

Pepe Escobar: Iran LAUNCHES Offensive!?

Missiles SLAM UAE — US Army FLEES

Geopolitical analyst and independent journalist Pepe Escobar discusses the new phase of war ignited by the expiration of the MoU. Has Iran really struck the UAE, and what's behind the extreme confidence expressed by both sides of the conflict amid renewed escalation? We answer these questions and so much more. Pepe on Telegram: <https://t.me/rocknrollgeopolitics> Pepe on X: <https://x.com/RealPepeEscobar> Transition Protocol: <https://www.youtube.com/@UCewRbK22LRnNi6N3EcGjbow> / Pepe's new article : <https://strategic-culture.su/news/2026/08/19/why-trumps-blockade-cannot-turn-iran-into-an-island/> Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> #iran #uae #trump

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, Pepe Escobar, independent journalist and geopolitical analyst, is here with me to analyze the latest developments, and let's get right to them. So yesterday, Pepe, the UAE Defense Ministry announced that there were two ballistic missiles that had been fired toward them. One fell outside and the second fell inside of their territorial waters. They said they're on high alert for any further threats. And here is the official documentation of that, what the ministry said. Now, Iran has refuted this. They've said that they didn't actually fire any missiles on the UAE and that it had a Zionist tinge to it in terms of a false flag. The UAE responded by imposing an embargo on Iran over these missile attacks. But one thing is for certain, Pepe, is that Iran is actually on the offensive.

They're going on an offensive posture in this war. They said that if the United States strikes again, that they are eyeing targets now even beyond the current scope of the theater, potentially European targets, including targets in Bulgaria, Cyprus, and the undersea fiber optic cables in the Strait of Hormuz, which would, of course, have global ramifications. Now, the Pentagon is seemingly on the run. It has announced to the Washington Post that CENTCOM may be moving its troops and bases, or at least the infrastructure in the bases, out of there after Iranian strikes essentially destroyed all of them. Now, Pepe, I know you have a new column out talking about Iran's offensive posture, as well as what has led to what is now the death of the memorandum of understanding, as it has expired and led to all of these developments. So, Pepe, to you, what exactly is going on right now?

#Pepe Escobar

Wow. How many hours do I have? Look, it's going to be very hard to put it in a condensed form. Okay, let's try bit by bit. Let's start with this UAE thing. It is a false flag. When the Iranians do something, they actually advertise it. They have images. It's obviously a false flag. Okay, who's profiting from it? Obviously, the Americans. This is directly coordinated to that ghastly Scott Bessent's new campaign to strangle Iran economically and financially. So it's perfect, because scenario number one, which is the most plausible scenario, the Treasury Department and the White House pressure Iran, the UAE directly, MBZ and his cronies.

Look, you have to do something against Iran. Cut off everything: trade, commerce, financial transactions, et cetera. Why? Essentially because the number two trade partner and financial partner of Iran, right behind China, is the UAE. There's a lot of Iranian money in the UAE: legal, illegal, back-channel, underground, you name it. The numbers are staggering. I heard all sorts of numbers for the past twenty-something years, everything from tens of millions of dollars to hundreds of millions of dollars—billions, I'm sorry, billions. If you take the shuttle, or the different kinds of shuttle, between Tehran and Dubai, which is less than an hour and a half, you see this in front of you.

Businessmen from both sides doing business all the time. And, of course, the upper middle class and the wealthy in Iran, they all have interests, companies, you name it, especially in Dubai. Also Abu Dhabi, but especially Dubai. So if you cut off trade and finance between the UAE and Iran, yes, it's a big, big shock. But it's not such a big deal because Iran and a lot of these people, they can relocate their businesses to other GCC nations or to Asia. Example: Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, not a problem. So Dubai is only one among many options.

Number two, this false flag, simultaneously with Bessent's new strategy, so-called, fits the bill perfectly. So yes, and considering that, once again, when something like that—the IRGC says, "Look, we sent a missile so-and-so, another missile so-and-so"—nothing, no word. So it is a false flag. Well, this is part of the empire's new groove because they are desperate. And it's something that I alluded to in my last column, and something that we have been discussing with Larry in the Transition Protocol channel. We are part of this project. It directly links to the Americans, or the White House specifically, trying to get an indirect or semi-direct channel to talk to the Iranians, a back channel, semi-underground.

