

Seyed M. Marandi: Trump Lost the Iran War - Must Sell It as a Victory

Prof. Seyed Mohammad Marandi is a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. RECORDED June 24, 2026. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined again by Saeed Mohamed Marandi, a professor at Tehran University and a former advisor to Iran's nuclear negotiation team. So, yeah, thank you for coming back on the program. I want to ask you about the development of the Memorandum of Understanding, because when the United States asked for the initial ceasefire a while ago, Iran agreed to this 10-point plan to stop the hostilities. But as we saw, they didn't abide by it. Indeed, it appeared that the day after, they began to water it down, ignoring what was supposed to be the point of departure for these discussions. I was wondering how you see the Memorandum of Understanding this time. Is the U.S. strategy yet again to string the Iranians along, water it down? There appears to be some pushback, not just from Trump, but, well, the White House in general.

#Marandi

Well, thank you very much for inviting me, Glenn. Always very glad to be on your show and to have the opportunity to speak to your audience. I think the 10-point plan was an achievement in itself. The very fact that the Americans accepted it as a framework for negotiation. They didn't accept the 10-point plan, but it was a huge achievement because the Americans started with unconditional surrender and after 39 days ended with, "Okay, we'll accept your 10-point plan as the framework for discussions." And, of course, it was obvious that once at the negotiating table, they would refrain from accepting the plan. But the Americans made a bigger mistake, in my opinion, after the war.

The war itself was a catastrophic mistake and a major victory for Iran, a key victory, a turning point in the world that we live in today. But what became even more, I think, devastating for the United States was what happened after the war. We were supposed to have a ceasefire, and if Netanyahu was smart, he wouldn't have wrecked it. He carpet-bombed Lebanon in order to wreck the ceasefire. This was more than two months ago, and I know you remember, but just in case some of your

viewers have forgotten. So because of Netanyahu, the ceasefire plan crashed, and the Strait of Hormuz continued to remain closed for those countries that helped the United States in the war. It was never closed for everyone.

The Iranians closed it to the Saudis, the Emiratis, the Kuwaitis, the Bahrainis, and the Qataris for their role in the war. And that caused the price of energy, LNG, and all the other petrochemical products to rise. But after the failure of the ceasefire and then the US siege on Iranian ports, the situation for the entire world got a lot worse. So if the Americans had been smart, if Netanyahu had not wrecked the ceasefire agreement, right now the United States would not be in this position. Netanyahu single-handedly, and then Trump through the siege on Iranian ports, really made things a lot worse for them. Because losing the war was one thing, but crashing the economy is something else. So ultimately, the Americans backed down.

They thought that they'd strangle Iran, starve the Iranian people, bring them to their knees, and then they were swiftly using strategic oil reserves and talking down the markets, ironically keeping consumption high and pushing us faster and faster towards the crisis. But in any case, they were hoping that they would defeat Iran and ordinary Americans would not experience very high oil prices and energy prices, and it would be over. But it didn't happen. Iran didn't fold. Iran remained very steadfast, and the Americans, they folded. So we had the negotiations for the MOU. And ultimately, it was becoming clear that the Americans needed an urgent agreement. But they were still dragging their feet until Netanyahu struck Beirut, southern Beirut, and the Iranians were going to retaliate, and Trump said, okay, we'll give you these concessions for the MOU, and there was an agreement.

The MOU is pretty good. Of course, there's a big controversy in Iran about the MOU. Some people are against it, some for it. The leader, it turned out—we didn't know—but in the negotiations, it turned out that he was not in agreement with everything in the MOU or the way they chose to, let's say, formulate the MOU. There are some elements of it which are still unclear.

Well, for people, it's unclear exactly what it is that he was opposed to, but he agreed to the MOU ultimately, even though he wasn't completely happy with it. But he agreed to allow the Supreme National Security Council to approve the MOU. So there is a controversy in Iran. Some say we should have taken a harder stance, some say that, well, this was approved, so we should just be tough at the negotiating table. Personally, I think the reason why the leader let it be known that he was critical of some elements of the MOU was because he was sending a message to the Americans that his negotiators are not going to be flexible, that they've already conceded as much as is going to be conceded, if you get what I'm trying to say here.

