

Pepe Escobar: Iran & Yemen HUMILIATE Trump, F-15 Base & Saudi Oil WIPED OUT

Analyst Pepe Escobar discusses Yemen and Iran's multi-front offensive that has put Trump on notice and set the US empire of chaos back immensely as Yemeni Armed Forces expand their target back & Saudi oil goes offline. 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://geopoliticsprime.substack.com/p/history-on-a-roll-brics-yemen-hormuz> 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>

#Danny

Welcome, everyone, and welcome back to the show. As you can see, I'm joined by geopolitical analyst, independent journalist Pepe Escobar, joining from Moscow to go over the latest developments, including his latest article. First, we talk about why Ansar Allah right now is launching missiles at Saudi Arabia, in particular their military base, the Khalid Air Base, in which they are responding to over 300 strikes over the last few days. They said Ansar Allah did. They hit fighter jet hangars, radars, runways, ammunition depots, and military infrastructure in what they called a very damaging strike. Also, the Yemeni Armed Forces, Ansar Allah, are right now repelling Saudi air formations over the skies of southern Yemen.

This comes as the United States has said that they are trying to talk to Ansar Allah to come to some kind of deal. That's what J.D. Vance is saying right now. Well, Pepe, history seems to be on a roll. Ansar Allah has made incredible gains. Here you talk in your article, "History on a Roll: BRICS, Yemen, Hormuz, and China." You first begin with Yemen, and you show this map from the Institute for the Study of War, which shows that Yemen now has control of the entire Red Sea coast, including Bab al-Mandab Strait. And the offensive actually continues, as I believe there is now fighting happening close to even Aden.

And there is no being taken, Pepe. The mainstream media—Donald Trump has posted several times in the last few hours talking about the oil prices, which are fast increasing and causing much consternation in the Trump administration. Fifteen billion dollars, Pepe, in oil per month could be wiped out completely if the Yanbu port area, which was hit by Ansar Allah, remains closed for over a month, and it seems like that's what's going to happen. Talk about your latest piece, how it ties all

these things together. Maybe you can start with how Iran and Yemen right now, both of them seem to be in a very favorable situation. How do you see things?

#Pepe Escobar

Thank you. Thank you, Danny. Thanks, everybody. Greetings from Moscow to all of you. It's past midnight. This means that everybody is actually asleep, because people in Moscow, they go to bed maximum 10, 10:30, because everybody wakes up very early to work very, very hard. So it's total silence in Moscow after midnight. It's great for a walk, in fact, and the weather is still good. Well, Russia, it does things to you, right? You arrive here, and you enter a volcano of information, meetings, dinners, exchange of intel, and all that. That's what I had tonight, for instance. Tomorrow, I'm going to spend the day with a bunch of interviews, one after another, and talking to people that matter, people from the Duma, politicians, commanders, people who are involved directly in the SMO, the new character of the Special Military Operation.

But this weekend, I was a hostage of BRICS, of course. I spent the whole weekend glued on BRICS. And it was a deliberate decision to cover this BRICS summit from Moscow, because the most important summit in BRICS history was here two years ago, the summit in Kazan. This was the great leap forward of BRICS. And many of us thought it would be a waste of time actually to go to New Delhi because nothing extraordinary would happen. It did not. But when you look at the declaration, some points of the, wow, 140 paragraphs and 45 pages, right? That's a long declaration, very detailed. And some stuff was quite, quite something, especially the outright condemnation by all BRICS full members of illegal sanctions and secondary sanctions without naming anyone. So that was a feat in itself.

And it required a lot of negotiations until at least four in the morning before the first day of the meeting, which was on Saturday. But they made it. But, of course, they had to sacrifice something that was equally important. When it comes to the illegal, completely absurd war by the U.S. against Iran, they did not name the war. They did not name the aggressor. But they talk about, and I'm quoting, they call for maximum restraint, without naming names. So this was the compromise that the Sherpas arrived at to make this declaration be signed by all members, including, very important, India, which has been, you know, sitting on the fence since the start of the war in February 28, and, of course, the UAE. And the UAE is a full member of BRICS, as much as Iran is.