And they tried two different plans. The first—and both of them, by the way, were straight up to all of you, our audience—major disaster on both counts, which increases their frustration. The first one was via Asim Munir, Pakistan's field marshal. As you all know, he has Trump on speed dial and vice versa. And our Pakistani mediator friends, many of the people who pass information to Larry and I, they confirm, they reconfirm that Trump calls him virtually every day because he wants a channel so he can talk to somebody very well placed in the Iranian government and obviously do some Trumpian thing. And in this case, it was basically from the beginning to install divide and rule.

So Trump asked Munir to talk directly to Ahmad Vahidi, the head of the IRGC. And obviously, Munir and Vahidi, they have a very good relationship for, we can even say, decades. It's not only years. They know each other very well. And they talk, of course, they talk military matters. And basically, Trump's idea was to try to seduce Vahidi directly, play divide and rule, play a Venezuela on Vahidi, essentially. And obviously, Vahidi, when he learned about that, he said a straightforward no to Asim Munir. And Asim Munir told the White House, look, I got a major, major no on that. And we, as mediators, we cannot do this.

We, Pakistan, we are mediating between you and the Iranians, but we cannot—you cannot use us to try to destabilize the Iranian government at the top. So this was plan number one. Plan number two was even more far-fetched: the Iraqi Kurdistan channel. This channel already existed. That's very, very interesting because the Americans, basically, they tried a new version of the same channel. This channel was established last May, only three months ago, by Tulsi Gabbard. Tulsi got an authorization from Trump and Vance to try to build an alternative channel to talk to the IRGC, and they chose Iraqi Kurdistan. Neshirvan Barzani is the president of Iraqi Kurdistan. Okay, Barzani clan. I'm sure all of you know that there's no Iraqi Kurdistan.

There's the Barzani clan, and they own everything in Iraqi Kurdistan. This is how it works. It's a nest of vipers, and it's infested with CIA, Mossad, MI6. If you go to Erbil, it's one of the most disgusting places on Earth. Really. Anyway, and this even before shock and awe. Much more, of course, after shock and awe, 2003. Anyway, this channel already existed, and it was there. It was dormant. It was not working. It was in a coma or whatever. So the Americans, this time, they resurrected this channel, but it was not through Neshirvan Barzani. It was through the prime minister of Iraqi Kurdistan, also Barzani. And obviously, it didn't work because, once again, the message was the same. It was related to Vahidi.

And Vahidi's answer, once again, said absolutely no way. And we are not interested in talking to Americans, whoever that may be, including the president of the United States. So the Americans had two failures in a row trying to set up a channel directly with the IRGC to basically instill divide and rule. It could be anything: a seduction operation, a PR operation, bribes, lots of cash, suitcases full of cash, you know, the usual, what they usually do, what they did everywhere: Syria, Venezuela, Libya, everyone. Anyway, didn't work. And it's not by accident that—why this twin approach to play a dividing role at the top of the Iranian government, and on top of it with the wrong guy, because the guy who actually decides military policy is Mohsen Rezaei.

It's not Ahmad Vahidi. Vahidi is the head of the IRGC, but the guy on top of everything, directly appointed by the Supreme Leader, Khamenei himself, is Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and personal representative of the leader, and, of course, overseeing everything in military terms. So, obviously, another American failure. Why this is so important as we stand at the moment? Because it coincides with the discussions, or the play-acting, or, frankly, the dementia inbuilt in discussing a nuclear attack or a tactical nuclear attack against Iran, confirmed by different sources, including a long post on X by Marjorie.

So this means, yes, and these people know that this is being discussed, and it's not these past few days. This has been discussed for a while, and now it's back, including this was not officially confirmed, of course, Trump asking directly the generals, "I want a nuclear attack," and the generals saying, "No bloody way." So this is where we are. So it's a very good reason for, once again, Trump resuscitating the nuclear attack gambit, because the two plans that he had to try to basically destabilize the Iranian government at the top, they failed. And that's why, Danny, we are in a much, much rougher situation now than we were two, three, four days ago.

#Danny

Again, it's another form, I'm sorry, of escalation ladder. Yeah, right. Well, Pepe, I wanted to bring up your article here. First, here it is: "Why Trump's Blockade Can't Turn Iran into an Island." But you said that Iran is very much aware that a long, dark cloud may be coming down. And the personal representative of the leader, he is setting the tone now: the way is to go all out to force the hegemonic old order to bow down. How do you see, then, Iran's offensive posture actually taking place? Because there have been a flurry of reports. I've been covering them over the last few days, reports of going after the undersea cables.