In other words, the MOU was agreed upon. He said, I'm not completely satisfied with it. And so that's sending a message both to the negotiators, but more importantly to the Americans: don't try to get any concessions from the Iranians at the negotiating table. This is it. This is the MOU. You have to fulfill it. At the negotiating table, even though Vance and Trump said a lot of nonsense, it does seem to be clear that the Iranians continue to have the upper hand. So the MOU is pretty

good. And so far, the Americans have lifted the siege. They've lifted the sanctions on Iran's oil and energy sector for exports. The mechanism to free frozen assets has begun, although the Americans say that Iran has to buy U.S. agricultural goods, but that's not true.

And also, the Israeli regime has been forced to end its genocide in Lebanon. Although they did murder two people yesterday, so far it's pretty clear that the Iranians are not going to be flexible at all. And I think it's clear that they won't be in the future. So there is progress. The Iranians did not agree for International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to come to Iran with any new mandate. I mean, they do come to see the Bushehr nuclear power plant, which was never bombed or anything, and the Tehran experimental reactor, which I think you may have visited or had an invitation to visit, but you couldn't go. You went? Okay. So monitors or inspectors still go there. But the sites that were bombed, Iran has not agreed.

So what Trump and Vance are saying is basically for internal consumption because of the criticisms that you alluded to in the United States. So, so far it seems to be moving well. What I can also say is that the Strait of Hormuz during the last few days has been open. The number of ships in general over the, I don't know how many days it's been since it's open, but the number of ships that have passed through have not been that great, except for two days they were higher, especially the tankers. But a lot of that oil is Iranian oil. So the Iranians have been disproportionately exporting oil. They had a lot of tankers full of oil that were ready to go, and as soon as the siege was lifted, those many tankers began to...

#Marandi

Leave the region. Many of them were inside the Strait, some of them were outside. But in any case, Iran has been able to export a lot of oil. So this is where we are. But the Strait is still... the traffic is not great. Not lots of tankers are coming in. The Iranians have told all the ships that they have to pass through a certain route, so the passage is not... there are not that many ships going through. But of course, the tensions when Trump keeps threatening Iran, threatening to kill the negotiators, to murder the negotiators, to destroy Iran, that's obviously not going to create confidence for insurance companies and the owners of tankers that are thinking about sending their ships to the Persian Gulf.

#Glenn

That's what I meant. The threats being made against Iran do not conform with the MOU. But also, Trump made some comments — that is, that Iran wouldn't get 10 cents. But the memorandum speaks of 300 billion for the reconstruction and economic development of Iran, so essentially for the U.S. and its partners to fix what they broke. Also, yeah, in one tweet, Trump — that is, he blamed Hezbollah for the problems in Lebanon. But I think, again, here the MOU is quite clear that this is sovereign Lebanese territory. And, yeah, essentially the Israelis have to go. And as I said, with the claims they also made about the IAEA being allowed in, which Iran considers to have essentially

spied for the Israelis and Americans, the agricultural deal, which doesn't seem to exist — there are a lot of these things. And essentially, in my mind, I'm left with two possible hypotheses.

That is, either Trump is trying to water this down, walk it back, or second, it's simply noise. That is, it's a very unpopular deal back in America. He promised unconditional surrender of Iran. He was going to destroy them. He reassured everyone, "We're winning, we're winning." And suddenly, you know, this looks like a, you know, a deal for surrender almost. That is, they didn't get anything they wanted. And it reflects realities on the battlefield. So, you know, I'm not going to criticize the Americans for signing this one. I assume this is the best deal they could get. But again, for domestic politics, it is possible that they're only making noise while they're gradually accepting the new realities. I was wondering, how do you see this? Is this walking back or just making noise for the domestic audience?

#Marandi

I think they're definitely trying to walk it back, but the Iranians won't let them. They're very tough at the negotiating table, and they want the full implementation of the MOU. And Ayatollah Khamenei's letter was, as I said, a message to the Americans that we're not going to be flexible. This was agreed upon, and this is the only option — either a fulfillment of the agreement or nothing. And so far, I mean, there's a long way to go, especially with regard to Lebanon, because Netanyahu will do anything possible to wreck the agreement. And the murder of two young Lebanese men yesterday, who were just trying to fix a road that was destroyed, was intentional. They killed these men in order to undermine the agreement. It was no accident.