So this part of the declaration was particularly important, as well as the condemnation of what's being perpetrated against Gaza and the Palestinians. So we can interpret this as the overall BRICS, and also BRICS Plus partners' position, and the position of the overwhelming majority of the Global South. There was a lot on the energy crisis, of course, a lot about trade in local and multilateral currencies. Very, very fruitful discussion about BRICS Pay, but there are problems about BRICS Pay. This is one of the things that I emphasize in my column. BRICS Pay is a Russian invention. It's basically a card, like a credit card, linked to BRICS nations. This means you have to be linked to BRICS nations' banks.

So what we got in practice in New Delhi is a go-ahead for a trial on the spot between Russia and India, between the Russian financial system and the Indian financial system. So this would be the beginning of BRICS Pay. If that works, and the trial should start within the next few—I wouldn't say weeks, but the next few months—they can expand BRICS Pay to other full members and, in the future, to BRICS partners as well. But this, to escape SWIFT, because BRICS Pay will escape SWIFT. For instance, companies—let's take the first example, India and Russia—companies and tourists, they can purchase whatever they want peer-to-peer, company-to-company, bypassing SWIFT, bypassing the U.S. dollar, and bypassing the commissions that you pay when you deal with Visa and MasterCard, for instance.

So the idea is very simple and straight to the point. The problem will be later to have, for instance, Iranian banks being part of BRICS Pay, Emirates, of course, but Emirates is part of SWIFT. Brazil, for instance, which has a very developed banking system, but Brazilian banks are also part of SWIFT. So how are you going to have all these banks and different BRICS members using BRICS Pay and escaping the American sanctions? So this first trial between India and Russia will be very, very important if it works. And if it really bypasses the U.S. Treasury, then that's the way, because then they can really expand to everybody else. Especially in the case of Russia, we're talking about a nation that has been expelled from SWIFT. And you cannot, for instance, if you have a Russian—a very simple example—you have a Russian Mir card, released here in Russia.

If you go to India, you cannot use your Mir card in India because India is part of SWIFT. So BRICS Pay is going to have to find a way. That's what the trials are going to do, that you can have a Russian card and use it in India, and you're going to bypass SWIFT. So this means it's a direct connection including Russian banks and Iranian—I'm sorry, Indian banks. And with the case of Iran, which is also under sanctions, also extremely complicated because they're also outside of SWIFT. And Iranian cards you cannot use anywhere on the planet, only in Iraq. But that is already a step forward. And of course, if we looked at some of the discussions in the bilaterals and in the main roundtable where all the 10 full members were, what Putin especially, and Pezeshkian said was straight to the point of BRICS Pay.

We have to increase our trade and commerce in our local currencies and multilateral currencies. The message is bypassing the U.S. dollar. And everybody agrees, not only the 10 BRICS members, but also the 10 BRICS partners, what we call BRICS+. So, you know, BRICS is slowly but surely. When we compare to two years ago, it doesn't seem much in terms of progress, but they are progressing little by little. They are more assertive. They can, for instance, have a long declaration where they unanimously condemn secondary sanctions. This is very, very hardcore language. And it's the first time ever that BRICS as a whole condemns secondary sanctions. So everybody agrees on that, even countries which are part of the SWIFT system, like the UAE, for instance, or India.

So these are the positives. And, of course, the bilaterals. We knew from the beginning that the real deal would be in the bilaterals. So we have ultra-important bilaterals involving Russia, India, China,

and Iran. And we also had something that nobody was expecting. We had a bilateral between Pezeshkian and the Crown Prince of the UAE, Prince Khaled. This in itself is a bombshell. Nobody was expecting that. And, of course, no one really knows what they discussed. There were no leaks on both sides. But the fact that they actually met—and Pezeshkian himself, Pezeshkian was quite upbeat. He said, "No, we started to talk about the possibility of, okay, let's get our relationship back together. Let's put it back together." It's an amazing sign.

And when we compare, for instance, what should have happened today in Oman and did not happen—you know the story, of course, Danny—Pezeshkian announced during the BRICS that there would be a meeting today between Iran and the GCC in Muscat to discuss a temporary navigational arrangement in the Strait of Hormuz. Essentially, everybody coming in would go through Iranian territorial waters, and at least half of everything that was going out could go through Oman, and this under the supervision of the Iranians. So the idea was to explain the mechanism to the petro-sheikhs, to the GCC. So guess what happened? First thing that happened, the tiny satrap of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, boycotted the meeting. And after that, Saudi Arabia itself forced the cancellation of the meeting.