Now there's reports about targets in, I guess, near Europe, like Cyprus, for example. Syria and Cyprus. Yeah, Bulgaria and Cyprus. And then, of course, some other aspects, for example, like ground offenses in Kuwait and things like this. So how do you see this actually taking shape? Because as you noted, the plan for Iran the United States seems to have, under the ingenious tutelage, being sarcastic here, of Scott Bessent, is to try to starve Iran out like Syria. But as you said, that can't happen. But Iran, of course, wants to—does not want this war to go on forever. So your thoughts on how it actually goes about this?

#Pepe Escobar

Well, it's a very complex framework that is being developed by the Iranian leadership in detail. Everybody's involved: Mojtaba, Mohsen Rezaei, the top of the IRGC, Ghalibaf, of course, and of course the Minister of Foreign Relations, the Majlis, everybody's involved. Okay, we need to change our strategy. So far, it has been strategic patience. If we continue to do like this, we'll be reacting all the time. And the Americans come up with a different ploy literally every week. So we need to go on the offensive. The thing is how they're going to go on the offensive and when. They are expecting an attack by the Epstein syndicate before the midterms. This is absolutely guaranteed.

And we managed to confirm this via different channels, all leading to the top leadership and people staying inside the tight inner circle of Mojtaba Khamenei. So the thing is, how do you preempt that? And that's the discussion at the moment. They are with their finger on the trigger, and they have several options. The first one, the most obvious one: more devastating attacks against what's left of the U.S. empire of bases in West Asia. Number two, a preemptive attack on Israel. Very, very

complicated. They prefer not to do that. They prefer that Israel attacks them, and then the counterpunch is going to be absolutely lethal, especially because now America has transferred a lot of assets from the bases to Israeli territory.

So Israel is inside a box, and the Americans are inside a box in Israel. That facilitates the work of the IRGC, you name it. Number three will be to go against American vessels, part of the Trump blockade. Huge problem. They are very, very far away from Iranian territory and, of course, territorial waters. They are in the extremity of the Gulf of Oman, very close to the Arabian Sea. That's very, very far. And, of course, the Iranians, they prefer to have an excellent motive to strike against the U.S. Navy. So, an extra thing: they are waiting for the Americans to provide the motive. And, of course, around all that, they continue to maneuver in terms of solidifying their network across Eurasia.

It's not only Russia and China. It's Russia, China, the Central Asian states, and everybody around the Caspian, which includes, for instance, one Central Asian state and even Azerbaijan, and two Central Asian states, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. And solidifying their network because the Trump blockade, or Scott Bessent's flights of fanciful imagination, is to isolate Iran. You cannot isolate Iran. You just need to look at the map, which these idiots in Washington never do. If you look at the map, and if you look a little bit at least at the past 3,000 years of history, at least, Iran is the crossroads of Eurasia. So nowadays, okay, we're not even going—going back to Iranian dynasties, Persian Empire, you know, no.

Let's focus on what's happening today. They have overland corridors to Pakistan, between six and seven. Pakistan opened all overland corridors to Iran because this essentially is trade and commerce between these three players: China, Pakistan, and Iran. From Xinjiang to Pakistan, crossing Pakistan or going to the port of Gwadar. From Gwadar, it goes to the border. From the border, it goes to Iran. This is how China can export anything that they want and anything that Iran needs via Pakistan. It's maritime and then overland. And vice versa, what Iran needs to trade with both Pakistan, their neighbor, and China goes this way. So the Americans, they cannot do anything against that.

Apart from bombing, for instance, different stretches of the whole thing, which is what they did with another connectivity corridor, which is the China-Iran railway corridor. The China-Iran railway is from a dry port 20 kilometers outside of Tehran, crosses Iran to the east—I'm sorry, crosses to Turkmenistan. From Turkmenistan, goes to Central Asia and arrives in Xinjiang, in China. Paid by China, built by China, inaugurated last year, part of the Belt and Road Initiative. And obviously, one of the stretches was bombed by the Americans during the war. But it's working fine again. Relations with Turkmenistan, very, very close, because they even swap gas. For instance, the gas that Iranians use in their northeast is Turkmen gas. Swap deals.

And, of course, between their borders, they can do all sorts of commerce. Iran is improving their fleet of railway tankers, so they can export oil and gas to anybody that wants it, from Central Asia to

Pakistan, to Xinjiang, China as well. So you cannot cut that off. And, of course, the Caspian, same thing. The Caspian is the Russia-Iran shuttle of everything. Ships, and of course military via Russian transport planes that they, you know, they did the Astrakhan-Tehran route many, many times during this past six months. Astrakhan and Bandar-Anzali are the top ports in the International North-South Transportation Corridor. Very, very important across the Caspian. Russia, Iran, India. So this continues, absolutely. And there's no way the Americans can interfere in the Caspian.