So the Israeli regime is... And as we speak, they've been intensifying the slaughter in Gaza and the crimes in the West Bank, I guess, to fulfill the bloodlust of Israelis who are unhappy about the forced silence of the guns in Lebanon. So... the fact that the siege has been lifted, the fact that the U.S. has officially waived the sanctions, and the fact that there was an agreement signed between Iran and Qatar on the sidelines of the agreement, I think shows that things are moving forward. And the fact that the Israelis can no longer bomb cities and villages and flatten neighborhoods in Lebanon is a sign that progress is being made. Actually, I've heard — I haven't seen this, but I've heard — that 67% of Americans, ordinary Americans, support this agreement.

So the animosity, the anger, and the hatred and the criticism largely, I would assume — I haven't seen the details — come from the political class. And that's clear. I mean, the reason is clear because both classes, both parties, are captured by the Zionist lobby. So the Democrats, even though the base hates the Israeli regime, in Congress and in the Senate and in think tanks, they're overwhelmingly pro-Israel and pro-genocide. So for the time being, you're going to see criticism, which is, of course, valid in the sense that Trump promised victory and came back with defeat. That criticism is valid. But I think that the American population, being anti-war and anti... and to a lot of things nowadays that used to be taken for granted that are acceptable — they want this deal because they don't want war.

#Glenn

Well, you see this from the polling, though, that the American public — again, they don't want this war, overwhelmingly so. But often you see the Americans tend to vote for people who promise a return to normalcy and an end to this war, but they always get the opposite. That being said, though, because the political system in the U.S. is so polarized, the fact that Trump got a bad deal, many see this as an opportunity to, well, knock him over the head with it. So this also puts the deal, I guess, in a weaker position.

Well, I know it's not a deal. It's a memorandum of understanding — a deal to make a deal. But nonetheless, this polarization within the U.S., I think this could become a big problem as well. Even people who recognize they have to sign the deal, it's still too appealing, too attractive an opportunity to use against Trump, given that it has been such a failure. But it almost sounds like you're a little bit optimistic, it sounds, though, that this memorandum of understanding is that the U.S. is, grudgingly so, recognizing these new realities. Is that fair to say?

#Marandi

Until now, for the time being, but no, I think that this is a, I mean, the very name of it is called an MOU, which indicates the fragility of the process. And so I'm not terribly optimistic because of the nature of the U.S. government and the Trump regime and the influence of the Zionist lobby and Netanyahu. So in that regard, I'm not optimistic at all. I don't think, based on that, the deal should last very long. But on the other hand, if you look at the situation logically, the shortage of energy, which Trump admitted in public — the approaching energy crisis — he said we have only four more weeks of reserves left. Some say four, I mean, it's four to six weeks. But in any case, the fact that he admitted this, which I found very surprising, and I'm sure many of his advisors were unhappy that he said that aloud, because of course it helps Iran. But I think that if one looks at it logically, therefore, the deal should last.

Because if it does not last, that means the energy crisis is going to get much worse. Much, much worse. And if conflict is renewed, I think that a global — I mean, we've discussed this before — I think a global economic depression worse than the 1930s is assured. So I don't know, because the irrationality and bloodlust of Zionism and the Zionists is a powerful force. On the other hand, the needs of the global economy, the U.S. economy, should far outweigh that. But I also think that it's not just Trump whose interests are against Netanyahu's. Netanyahu wants crisis, he wants war; Trump needs peace so that the economy doesn't collapse.

But I think probably many people around Netanyahu, and probably many Zionists in the United States — Israeli firsters in the United States — are pragmatic enough to recognize that if the U.S. economy collapses, it would be catastrophic for the Israeli regime too. So it's not as if all—I'm just guessing, of course, I have no insider knowledge—but I'm assuming that many of these Zionists who

are supportive of the genocide and what's going on in Gaza and Lebanon and the West Bank and the wars and all that, that they too must recognize that this dire economic situation is catastrophic for Israel, because the Israelis are now despised universally.