And the Omani foreign minister said, look, it's going to happen, but we still don't know when. So they were forced to cancel it. So this did not happen today and could have been the beginning of some sort of understanding between Iran and the GCC. So this is where we were at the moment. These signs coming from the BRICS summit, very encouraging, and point to consensus, especially on the de-dollarization front, without naming it de-dollarization, and in terms of condemning, let's say, Soros asset Scott Bessent's regime of sanctions. Very, very important. At the same time, we have the out-of-control disaster when it comes to Saudi Arabia, as they relaunched their war against Yemen, and now you don't mess with the Yemenis.

Come on, it's like Bismarck in the 19th century said, whatever you do, don't mess with Russia. So here in the young 21st century, our motto should be, whatever you do, don't mess with Yemen. And those bloody Saudis obviously haven't learned their lesson. So what do we have at the moment? We have the East-West pipeline bombed in eight different points. It's going to take at least one month to repair it, maybe more. There are rumors in the Arab-Persian Gulf that it could take months. And of course, there could be extra drone or ballistic missile attacks against the pipeline or the refineries at Yanbu port in the Red Sea.

Something very important, Danny and all of you: we still don't know 100% who attacked the pipeline. There are several possible scenarios. One, drones from Iraq. Two, missiles from Yemen. Three, a combination of drones from Iraq and missiles from Yemen. And four, a false flag. Everything is possible. So we cannot say with certainty anything about this. And of course, if there will be a sequel. The fact is, the pipeline is immobilized at the moment. This means between 4 million or perhaps 5 million barrels of oil a day out of the market, like this, instantly. This means Saudi Arabia cannot export virtually a single barrel of oil for the moment. The Bab al-Mandeb is closed for Saudi petro-tankers.

Also for petro-tankers that would go to Israel, and petro-tankers from the U.S. and Britain. Everybody else, no problem whatsoever. And the Ansar Allah and Yemeni armed forces, they have said it over and over again. No, Bab al-Mandeb is not blocked. It's open to everyone except these four. This is our list. So obviously Saudi Arabia, not only they don't have a lot of oil to extract, but they don't have a lot of oil to export. And their reserves might be extinguished in a matter of days, perhaps even next week. So this is MBS's predicament that he calls on himself. So what is he doing? He's begging everybody to help him strike Yemen. He begged the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis said, no, this is not our war. This is your war.

And apparently, you have not read the footnotes in the Mecca Defense Alliance. This is a pre-existing situation. We have nothing to do with that. He tried to beg the Turks. The Turks didn't even bother to answer. He is begging Israel to attack Yemen. And this in itself is one of the headlines of the 21st century. The House of Saud is begging Israel to attack a Muslim nation. Try to imagine, all of you, how is this being played all across the Ummah, all across the lands of Islam, all over the planet. You don't even need to comment about that. It speaks for itself. And, of course, MBS begged Trump, apparently—two phone calls that we know of so far—and Trump said, "No, this is not my problem." So what's going to happen to Saudi Arabia?

There are several scenarios, from the relatively sober to the totally apocalyptic, which would be not apocalyptic in the sense of the fall of the House of Saud, because nobody would care about it. Who cares about the House of Saud? Who cares about MBS? The problem is, what's going to happen to Saudi Arabia if that happens? Two possibilities, at least. One: the Americans install their man in power, Prince Nayef, who was always the American, the CIA man in Riyadh, now under house arrest by orders of MBS. That's possibility number one. Possibility number two is highway to hell, meaning a hundred tribes from across Arabia who hate MBS, the House of Saud, with their guts, fighting among themselves to see who gets power in Riyadh.

Also quite, quite possible. So, you know, so the prospects for the House of Saud from now on are, wow. I mean, the fact that you're... We have to laugh because the most absurd thing, Danny, they brought this on themselves. How stupid can you possibly be? Well, MBS is stupid. He was doctored by MBZ. MBZ basically explained geopolitics to MBS. Apparently, he's not a very good student. So far, he was getting away with it, with basically bowing to the Americans. They said, "We're going to invest in our economy. We're going to build this NEOM thing in the middle of the desert. You can build all the data centers you want here, whatever." Now, essentially, MBS has been abandoned by everybody. So what's going to happen next? Fascinating to watch.