You saw what happened when the Ukrainians actually fired—was it a drone, if I'm not mistaken? It was not a missile. I think it was a drone—against an Iranian vessel in the Caspian. The Iranians were ready to respond big, big time. The Ukrainians apologized when somebody with a brain at Bankova—there are not many—did the math, and they said, "Oh shit, the last thing we want is the Russians and the Iranians against us." So this is exactly what happened. So you have a lot of options around for Iran to continue to do trade and commerce with their neighbors, their immediate neighbors and their faraway neighbors as well. So the only thing that the Trump blockade can do is to block some of the maritime trade of Iran. Okay, it is a pain in the ass. It is serious.

There are no definitive numbers, but the export of oil by Iran fell dramatically this second semester. In the first semester, it was much bigger than a year before. The numbers came out already. Iran exported, I think, \$7.5 billion or so in the first quarter of this year. But that was before the war, or counting one month of war, March. So obviously, this fell these past, let's say, months or so with the new Trump blockade. But it's not strangling Iran. That's the most important point. Although, you know, if you listen to Scott Bessent, everybody is dying of hunger already in Iran. But okay, okay, I'm not even trying to qualify this specimen. So that's how we are, Danny, in terms of the blockade not accomplishing what it was imagined to accomplish, which is to isolate Iran completely. Major fail, again.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, and Pepe, you called it coercive but not decisive in your article. Not decisive. Now, I wanted your thoughts on the fact that it appears that not only has MOU expired and all these developments that you just commented on are going further and further toward escalation, but that Trump has ordered, actually, that all so-called envoys, whatever they are, whoever they are, halt all possible future negotiations with Iran, and that it is changing its strategy toward Iran. I don't know what that means. But one thing that is for sure.

#Pepe Escobar

They never have a strategy.

#Danny

But this is what is definitely happening, according to sources close to the Pentagon, that these shifts in military assets toward Jordan, Israel, or even Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast. Now, that's an interesting proposition there, given I know you wanted to talk about Yemen. Yeah. It seems that the United States military is actually on the retreat in many ways, and I'm wondering if that is factoring into this strange, you've called it neither war nor peace, situation and position that the U.S. finds itself in: not willing to negotiate, not willing to strike.

#Pepe Escobar

Sorry, Danny. It's how they call it in Iran. They call it no war, no peace. It's there because that's what it is at the moment. And this is one of the reasons why they started to really think seriously about changing their strategy. If it's only strategic patience, this thing can go on for months or years. And obviously, they want some sort of drastic resolution before the midterms. And they want Trump to lose the midterms. This is part of Iran's policy. You asked me something about Yemen. We're going to get there soon, because when we get to Yemen, we're going to have to talk about the Sunni-NATO Mecca Pact. And this is a discussion in itself, right?

But, okay, we could start with a few numbers. And these are quite extraordinary. So in one month only, until, let me see, until today—so the past month until today—the Yemenis managed to immobilize at least eight Saudi petrol tankers, and they made 48 come back to where they came from, Yanbu or any other port. That's a lot. And apart from that, they launched drones and missiles against Yanbu, against some installations at Yanbu, against the Jizan oil refinery, which basically processes 400,000 barrels of oil a day. And they also attacked some nodes of the eastern oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia. And they say this is just the beginning, from Ansar Allah and Yemen armed forces.

They want Saudi Arabia to feel the pain on land, sea, and air. And they are just starting. Once again, these are the real badass motherfuckers. Don't mess with the Yemenis. And that's, once again, Saudi Arabia's mistake, which brings us to the Saudi-Turkish-Pakistani Mecca Pact. Will the Saudis bring Erdogan and Aziz Munir to their fight against Yemen by invoking the pact? Out of the question, because both the Turks and the Pakistanis are going to say, "Are you dreaming? This is not a war. This is your war, a war that you provoked. This has nothing to do with what we signed. What we signed is essentially a defense pact. Yemen is not attacking us, and in fact, they are responding to the way you attack them."

And they're responding to the illegal blockade that you have against them for almost 12 years, and the fact that you signed a memorandum of understanding with them and you broke it. And from the Pakistani side, we already have confirmations that they told Riyadh in no uncertain terms to stand down. First of all, they have a military pact, which was upgraded months ago. And now they have the Sunni Mecca Pact, but they are not going to be dragged into Saudi Arabia's adventures and the fact that they simply cannot manage their relationship with Yemen. But then there's another story

which links with— no, no, no, I was thinking about something. Ah, the Israeli attack against Turkish assets in Syria.

