



Iranians are "Outraged": Iranian-American Professor on Tehran Attack Aftermath

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Professor Mohammad Marandi is an Iranian-American academic and political analyst. He is based in Tehran, where he is located right at this very moment, and is the head of the National American Studies Programme at the University of Tehran, where now teaches English literature and Orientalism. He has become one of the leading voices inside Iran to give a perspective that is crucially different than the kind of echo chamber we hear from the Washington think tank community, and he is generally regarded as a supporter of the country's general foreign policy orientation and political interests, which is why he brings a very valuable perspective, usually deliberately suppressed and unheard in Western media. But we believe, as we've said before, that especially when war breaks out, it's more vital than ever to hear exactly from people inside those countries we're not supposed to hear from, or we're supposed to consider our enemy. He has been on our show before. We've followed his work for a long time, and we are very happy to have you be able to hear what he has to say.

Professor Marandi, thank you so much for taking the time to join us tonight. I know that you have a lot going on. So, we had you on our show, I think, about a month ago to talk about the prospect of an Israeli strike on Iran, which has now happened. Before we get to the kind of geopolitical implications and the like, you are in Tehran. What is it that you can tell us that you heard, that you saw, what is happening in that city over the past, say, twelve to 16 hours since this attack began?

Mohammad Marandi (MM): Well, the attack began early in the morning, and people were asleep for the most part. I, by chance, happened to be awake, and there were sounds of very loud explosions. And it turned out that some of these explosions were in our neighbourhood or close to our neighbourhood. And they targeted apartment blocks, apartment buildings. They destroyed one apartment building with ten units, and children were thrown out of the windows and onto the streets. Women were murdered. Neighbours of targets were killed.

Family members of targets were killed. It was stunning. And people here are outraged. And then, of course, the fighting, people heard the news about the fighting and about the airstrikes being carried out across the country. And we are where we are right now. Commanders were murdered. In the eyes of Iranians, they are martyrs. And they've been quickly replaced, and they are regrouping. We expect that the Iranian retaliation would begin possibly in the coming hours.

GG: I want to get to that retaliation in a second, but before I do, one of the theories that I have heard for the last several weeks is that this whole notion that there's some kind rift between Netanyahu and Trump is theatre, that it's artificial, that's it's not real, that the purpose of that, as well as Trump's optimistic claims about the progress of negotiation with Iran was all kind of a ruse to lure the Iranians into a false sense of security, not really being on high alert. Is that something you believe? And if so, either way, did it work? Was Iran taken a little bit by surprise by this attack?

MM: I don't think many people believe that there's any divide between the United States and the Israeli regime. They're close partners. Regardless of what Trump personally thinks about Netanyahu, that's something different and open to speculation. But I don't think that will have any real impact on – and I don't think people here think there's a real impact on the relationship, the strategic relationship between the regime in Tel Aviv and Washington. As far as I know, the Iranians were prepared for an attack. They were waiting for an attack. What I think, and I'm speculating to be very clear, I think they did not expect the Israelis to [kill] senior officials, whether military or civilian. I think the expectation was that they would strike military targets or possibly the nuclear programme, but not go so far. That is why I think that we had these assassinations succeed. But we have to remember that the Iranians are very much alone. This is NATO behind Israel, countries across [inaudible], they are with NATO, they're either members of state or they're allied to the United States. So right now, US bases in Turkey and the Emirates in Qatar, in Bahrain, they're all being used to help the Israeli regime. Whether for defensive purposes or offensive purposes. And airspace to Jordan and Syria is open to the regime and the Americans. So it's very difficult for Iran to fight such a battle.