And what do they do today when we could have the opportunity of maybe a start of a serious dialogue between Iran and the GCC? They block the meeting. They force the meeting to be canceled. Well, look, in terms of geopolitical stupidity and BS, we can say now he's in a class by himself. And how he's going to extricate himself from this situation, nobody knows. But most important thing, nobody really cares, as long as Saudi Arabia doesn't turn into a threat against

everybody in West Asia. We still don't know. And even the Pakistanis... After all, they have a military pact, which was upgraded a little over a month ago, and now they have this Mecca Defense Alliance, which we would assume would be helping Saudi Arabia, but not necessarily.

In a war that started actually in 2015, the Saudi war against Yemen, there was a memorandum of understanding from 2019, if I'm not mistaken, which they broke last July when they bombed the runway of Sana'a Airport. So it's all on them. They're going to have to live with it, and they're going to perish by it, almost certainly. So this was—the whole thing was evolving at the same time: the discussions in New Delhi, the absolutely outstanding offensive by Ansar Allah and the Yemeni armed forces in western Yemen. And now they have two very, very juicy paths to follow, which they are already following. The first one is they are trying to encircle the city of Taiz in the southwest, which is one of the most important cities in Yemen.

And it is still heavily populated by gangs, mercenaries, fifth columnists, whatever, Yemenis that pledged allegiance either to UAE or Saudi Arabia. This could be a matter of days or maybe, what, one, two weeks. They will get Taiz eventually. And the other one is Marib. Marib is in the central southwest, more or less, where the oil and gas is. Very, very important. And what are the Yemenis doing? What is Ansar Allah doing? They're basically talking to the tribes and saying, look, let's make a deal. We don't want to go to Marib and kill people. Simple. You ally, all of you, you ally with us. We enter the city and we take control of Marib peacefully. You can keep your weapons, which is a sacred duty in Yemen, where everybody carries a weapon.

And that's it. And we make a deal. So this is something that could happen within the next few weeks as well. So Ansar Allah is solidifying their control in the whole western part of Yemen, which is the Yemen that matters. Because from the center to the east and the Hadramut, there's nothing in the Hadramut. It's an enormous desert. Last year, I tried to go to the Hadramut, and they told me, "No, there's nothing to see there. It's just desert with very, very hardcore tribes, and they're going to kidnap you on the spot." So there's nothing in the Hadramut, essentially. So 80 to 90 percent of the population of Yemen will be, sooner or later, controlled by Ansar Allah and the Yemeni armed forces.

So we can talk essentially in a foreseeable future of a somewhat unified Yemen, with a serious government sitting in Sana'a. They will have to be recognized by everybody because they will be the legitimate government of Yemen. And they conquered that on the ground, on the battlefield. So that changes the chessboard completely. And, of course, who controls the Bab al-Mandeb? Ansar Allah and the Yemeni armed forces. That's one of those things. Because now we have a maritime strategy on both choke points at the same time, from the Strait of Hormuz to the Bab al-Mandeb and vice versa. So talk about the chessboard being turned upside down.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, the fact that we're even talking about a lot of these things right now, Pepe, is quite astounding, and so rapidly, too, how fast this was. I mean, how humiliating is this for Trump and the

hegemon, Pepe? Because we have Saudi Arabia, one of its biggest—I mean, literally a military, I guess we call it partner-vassal. All of these weapons that are being used, they're all—they're American. They captured billions of dollars' worth.

#Pepe Escobar

Just like in Afghanistan. The similarities with Afghanistan five years ago are absolutely striking, because these places, they were subdued in a matter of, in some of them, hours. And maximum 48 hours, the whole thing. It was very similar to the advance of the Taliban towards Kabul five years ago, which took maximum nine days, if I remember well, at the time. Same thing, because they were puppets, mercenaries, fifth columnists, paid by the U.S., you know, puppets, essentially. So, obviously, the whole thing collapsed very, very easily. Same thing in Yemen. And with billions of dollars invested by both Saudi and the UAE, still this was not enough.