So this could be the prelude of an Israeli-Turkish war, which, by the way, has already been advertised by several infrahumans belonging to the Daesh cult openly. Turkey is next after Iran. So they already announced this to the whole planet, that Turkey is next. So now they attack Turkish assets in Syria. Will the Turks invoke the NATO-Mecca Pact to go after Israel? And that's how things have become very, very interesting. Guess why? Because the Pakistanis will be the first to say, "Yes, we're in. Excellent idea." So can you imagine the Turks and the Pakistanis using the pact? The Saudis come for nothing. Okay, let's use the pact to go after Israel. Okay, in terms of far-fetched scenarios, this one is not so far-fetched as it seems.

Okay, but for the moment, nothing. What we already know is that we already are entering the preliminary stage of an Israeli-Turkish confrontation. No question about it. So, as you can see, Danny, and all of you, all these pieces on the chessboard, you know, the whole thing gets so much more volatile day by day. We can think about parallels pre-war in 1914, where you have a system of alliances, and in the end, the war is inevitable because of this system of alliances. And we are more or less entering quite similar territory. Of course, completely different situation, completely different framework, historical moment, etcetera. But the fact that everything is interlinked, and many of these players are trying to save their asses from what may come later.

What may come later, if it is an absolutely irrational move by the White House, which is on the cards, and the whole planet knows that. Considering the psycho-toddler mess in power, anything goes. And now they're discussing tactical nuclear weapons like it's going to a 7-Eleven. Anything goes, literally. So if we have a Nazi-state Zionist system that was able to normalize a genocide against the will of the whole planet and enforce this genocide, they can also normalize nuclear weapons, or tactical nuclear weapons, because they know they can get away with it, sort of. And that's why the situation that we are now compared to only a few days ago is immensely more terrifying. There's no other way to put it.

#Danny

Yeah, it definitely seems like we're on the cusp of a major escalation. Even just the discussion of tactical nukes is quite astounding. But I wanted to also—I'm glad you brought up Israel striking Syria, because Barak Ravid, Unit 8200's Mossad agent posing as a reporter, said something very interesting about these strikes. He said the aggressive move by Israel frustrated White House and senior U.S. officials, but it also exposed again—bullshit, bullshit. Yeah, exactly. But this is what's so BS about it—exposed again that the Trump administration is rarely prepared to draw a clear red line with Netanyahu, essentially contradicting the prior statement, because what's the point of frustrations if you're not drawing a clear red line? It means it doesn't exist. But your thoughts on this? I mean, this was not really well reported. Look, Danny, can you imagine people actually fooled by this thing, this Barak whatever?

#Pepe Escobar

Third-rate IDF Mossad agent posing as a journalist. All of us real journalists, we can smell people like that zillions of miles away. And he still manages to fool people. At least in the U.S., he fools a lot of people. Across the Global South, definitely not. In West Asia, nobody. Only people with IQ or a negative IQ. But he fools a lot of people in the U.S. Everything that these people write and publish is a spin. It's hagiography or following the larger picture of the Zionist international agenda. So everything that they publish is essentially fake or spin or both. So we should stop paying attention to this because it's in fact the lowest common denominator of something posing as journalism, in fact. So it's better to read social posts. At least we can laugh about the dementia. These people don't even have a sense of humor.

#Danny

Yeah, and this whole situation does pose a very big question, as you said, with this whole Mecca defense pact. But the idea of an Israel-Turkey war just adds a further flashpoint of major destabilization. I mean, that war is a different kind of war. I mean, Turkey, I wouldn't say, is battle-tested, and I wouldn't say Turkey is completely independent in its foreign policy either, given its NATO and U.S. relationship. But if there is a clash between the two, and given the state of where things are with Iran and now, of course, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, you have essentially all corners of the region in a state of war.

#Pepe Escobar

Absolutely. And the problem is these triangular relationships, these interlocking relationships. And the fact that, for instance, the Pakistanis now, we could gather, especially these past two days, they are immensely frustrated with the fact that they put a lot of effort into trying to be credible mediators between Iran and the U.S. They worked their asses off, no question about that. They had help from Oman in some cases, from Qatar in some other cases. And now the whole thing, you know, our friend, the MOU pact, now he's six feet under, probably for life. It's totally dead. And this was essentially Pakistan's baby, the MOU. They did everything to have the MOU approved. They were explaining to the Iranians all the time, look, this can be good for you. You need to keep this diplomatic door open, et cetera, even against Iran's best judgment. The Iranians gave a chance to the MOU, persuaded by the Pakistanis all the time.