And even in the United States, I think 60% of Americans at least have a disapproval of the regime. Add the crisis to that — the fact that people are living with inflation today is one thing, but if the crisis hits like it's expected to, if the shortages continue, then lives will be ruined and the lifestyles of people, billions of people across the world, will change. And people are going to say it was Netanyahu and the Israelis who were behind it. So I think probably pragmatic Zionists in the United States are also pushing to prevent the situation from getting worse. So I... I can't say where this is going to go. I'm not particularly optimistic about the future, but I think until now, until this moment that you and I are speaking, progress has been made.

#Glenn

I was also a bit surprised that Trump could say out loud that they have four weeks left of fuel, because that's admitting quite a desperate situation for the United States. On the other hand, this is almost required — if you're going to sign this deal to show, you have to explain why. So you have to show that it's quite desperate. So it's probably not accidental that he blurted this out. But this also gave me some suspicion, though, that if this is the reasoning — that Trump said they're almost running out of fuel — then it could also be an indication that this is a temporary solution, that is, the memorandum of understanding to relieve some pressure, buy some time. And if they can replenish a bit, then start again from a more advantageous position.

My last question was just about what you said about Netanyahu. You said that everything he had done had made the situation much worse for the United States. And this is obviously something many people in the U.S. have noticed. They're commenting on it. Well, I guess the main example would be people like Tucker Carlson. But how do you see this developing? Because even if this will be a temporary ploy just to buy time, this kind of new rhetoric you've seen in the U.S., the open criticism of Israel, the way they're legitimizing Iran nowadays by saying, well, you know, Iran needs ballistic missiles because its neighbor has them. So it's no longer this, you know, terrorist hub masquerading as a country.

It's now a legitimate country with legitimate interests and has legitimate rights to defend itself. I haven't seen this before in my lifetime — rhetoric about Iran. It's refreshing. It's one step towards normalcy. But what does this mean, though, you think, for Israel and the Greater Israel project? That is, they do have... they're put in a very desperate, difficult situation. And one should always be cautious when one's opponent as well is put in a situation where they see few ways out. They can act in a very irrational way if panic sets in. So I was just wondering, how do you see this U.S.-Israeli relationship and what Israel can do next? I mean, a lot of its options have fallen away. Keep in mind, knocking out Iran was supposed to usher in glory days for Israel.

#Marandi

Well, first, I'd like to just add one. Well, first of all, not only did Trump talk about Iranian missiles, but he also said Iran needs nuclear energy for electricity too. So that's quite extraordinary stuff. Just one thing that I'd like to add is that the Iranians are quite aware that the Americans need their energy supplies. And one of the interesting things about the MOU—and I don't know how it was negotiated, I don't know the behind-the-scenes developments—but the normalization of the strait for business and traffic is in the second month. The first month is...

#Marandi

I think that Iran is given a month's time to normalize this trade. And even though I can't say for certain, I think that the Iranians will probably use that to make sure that the traffic in the first month doesn't exceed expectations. So I would imagine that the Iranians are going to make sure that the U. S. shortages remain in place for the foreseeable future, and that its leverage remains intact while allowing trade to flow. But I'm pretty sure that in the first month, the Iranians are going to have the opportunity to increase pressure. And I think that's the leverage that they have at the negotiating table right now. That's what makes the Americans free Iranian assets, lift the sanctions. Otherwise, they'd never do this.

We saw in the JCPOA, the nuclear deal of 2015, that when the Iranians carried out their obligations, under Trump the United States refrained from doing so. This time around, the Iranians are making sure that their leverage is intact. So I don't think the Iranians are all that excited about letting as many ships flow through the Strait of Hormuz as possible. And Trump is actually helping by threatening Iran, by saying he'll destroy the country, by saying he'll murder the president or the negotiators. He is also causing concern for, as I said earlier, shipping companies and insurance companies. So I'm not sure if the Iranians are too upset, even though these are all violations of the deal. He cannot make threats. The United States is not allowed to threaten Iran at all during this period.