But Glenn, the fact is that this is all about Palestine. It has nothing to do really with the Iranian nuclear programme. If Iran had a policy towards the Palestinian issue, like Turkey or the Emirates or Saudi Arabia or Egypt, the United States would have nothing to do with Iran. But the problem is that Iran refuses to accept an ethno-supremacist regime in Palestine, and Iran continues to support the Palestinian cause. And that is something that is completely unacceptable to the United States, and of course, Iran's independent foreign policy in general, which came about after the revolution, where decisions in Iran are made in Tehran. There are other reasons, too, the revolution itself and the role that the United States played with the Shah and the embassy takeover and all that. But I think it's clear that the divide between Iran and the United States has to do more with the Israeli regime and what it's doing to the Palestinian people than anything else. And therefore, whether there is a nuclear agreement or not, I don't think that the United States is going to ever accept Iran. And also under Obama,

the nuclear deal was constantly violated. Trump tore up the deal. The Europeans ignored the deal, and it was only Iran that was abiding by its commitments. And now, with Trump in power, as he's constantly flip-flopping and changing his position, even Witkoff one day talking about accepting Iranian enrichment at lower percentages, and then he shifted his position completely.

With all these shifts taking place in the White House, whether with regards to the ceasefire in Gaza or the trade war or Iran or Ukraine or elsewhere, it's really impossible to have a deal with the United States. And even if we do have a deal, who's to say that Trump won't wake up the next morning and post something on Truth Social, saying, I don't accept this deal, the Iranians [inaudible] the deal, or they cheated me, or did this? And then the Europeans would say, yes, whatever you say, we follow the leader. We already see that the Israelis, after they attacked Iran, the Europeans are condemning Iran. The French are saying Israel has the right to defend itself. The Germans are accusing Iran of attacking the Israeli regime, whereas Iran hasn't even—Iran hasn't done anything yet. Oh, those drones that they talk about, there were no drones fired from Iran. But in any case, the regime initiated this. The Israeli regime is attacking Iranian nuclear installations. It's killing civilians, but Iran is to blame. So how can Iran have an agreement with such countries, such governments?

GG: Alright, so that all makes sense. So then the question then becomes, where are we in terms of this conflict? There's a lot of triumphalist rhetoric, of course, coming from Israel and the United States, like there was the last time that Israel struck, we took out so many of their air defences, but also their ballistic missile capabilities. If we look at where the strikes actually happened, they all, almost most of them seem to have happened in the west of Iran, very few in central Iran and almost none in the east. So the question that I have is, you know, the Iranians are vowing a serious retaliatory response commensurate with the attack itself. What is Iran's real capability, do you think, at this point to strike Israel in a meaningful way?

MM: Well, after all the Israelis have the support of the collective West, and it launched a war against Iran, and they have killed people and they've damaged Iranian assets. A lot of it, though, is misinformation and disinformation, and some of the images that people are seeing online are fake or they're from somewhere else or they are AI, but some of them are real. And that's what happens in war, especially when one side suddenly [inaudible] war and aggression.

Iran does have a very powerful deterrence, and that is its missile programme and its drone programme. But, of course, the Israelis went in with the help of the United States, targeting senior commanders. So they put in place new commanders and they're regrouping, and I think that ultimately we will see a significant Iranian response. I cannot predict the future, but I am confident that the Israeli regime will not come out on top. They control the internet. They control propaganda. But we have to remember what happened in Yemen. The White House said and the Pentagon or the Secretary of Defence said that they're going to defeat the Houthis, as they like to call them, or Ansar Allah and the Yemeni armed forces, and after a month, we saw they failed. And it was the United States that effectively capitulated. So I think that Iran was hurt. That doesn't mean the war will end, because Netanyahu needs a war.

But this is going to get messy. But the big question is, do the Americans get involved? If the Americans start striking Iran, then, Glenn, I think we're going to have a global economic catastrophe, because those tiny Arab family dictatorships in the Persian Gulf, they host American bases. Iranians will see them as complicit. And if Iran strikes them for being complicit, they'll be swept away in days, if not hours. And that would lead to a global economic meltdown, because the price of oil and gas will go through the roof. So hopefully Trump will be sane enough to stay out of this, although he is involved, he's deeply involved, but not to go further. I don't know how Iran is going to treat the United States for what it is doing now or how it's going to treat other entities at all...