The Pakistanis are sending delegations to Iran every week to convince them. And obviously, Americans blew it up. And now that's it. The post that you read, that the Americans are not—there's no more negotiation with Iran—this is even worse because he's also lying. He keeps calling Field Marshal Asim Munir virtually every day. Larry and I got a confirmation yesterday, Danny, that still he wants Asim Munir to find a solution for him. Orders U.S. envoys to completely halt all possible future negotiations. Bullshit! Until a few days ago, they were trying. Trump himself was trying to get this

via these two plans that we talked about in the beginning of our conversation, to get to Vahidi himself so he could try to turn Vahidi. So, you know, he will tell how he did not. You're talking directly to the president of the United States. That's it.

Bullshit. So you cannot trust it. And this is on top of it, per CNN. That's another bullshit operation. You cannot trust anything coming from CNN. But even if this is true, informed allies, it is in process of changing its strategy. There is no strategy. The only strategy until a few days ago was to install, divide, and rule at the top of the Iranian government. It didn't work. So now the only strategy is Bessent saying that he's going to starve the whole 90 million Iranian population. This is the strategy now. And, of course, much worse, the discussions petit comité, National Security Council, White House, about tactical nuclear weapons.

So obviously, Danny, the deciding circles in Tehran—and I'm talking specifically about Mohsen Rezaei and the people around him—the fact that he's number two, he's the second most powerful man in Iran today, overseeing everything, with trench warfare experience during the Iran-Iraq War, with diplomatic experience. He knows the system upside down. He knows the IRGC upside down. He was a commander of the IRGC. So, you know, this is a guy who is devising, alongside the leader, the new strategy from now on and induce the Americans into a major mistake. This is one possibility.

Second, if the Americans make a major mistake, the counterpunch is going to be lethal and basically destroy the Trump administration before the midterms. These are three imperatives. How they're going to accomplish that is, of course, it's the method. And obviously, only they themselves know the method that they're going to apply. But it's already a new, a new strategic era in terms of Iranian resistance and defense of their sovereignty. Now they are going one step further than that. And they have no fear, Danny. They have no fear. And they know this is an existential war, and the next few months are going to be perhaps even more existential than the past six.

#Danny

Well, Pepe, we can't even get through a program without the reports on this changing. According to Press TV, they're saying that Trump wants to resume negotiations after officially suspending non-existent talks less than a day ago. He's also quoted on the tarmac today that the situation is so good, so maybe negotiations sometime in the future, but there's not even any need for them now, is the Trump line at this point, which is also, I think, a far cry from how most of the world feels about this, including people in the United States.

#Pepe Escobar

Of course.

#Danny

The situation being so good, I'm saying, I mean.

#Pepe Escobar

No, we cannot. The only way to—I would not say interpret or decode—the only way to assimilate and then immediately discard anything that he says is that this is valid for probably 10 seconds, and then it's not valid anymore. This is the criteria, because nothing makes sense, and there's no continuity, there's no strategic thinking, there's no reflection, nothing. It's basically somebody spewing out whatever sort of crap is crossing his mini brain at any given time. That's it.

#Danny

So obviously, we have to look at the actions.

#Pepe Escobar

For instance, when we look at an action like what happened with the UAE, then we can try to understand the motivation. Was MBZ forced to do this thing about cutting off all trade and commerce and financial ties with Iran? Or are they playing a much more sophisticated game, which is, okay, we do this just to placate the Americans, and we continue to do business with them? Both scenarios are possible. So this is what we should concentrate on: actions, reactions, and especially motivations of all the players involved. For instance, what Turkey is doing.

We have to consider how Turkey is hedging in terms of how to develop their new Ottoman dreams, which will never fade away—the Greater Turan dream of integrating all Turkic peoples, but of course with Ankara at the top. And the other Turkic peoples, they look at that and say, okay, maybe, but not with you at the top. So this is much more interesting, in fact. And Turkey obviously is not looking for a war at the moment. They cannot afford it. They have no money. They cannot afford a war against anybody. They may have that gigantic NATO army for nothing. So this is much more valuable for all of us. And, of course, to follow in detail how Iran is going to develop their new method to basically freak out the Trump administration.

This is what it is, essentially. They want the Trump administration to freak out for the next few months before the midterms. And they can use all sorts of stratagems to get there. Persians are very good at devising stratagems out of nowhere. So this is where we are at the moment. And if there is an attack, if the Zionist entity is preparing an attack that could happen, let's say, between September and October, they are also ready, because they have everything it takes for an absolutely devastating response. And this time, no holds barred, really. Not like during the 12-day war. Okay, none of that is very auspicious, is it, Danny?