And the most important, I would say, the categorical imperative in terms of your allegiance and your moral and ethical values. So the tribes and the fifth columnists were asking themselves, "Are we going to continue to be paid by these people who want to actually destroy our country, installing divide and rule, etc.? Or are we going to pledge allegiance to people who come here to liberate our cities, treat us well, liberate our prisoners?" They are conceding an amnesty to everybody and welcomed as liberators by the populations. So the choice was obvious for all of them. And this is a choice that will be applied to Taiz as well and to Marib eventually. So that's it. They have the higher moral ground as well, Ansarallah and the Yemeni armed forces.

And when you go to Yemen, you see how they operate. You understand everything. They are the real sons of the land, literally. Ansarallah came from northern Yemen, which is deep, deep, deep Yemen in the mountains, you know. And they, of course, they are looking at those three southern Arab provinces, which are not Saudi Arabia. They were stolen by the Brits and given to the Saudis. Sooner rather than later—it would take a while—the Yemenis are going to go there and liberate them. It's their cousins. And when you go, for instance, to Saada, in the Northwest, they say, "Look, this border over there is not a border. They are our cousins or family members. And we import everything that we want via Saudi Arabia, via these three provinces."

So even with the embargo, with the blockade, I was fascinated. For instance, I went into a mini mall in Saada, and I found pineapples from Thailand. And I asked the guy, "How did you get this thing?" He said, "Oh, it was easy. It was across the border. I have friends across the border. You know, it comes to Saudi Arabia, they cross the border, it ends up here." So that's it. These three provinces, in probably a matter of months, they will be recovered by the Yemenis as well. This is the reconstitution of traditional Yemeni lands. And this process is now already ongoing. Wow. Fascinating stuff. Absolutely fascinating. And nobody expected it to be like this. Lightning fast and successful.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. The timing of it is not lost on me, Pepe. You know, after Iran essentially eradicated the United States' military posture in the region by destroying 15 bases, now you have Saudi on the back foot. You have the UAE. There are still tankers—I believe there's a supertanker right now on fire, a UAE supertanker on fire in the Strait of Hormuz after it hit a mine yesterday. But you still have the UAE, despite all of this, despite being obviously pressured by the United States to push their tankers through illegally through the Strait of Hormuz, they're still trying to talk to Iran and mend fences, which is a huge shift as well. So the two biggest vassals, or the most important vassals maybe, of the GCC are really on the back foot. So that's very humiliating for Trump. And then his behavior today, Pepe, because crude is what, 109? Diesel is over \$6.30 a gallon in the United States.

Now he's on an X, I should say, Truth Social rampage, first blaming the Ukraine conflict on the oil prices, then saying that Iran wants to make a deal very quickly and that he's maybe open to that, but the U.S. is in control. And then he says that now that oil is flowing through the Strait of Hormuz, that this whole scam—he calls it the scam conflagration—is all over. So now they have to pay up, essentially saying the imaginary countries that are seeing their oil get through. So maybe this has all happened in the last couple hours, like three posts, obviously panicking about how all of this has affected the oil markets. What does this tell you about where things are for the hegemon in relation to all these changes and shifts that you have been following with regard to Yemen, Iran, BRICS? It's a very interesting moment, I feel.

#Pepe Escobar

It's incomprehensible, Danny, not only to Trump, who doesn't read, who doesn't study, who doesn't listen to anybody, who knows less than zero about history, geography, culture, etc. He's crass, crude, and cruel at the same time. And his ignorance is something beyond stratospheric. And it's reflected in the people around him. The people in the Trump administration who actually have direct access to him, it's the same thing. It's a bunch of uncultured savages. They cannot possibly understand what's going on. It's too complex for them. They cannot even point to Yemen on a map. Seriously, they can't.

They cannot understand the differences in terms of Shiism practiced in Yemen or in Iran. They cannot understand the ethical values in terms of the purity of Islam represented by Yemen, quoted over 40 times in the Quran by Prophet Muhammad as the real pure Islam. A civilization state, really, you know, the heart of Arabia, vilified, harassed, bombed, exploited, you know, blockaded, you know, including by the United States, especially by the Saudis, but mostly by Saudis and the United States. They simply cannot understand that. And they also cannot understand that what's happening in Yemen is directly related, is a consequence of the war that they started against Iran.

