through the Strait of Hormuz in a way to intensify the crisis without blocking shipping. So the Americans are in a very tough position. The more they threaten Iran, the more uncertainty there is for insurance companies. If they don't cooperate with Iran, the less cooperative the Iranians become. Even if they don't shut the Strait of Hormuz, they can make it more than half shut. So it's a difficult situation for Trump. The only way forward is for him to implement the deal.

And even then, we're still—I mean, Larry has discussed this, and so have I. Even if there's a deal, and I've said this earlier, even if there's a deal, and tonight everything is resolved, and the Israelis swiftly leave Lebanon—it's not going to happen that way—but even if there was, and the Iranians did their maximum effort to help as many ships go through the Strait of Hormuz as possible, we're still going to have a very bad economic crisis. It's going to hit in a few weeks from now, and it's going to be long-lasting. So it's going to be bad anyway. But the more the Trump regime harms the chances for normalization of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, the deeper the crisis becomes and the longer-lasting.

#Larry

I agree.

#Nima

Thank you so much.

#Larry

All right, my friends, thank you.

#Nima

Thank you very much.

#Larry

See you tomorrow.

#Seyed

See you tomorrow. It is 2:32 a.m. Nima owes me something—some sleep.

#Larry

All right, my friends. Bye-bye. See you. Bye for now.