#Danny

Yeah, I think people should remember, to your point about Turkey, it wasn't Turkey's army that came into Syria to overthrow the Assad government, the Bashar al-Assad government. It was the jihadists that came marching down from Turkey to do that. So I think that says something about, yeah, Turkey's capabilities. Now, also, Pepe, I wanted to ask you, you know, we have about 15 or so minutes, 10 to 15 minutes.

I wanted to ask you about what the actual impact is, because of the UAE supposedly cutting off all trade with Iran, because it wasn't just some weeks ago that I saw reports—I don't know if they were verified or not, I don't think they were 100% verified by either Iran or the UAE—that the UAE was actually sending Iran some of those frozen assets that had been held in its own accounts. So what—you said they might have been forced to do this—but what would be the actual impact then of this break between the UAE and Iran now? As you know, during the war, the UAE was a principal target. And then after the first—when the MOU was signed—actually, even the first ceasefire, the UAE was acting very differently after that. But your thoughts?

#Pepe Escobar

That's why it doesn't make sense, Danny. And Larry and I confirmed and reconfirmed that earlier this week. The UAE, they sent \$3 billion cash plus two tons of gold to Tehran in two different flights. This is very, very important. So this was a sort of, okay, let's cool down. Let's try to, as best as we can, restart a relationship. Of course, they know, the Iranians know, everything that they did during the war in terms of attacks on Iranian assets. But another thing that our Pakistani mediator friends told us a few days ago—in fact, over a month ago—they were saying, just wait. The UAE is coming to the table.

At the time, the negotiation was with the dead-cat MOU. The UAE will come to the table. Give it a few months, maybe by the end of the year. And Larry and I both, we couldn't believe it. There's no way. It's actually happening. It started happening these past few days: the money and the gold. That was the first, you know, okay, let's break the ice. So it makes absolutely no sense that, from one day to another, you cut off all trade and commerce based on a false flag operation. And now it's established that these missiles, the two missiles, are a false flag operation. So you can see the Zionist hand all over this thing. All over, all over. Including, of course, the ghastly Mr. Bessent.

#Danny

Right. Who is in charge? So, yeah, I was about—I was literally about to say a source. So, yeah, Pepe, I mean, you know, in the last five or ten minutes that we have, perhaps, you know, one thing you note in your article is that actually all of these developments are leading to a consolidation and an expansion of what you call Eurasian integration, a deepening of Eurasian integration. Maybe you can explain this in more detail. How is the United States—you said it before—shooting itself in the

foot? How is it actually deepening Eurasian integration while claiming that it's, of course, isolating Iran, taking over the Strait of Hormuz, and, you know, as Trump says, finding itself in a much better position, a great position, as he called it.

#Pepe Escobar

It's what I addressed in one of my columns last week, "The New Great Game Revisited." I think we talked about that last week. All the players across Eurasia, they are looking at this war and they are rethinking their positions and they are reorganizing themselves. And there is much more, in many senses, closer collaboration than six months ago at the start of the war. We're going to see maybe some glimpses of that next month during the BRICS summit in Delhi, although nobody has any expectation that anything of value will come of this BRICS summit. For instance, if you go to the—finally, the Indians decided to do a website. So I was checking the website this weekend, and it's pathetic.

There's practically nothing. It's only blah, blah, blah. No substance at all. And the summit is going to be on September 12th, so literally around the corner. But everybody's going to be at the table. Can you imagine that? On the same BRICS summit, we're going to have Russia, China, and India at the table, but also the Emirates. They're all full members. And among the partners, BRICS Plus, we're going to have the Central Asians. We're going to have Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, for instance. Not to mention, India is going to have to do a lot of explaining, especially to Russia, China, and Iran, about their actions for the past six months.

So this could be immensely interesting. But the most important aspect is that the irrationality and the dementia of the empire is being imprinted on all these players across Eurasia, that there's only one way, which is closer integration. And the three leaders of this integration are Russia, China, and Iran. It's what I decided to call last week the Three Musketeers, in a sense. And they are the Three Musketeers. And there's even a d'Artagnan. So, you know, you have to imagine who's going to be the d'Artagnan in this story. So this integration in terms of protecting Eurasia, this supercontinent as a whole, from the destructive impulses of the empire is a given.