So it's no wonder that they look and sound like a bunch of lost cockroaches. They don't know what to do, literally, because there was never a strategy in the first place, and much less now. And especially after the only possible off-ramp available to Trump, which was the famous dead-cat

memorandum of understanding, Pakistani mediators with help from Qatar, help from Oman, etc., which was offered to him, and he blew it at least twice. And now everybody is literally fed up. That's it. Okay, forget about it. Let's try to do our own thing, which is something that Iran and Oman were trying technically to solve in terms of the Strait of Hormuz.

And the idea was today to present this to the other GCC. And of course, at least it would be the start of a conversation. And from the point of view of the GCC, considering that they have zero margin of maneuver at the moment, because they know that if Trump attacks Iran again, the new Iranian doctrine, which we should repeat over and over again, is not one to one or two to one. It's 20 to two. And this has been announced by IRGC people left and right as the new doctrine. If the Americans attack two of our targets, we're going to attack 20 of their targets. And we all know what that means.

It's not only the bases that are practically destroyed, all of them—most of them, in fact—but also naval assets even far away in the Gulf of Oman, in the Arabian Sea, or the Southern Indian Ocean. They are waiting for the moment. They don't need to do this now. If push comes to shove, they will do it. And just have, you know, people in commanding positions in the IRGC, and even Mohsen Rezaei himself, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, he said, "Oh, they don't know what's coming. Okay, you want to attack us? Okay. Okay." So, how can anybody possibly explain this to the president of the United States, who lives in an alternative reality inside his own mind, or what's left of his mind? There you go.

#Danny

Yeah, and to get into your article a bit more too, Pepe, well, that's the image of the East-West pipeline and Bab al-Mandab Strait choking Saudi Arabia, essentially. But here, I highlighted this part: under your "Next year, the BRICS summit host will be China," you said, "A possible Iran-Oman agreement on the Strait of Hormuz, however, remains in the balance. Tehran has explicitly stated it will not reopen Hormuz, which will remain closed until Washington fulfills no fewer than seven conditions." And here they are. I mean, I think this is a big piece of this because right now the United States is essentially sitting on its hands on these things. It's not moving on them, any of these conditions, which you can comment on, any one of them.

#Pepe Escobar

You're right. They're not moving on any of them.

#Danny

Which then begs the question: as Yemen advances and as this war continues, I mean, you said 20 to 1 is the difference. These anti-ship missiles that Iran is firing are keeping the U.S. aircraft carriers and warships very far, but they are still being fired at. They're still being fired at. It's very uneasy right now.

#Pepe Escobar

At least 800 kilometers away from the Persian Gulf, Danny. This is the deep Indian Ocean. It's very far away. But Iran, they have the missiles to, if they want to do something about these naval assets, very, very easily. They're saving us for the right moment.

#Danny

Right? Yeah, right. So this meeting that was supposed to happen, that Saudi... I heard even some reports that Saudi Arabia, in their sabotage or pushing to postpone this meeting that was supposed to happen between Oman, Iran, and the GCC countries, they said that they didn't like the conditions and the terms and how they were being discussed, as if Saudi Arabia is in a position to...

#Pepe Escobar

Exactly. They are in a position to accept anything that would help them extricate themselves from their domestic mess they created. But once again, we are dealing with MBS, an egocentric, same thing, with a Mickey Mouse-sized ego, who

#Pepe Escobar

Centralizes all the decisions, so the responsibility is always his. And obviously, he hates to admit that he made one of the greatest geopolitical blunders in modern history, and picking a fight again against people who simply will not be subdued. On the contrary, they have the means to make you suffer if you go against them. That's stupid. But that's, once again, these people, they live in their own bubble. MBZ, MBS, all these people, they live in their own bubble. All these petro-sheikhs, in fact. The Qataris are slightly more, let's say, worldly people, because they learned a lot from the Brits. They learned a lot from the French. They are more worldly, and they are savvier. And the people who advise the Qatari royal family, they are some very, very smart people. That's the major difference between them and MBZ and MBS circles. Right.

#Danny

So, Pepe, you often talk about the clock running out in this broader war. I guess you could say the broader U.S.-Israeli war on Iran. And Iran is running out the clock. Where are we on that clock now, after all of these developments we just spoke about, including the fact that no Iran-Oman framework will be implemented, as you say here, until these seven conditions are met?