But in a sense, this is hurting the United States more than anything else, because they desperately need ships and shipping companies and insurance companies to feel assured about the future of this trade of Hormuz. The very nature of this two-month MOU does not give great assurances. And then to have Trump ranting and raving during this period is going to make things much worse. So I think that leverage is going to remain there for the time being. With regards to the Israeli regime, we've seen this thing throughout the last, since October the 7th, we've seen this growing hostility towards the regime and towards Zionism across the world. And surprisingly, in some places, it's quite surprising how even in, for example, India, the dislike is rising towards the Israeli regime.

And the same is true in the United States. And what you said about Tucker Carlson is interesting. It's very important in a second way as well. And that is that, as you see, as you watch Tucker Carlson, you see that a few months ago he began to become very openly critical of the regime. But now it's

increasingly becoming hostile. And I think that this is reflective of the growing hostility. So, you know, you disapprove and then you go further and it becomes entrenched. And this is the foolishness of the Israeli regime by continuing the genocide in Gaza. Every day they're murdering kids. They're bombing tents. They're bombing teenage girls going to give exams. I mean, the slaughter is endless. And people are seeing this across the world.

They're seeing what's happening in Lebanon. Young kids who are just now entering politics are entering with these scenes every day on social media, despite the algorithms, the pro-Israeli algorithms. It's so bad and so many people are angered that young people are seeing it. And on the other hand, the older Republican Americans, who are the base of the Israeli regime, they're old and they're bound to decrease in number as time goes by. So you see the percentage of people growing hostile towards the regime growing. You see the entrenchment of that anger growing. So the degree of hostility is growing. This does not bode well at all for the regime.

I can't say at all whether this is going to lead to some huge fracture in the near future, because at the end of the day, the political elites in the United States, the bubble in Washington, they are deeply influenced by the oligarchy, the Zionist billionaires, the billionaire class, the Epstein class, whatever one would like to call it. So you have the super wealthy, the powerful Zionist elite on the one hand, but you have a very angry and often dissatisfied population that is increasingly moving hostile. Where that takes the United States is difficult to say, but I think that if this shift had not taken place, it would have been more difficult for Trump to push back on Netanyahu.

In other words, if this war had happened without the two and a half to three years of genocide, and Trump was in this difficult position with this energy crisis, I think it would have been much more difficult for him to push back. But now, knowing how the political class sees how hated this regime is, it makes this pushback easier—if I'm making my point clear. So none of this is good for the Israeli regime. Remember, every time in the past when they would put something out about differences between Biden and Netanyahu over the genocide, it turned out to be a lie. Or Trump and Netanyahu over the Iran war last year—around now, a few days ago last year—they were saying that Trump didn't want war.

He wanted negotiations. Netanyahu wanted war. And then they carried out this Blitzkrieg attack. That turned out to be a lie. And then initially, when these outbursts by Trump began to leak—the first one saying that everyone hates Israel, everyone hates you, and he used the F word—there was a debate about whether this was just good cop, bad cop, how real this was. But then it just became, you know, we had more instances. And then even Vance made some comments about Israel, the Israeli regime, that obviously do not look good for the regime. So while I don't want to say at all that Zionism is dead—that's obviously not the case—they are extraordinarily powerful, and they can wreck this agreement at any moment.

It's possible. And I wouldn't put a false flag operation—I mean, I would not discount or ignore the possibility of a false flag operation in the United States in order to mobilize the American public

against Iran to pursue pro-Israeli policies. But I think that in any case, Zionism has been badly weakened in the United States, in the West, and across the world. And I think that is going to have implications in the months and years ahead. And if the genocidal actions of the Israeli regime continue, I think it's going to act as a catalyst to quicken the pace of this shift at the bottom, at the base, and it's going to have implications at the top ultimately in one form or another.

And of course, the economic hardship that we're all going to experience soon, based on what we're being told, due to the shortages of fuel that will hit—whether the Strait of Hormuz is open or not—if it's closed, it's just going to hit harder and it's going to last longer. But I think in the months ahead, as life gets more difficult for many people, it's also going to be bad news for the Israeli regime. So the road ahead does not look good for Zionism. The road ahead does not look good for the Israeli regime. And I think ultimately this regime cannot sustain itself in the distant future.