And especially because the two most important civilization states, Russia and China, are driving the process, which is what we're going to be discussing, seeing maybe in the BRICS summit and maybe in the SCO summit as well, the SCO leaders' summit. So forget about the UN. Nothing is going to happen at the UN because the UN is dead, and the Americans killed the UN. The UN is going to have to be transferred somewhere else. So in terms of everybody that is involved, that was involved in this, the possibility of a peace process via the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the U.S., even the lateral players or the distant players who made suggestions, contributions, et cetera, and then they all saw the actual memorandum be blown up by the Americans.

#Danny

It's another extra lesson for them.

#Pepe Escobar

They simply cannot organize their future based on a non-agreement-capable empire. To quote our friend Grand Master Lavrov again, their greatest motto of the geopolitical 21st century. So this is how the war is, in many aspects, accelerating this process of Eurasian integration. The Turks are desperate to get in. The problem is nobody trusts Ankara, especially the Russians and the Chinese. So they cannot bring Turkey to be a member of BRICS and a member of the SCO like the Central Asians, for instance, because nobody can trust Ankara, because Ankara, they're always hedging.

And they have this neo-Ottoman idea of not only resurrecting Ottomanism, but being the preeminent power among Turkic peoples. And once again, the other Turkic peoples, they look around and say, no, we're not interested. And we're doing a lot of good business with both Russia and China. And we also do business with Iran. So that's it. Everything is interlocked. This reorganization of Eurasia in more organic terms, these new partnerships, these efforts to try to protect major parts of Eurasia against the empire completely on the loose, completely out of bounds. So this process is being accelerated by the inner dementia of the empire. This is the main lesson for all of us, I think.

#Danny

Yep, and that inner dementia certainly has a reality problem. According to Iran, this just came up: the oil ministry says that it has year-on-year increased oil sales by 150% in quarter one of 2026. So this was during the war.

#Pepe Escobar

Yes, I mentioned that in an earlier conversation. We talked about this earlier in the conversation. In the first quarter, including March, Danny—and in March they were at war—they exported 150% more year on year. So obviously, the second quarter is going to go down. But still, they still manage. We know there are different communication routes. Yes, please, go ahead.

#Danny

No, no, no. Certainly. I mean, that brings us to about the close of our program, Pepe. But I want to make sure everybody knows that your article is in the video description below, so they can check that out, as well as all your other places to find your work in general, Telegram X and The Cradle Protocol. The link for that YouTube channel is there too. Pepe, any final message you want to give to the audience about the state of the geopolitical order right now?

#Pepe Escobar

Look, everybody, if we were not worried enough about this new escalation ladder, once again, we are in how many escalation ladders have we had these past two or three months? At least four, maybe. Okay, please keep in mind: some extremely perverse, nefarious characters are in the process of trying to normalize the use of nuclear and tactical nuclear weapons. Think about that carefully. They already managed to normalize a genocide. This is the next step: normalize the use of nuclear weapons and normalize, in fact, starting a nuclear war. Incredible as it might seem, this is where we are today.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. And Trump today was talking about how he knows that the DPRK has 57 nuclear weapons, which is the first time I've ever heard anyone from Washington acknowledge any number of nuclear weapons. Any number. Yes. But nuclear weapons are on the mind, obviously, of Trump, of the establishment. It certainly is not off the table. It's certainly more on than off at this point, which is, I think, quite striking, especially given the fact that this whole period, Pepe, was supposed to be the U.S. shifting its attention away from where all these escalation ladders are located—West Asia, Eurasia—and toward the Western Hemisphere. Actually, it seems like nothing of the sort is true at this point. At this point, it is principally Eurasia which is the theater.

#Pepe Escobar

And by the way, Danny, okay, maybe my wrap-up. The death of the already dead cat, the MOU. Can you believe that there was a deadline that expired on Monday? And this deadline was the 60-day period where they were supposed to be on the table discussing a path towards some sort of accommodation. So the deadline was literally dead, as dead as the cat. And this happened two days ago. It's absolutely unbelievable.

#Danny

Yeah, and it passed without any kind of concerted action by the United States that could be considered negotiating. There was none from the U.S., yeah. Well, it was a great program, Pepe. I want to make sure everyone knows that all of your work, again, is in the video description below, including your new article. And be sure to hit the like button before you go because that helps boost the show and YouTube's algorithm. I'll be on tomorrow, August 20th, at 2 p.m. Eastern time with Scott Ritter for the latest developments on what's going on in our world. Until next time, everybody, Pepe, thanks so much again. We'll be in touch. We'll leave here together. See you tomorrow, 2 p.m. Eastern.