#Pepe Escobar

Until the seven conditions, yes.

#Danny

And we also now have the Yemen factor. We also have Syria, which is now, I believe, all across the country erupting in protest because of the oil, the diesel prices, the gas prices. The region is becoming more and more uncertain for the United States, it seems like, by the day. So where are we on that clock right now?

#Pepe Escobar

Well, in a sense, the clock may have stopped for a while. It's a pause, of course. There's got to be something groundbreaking to move it, possibly some sort of military action. We still don't know how and who would initiate it. Certainly, the Iranians will not initiate. The Iranians are just waiting. Even if they don't have a defensive strategy anymore, they are branding it as offensive. They're not going to take the initiative. Once they are attacked, then they are going all-out offensive in a way that they didn't used to do before. And, of course, the Yemeni factor paralyzed the whole—in fact, the whole of West Asia again—because nobody knows how to, nobody among the GCC knows how to deal with Yemen, and they know that the Yemenis are the real badass motherfuckers, you know.

Don't mess with them. Period. And these are a bunch of cowardly petro-sheikhs, all of them. No exceptions. And, of course, they are... The only possibility would be what would have happened today. Okay, let's start with the table. Everybody, all the locals, Persian Gulf locals, on the table. And once again, the GCC itself bombed the possibility. So the Omanis are trying to be the mediators in this particular story. It's very, very hard for them because they don't have the gravitas or the power to be the mediators. They're, you know, a tiny sultanate, sophisticated, but not strong enough to compel the other GCC members to, okay, we're trying to defend your interests, idiots.

So that complicates even more the whole situation. And Iran, because they are running the clock from the beginning, they are not in a hurry. They are looking at all the indicators: the total disaster approaching the global economy after what happened with the East-West pipeline, depletion of the strategic petroleum reserves, the approaching midterms. And this is part of their plan. They want to drive the Trump administration absolutely crazy because they want the midterms to be devastating for the Trump administration. This is part of the Iranian policy, of course.

For the moment, they are achieving it without breaking a sweat. In fact... And I heard from some of my American friends here in Moscow who do the back and forth. They say, look, the situation in the West for the Republicans is... it's a disaster. It's really bad. The polls that are not published openly in the U.S., they are an absolute disaster. So there will be an Obama-style shellacking in the midterms. So can we imagine... Danny, in fact, I would ask this question to you now. Assuming there is this shellacking in the midterms, how out of control will a lame-duck Donald Trump be? Starting from you.

#Danny

That's a great question because it's almost impossible for me to imagine the GOP making out the same or better than where they are now. So losses are guaranteed. It's just how much and how badly. And if it's really bad, then the Trump administration may pull what Obama has done before him, which is a kind of rule by executive order, do what he's doing now, but it might have to be more pronounced because the political careers of the people who are going to be coming in, they will want to brandish their own kind of oppositional brand against him. So he will have to even look more tough, which means that we all know how Donald Trump acts when he needs to look tough. And it's usually not—it's the opposite of hinged. It will be unhinged.

So I could see him going very unhinged. And, you know, this idea of the war ending—he keeps saying that the war is going to end after the midterms, or is going to end after the midterms. I wonder if the United States actually, in the Trump administration policy, might be trying to slowly move toward the midterm elections without a big strike, and then right after the midterms put the Democrats, which tend to be lame ducks themselves—they tend to be very conciliatory—put them in a very difficult position by, I guess, depleting the U.S. military more, striking Iran harder than they have been, and see what happens. It feels like that's what the United—we've heard so many rumblings, but it feels like that's what the Trump administration is doing.

So I could see him trying to go for a big strike right after the—yeah, right after, to put the Democrats in a hard position. Oh, you're going to oppose the military action because Iran is going to have to respond. It'll get quite ugly. And then you also have this propaganda. I don't know if you saw the F-15 colonel, the pilot. There's all kinds of propaganda now to try to make this operation that was botched, and he got shot down out of the sky back in April, look like a heroic thing. And I could see more of that coming in order to make it difficult for the Democrats to do anything other than maybe kick and scream. And that might be the goal.

#Pepe Escobar

That might be the goal, right?