GG: I think you froze a little bit at the end, and of course, as you mentioned, because you're in Tehran, there's a slowed down internet, but so far we've heard pretty much everything until that very last few words there, which I think everyone understood the answer. Let me ask you this. So I think what Trump's posture is now, certainly what he's trying to convey is, look I gave you 60 days we didn't get a deal done today's the 61st day you got a little taste of what will happen to you if we don't get the deal done so now what you ought to do is sign a deal. And I think that you know that's something we talked about last night even before this attack happened which is the whole time the position of Witkoff and the Trump administration was yeah, of course Iran needs to have the right to have low levels of enrichment for a nuclear energy programme, and at some point the rhetoric changed for Trump of saying they can't have enrichment at all and sort of said, oh, the Iranians, something happened to them, they changed, something got into them, as though that was something Iran had originally agreed to do or something. I'm not sure Trump even understood the enrichment issue, or if he did, he got convinced that Iran shouldn't have any enrichment, it would never gonna be a deal. So, is there any possibility that the Iranians would now sit down with the United States in the hopes of getting a deal to avert further strikes?

MM: I do not think there is any chance whatsoever that Iran will agree to halt nuclear enrichment because it is a sovereign right of the Iranians. It is part of Iran's sovereignty, and the Iranians are not going to give that up. Iran's revolution was very much about sovereignty, independence and making decisions in Tehran, alongside supporting the Palestinian cause and the cause of liberation in apartheid South Africa. But there isn't a chance in the world that Iran will accept such a thing. Iran is willing to accept the International Atomic Energy Agency having been intrusive. And we already did that. We had it for many years. But Trump tore up that deal. But Iran is not going to give up its sovereign right, especially since, by doing so, Iran would be held hostage. If tomorrow the United States prevents Iran from importing nuclear fuel, then Iran's nuclear reactors will all have to be shut down. These are huge investments. And we know how the United State uses [inaudible] to strangle Iran. So I don't see any chance whatsoever, under any circumstances, that Iran will accept a deal where it is denied its right as an independent and sovereign country.

GG: All right, last question. Obviously, everybody knows it's not exactly a secret that there are major factions in Israel and the United States that don't want just attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities but want regime change in Iran, the restoration of what they call the Iranian

monarchy, which was this very brutal and savage dictatorship that was a puppet regime of Tel Aviv and Washington for decades, which the Iranian revolution overthrew. They want to reinstall that. And there's some people who believe that if Iran doesn't show a real deterrence at this point, namely the ability to strike in meaningful ways, whether it's Israel or US assets in the region or the Gulf states, that it's almost inevitable that Iran will become sort of a new Syria, that they will be able to foment enough attacks on the government, they have proxy forces ready –is that something you believe is a real possibility, especially in the event that Iran isn't able to mount a real response?

MM: I think Iran will mount a very real response, as a part of being Iran has created its own military industry. It's developed itself in high-tech fields. It's in the region, the most technologically developed country, using its own indigenous technology. I think that they will be able to hit back very hard. And I think contrary to what the Americans like to believe, the Iranian people have been more united than before by this aggression because they murdered innocent people and because the West is trying to deny Iran its sovereign right.

What they are in fact doing is making the Iranian People more demanding of the government to retaliate. And so right now the expectation in Iran is that the armed forces hit the Israelis very hard. The United States and the West, their so-called Iran experts, are always miscalculating. They hire like-minded people or these Iranians who say what needs to be said in their think tanks. Or they hire them for the media, and they repeat the narratives of the West. And then these people get money, and then they give money to those [inaudible] to participate in their programmes. And everyone is saying the same thing, and it's well-funded, and people have a good standard of living as a result. But it creates a very misleading picture of Iran in the United States, just as it does about Russia and other countries. Push a little bit harder, Iran will collapse, they've been saying that for decades. The narrative hasn't changed. But what I think is going to happen is it's going to create cruelty, in fact, towards the West, especially after the Iranians have witnessed 20 months of genocide in Gaza.

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