#Glenn

But we cannot undermine, we cannot underestimate.

#Marandi

The oligarchy that owns the major AI companies, that owns social media and the mainstream media, they are owned and controlled by Zionists. So it's going to be very complicated. But I am not optimistic about the deal, though I am optimistic about the future. I think there'll be dark days and months ahead, as I've always believed, and perhaps years. But I see the collapse of the empire taking place, unfolding in front of our eyes. And the collapse of the empire basically means the collapse of the power of the Zionist regime because it needs Western public support, which it doesn't have. And it needs Western wealth and power to sustain itself, which are increasingly scarce. And thus, I think the internal strife in the Israeli regime is justified, and the deep concerns are justified too. And these are not good signs for their future.

#Glenn

Well, I was one of the people who suspected that what was happening between the U.S. and Israel could be another game of good cop, bad cop, political theater. But again, what has become evident, even if this was the case—and I'm not so sure that it was anymore—all this language, it does matter that all that has been said about Israel kind of opened the door to other criticism. That is, I've spoken to some very important voices in the United States, and some of them in the past had the impression that they were more apprehensive about criticizing Israel too fiercely in public because it would come with a big social cost, if not a cost for their reputation or their profession. But now this appears to be gone because some people opened the door—now Vance and others—and now it's essentially permitted to say what many people were thinking.

Essentially, the normalized criticism of Israel. Now, once this is out of the box, it's very hard to put it back in. So I think, yeah, there are going to be some difficult times ahead for Israel, as well as the United States, and indeed the whole concept of what should be considered pro-Israel or pro-American. Because we've often used this concept as if it has a fixed understanding, but it's very hard for me to see how this is in Israel's benefit to continue this. You would think that at some point the United States and Israel would cut their losses and adjust to new realities instead of doubling down and always making bad even worse. So anyway, we'll wait and see. And hopefully then you'll come back on the program. So thanks for coming back on.

#Marandi

Well, it's always a pleasure, and I'm always happy to be on your show. The only thing I would add is that we've seen the Epstein files, and I'm sure there are many more Epsteins out there, big and small. And with the technology that exists today, there are easier ways to monitor people and get dirt on them than the old traditional ways used by Epstein. So I would never underestimate the power of Zionism and how it can capture people and force them to do their bidding. I mean, there's always speculation about Trump and why it is that he is so extraordinarily influenced by the Israeli regime.

And if it is true that he is compromised, I would imagine, as I was saying earlier, the reason why Trump probably, if he is captured, if he is compromised, the only thing that would allow Trump to stand up to the Israeli regime is if there are many others among the Israel-firsters and Zionists in the United States who see the danger ahead and believe that the Israeli regime has to back down. But the point is that the link, the bond between the elites in the United States, the powerful, and Zionism is still very much in place. I'm not naive about that. But you do see changes taking place, as you pointed out—criticisms of the Israeli regime which before were among the elites impossible to see.

I mean, when... I don't remember Reagan calling what the Israeli regime was doing in Lebanon a holocaust. But, I mean, I don't remember back then. There was no internet back then. But more recently, people have been reminding us of what he said back then. Now it doesn't surprise us, but back then, that was a... you know, he could say that. But after Reagan, no one would say that anymore. No one would even say small criticisms. So since the 1990s, the hold over the American elites and American society has been extraordinary. So this criticism that we're now seeing openly, and you see elites, as you were saying, openly criticizing the regime, is a big deal.

But again, as I said, the power of the Zionist lobby and the Zionist class is still very great. So we'll have to see how it plays out. But if the United States pushes for confrontation with Iran, then it gets worse for the Zionists. This, I think, is what the Iranians understand very well—that they hold the cards. If the United States wants to wreck the deal, or if they allow the Israelis to force them to wreck the deal, then I think many Zionists will understand that this will only make things in the long

run worse for them. So they're stuck. They don't know what to do. On the one hand, if they abide by the deal, it's bad news for Israel. If they wreck the deal, it's very bad news for the Israeli regime too.