#Danny

Because Trump knows that he's president, and his cabinet, who's not elected, knows that as long as Trump is around and he doesn't need to get rid of one of them, then they'll be fine. So, I think they may be playing it like this, but who knows? It could also go the opposite direction because I don't think, as you said, I don't think they really know what to do right now because it's a bad situation all the way around. I mean, I think that they're trying to call somebody in on Sanaa. Hey, where's Yahya Saree? Can we talk to him? I don't know. That's how it feels when it comes to this, trying to keep things steady when obviously things are going off the rails quite dramatically in West Asia, which was supposed to be the afterthought. I thought it was supposed to be the afterthought for the Trump administration. It's become the focal point.

#Pepe Escobar

And we have the general saying that headquarters of the Fifth Fleet was blown to smithereens, meaning, we're not coming back. Bye.

#Danny

No. In my estimation, it might be that the United States, given the behavior of the U.S. military and CENTCOM during these recent strikes on Jordan, I wouldn't be surprised if they're really racking their brains about where to move everything. That could be the big issue right now. It's like, okay, with what we have left, if we can't keep it at Muwaffaq Al-Salti Air Base, where the hell do we keep it? You know, whatever's not damaged here, whatever hasn't been destroyed. That's, I think, what might be going through the thick heads in Israel.

#Pepe Escobar

In fact, yeah. Israel's not going to be happy with that for too long. Exactly. And that's what, in fact, the IRGC is waiting for: that the Americans will be boxed in inside Israel. So that will make their job much, much easier. It's basically one big target. That's it. And this is going to happen within the next few weeks.

#Danny

Yeah. Oh, yeah, totally. Yeah, I could see that, Pepe. Well, you know, as we wind down to the last five minutes or so, your thoughts. China is the BRICS summit, the next BRICS summit. You know, we talked a bit about what happened at the BRICS summit, but I guess from here, you know, you have the whole world, I feel like, moving away from the U.S. empire in many respects. And then those that aren't, like the Saudi Arabias, are paying a massive price. How do you see, you know, how do you see things transpire as we go into this next BRICS summit? Because it seems like West Asia is going to be, at least for the next several months, a focal point of massive, not just unrest, but transformation potentially. I mean, obviously, it seems like in many respects.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, we cannot even imagine how the chessboard is going to look in one year, when we're going to have the Chinese BRICS summit. This is going to be the big, big bang, because this will be the, let's say, counterpart of the BRICS summit in Russia two years ago, which, you know, the foundations of a more assertive BRICS, they were planted two years ago here in Kazan. So next year in China, it's going to be, okay, now we are on escape velocity mode, and that's it. And now we are going to change the rules by ourselves, which is essentially, when you read the declaration from Delhi, they are saying that very politely, but they are already saying it: we want a completely different system of international relations. And obviously this is not going to be given to us.

So we're going to take it, essentially. We're going to take it and we're going to do it our way. And the Chinese—Xi Jinping, during this meeting, was fascinating because he was brief, sharp, straight to the point, and he didn't even stay for the gala dinner because what he had to do, he said it in the main session. He proposed several measures in terms of more cooperation in AI, in electronics, you name it, in projects of sustainable development, et cetera. Then he left, because everybody already knew that the real BRICS summit, you know, the real hardcore thing, is going to be next year, and they are going to be chairs. And when the Chinese are chairs, it's a completely different story, just like the SCO last year in Tianjin.

The big, big SCO summit of these past few years was last year in Tianjin, where Xi Jinping, for the first time, got into details in terms of what global governance means. So this was announced only a year ago. And he talked once again about global governance at BRICS. And this is it. This is China basically being the central focus and the central pole of organizing a new global governance system. And the other BRICS, they essentially agree. China—oh, sorry, India—it's complicated, but they're going to have to agree if they're going to be an effective BRICS member. For instance, during this summit, Xi basically said that, look, China and India, we're not rivals, we are partners. So this was extending a hand directly to Modi in Modi-land, let's put it this way.

And Modi was trying, you know, with all sorts of photo opportunities. He's a master of photo opportunity. In fact, not too much substance. He was trying to court Xi. And Xi, of course, like the big panda, he was, you know, giving a few smiles here, handshaking over there. And, for instance, that famous viral photo of the three of them smiling, shaking hands, and camaraderie and all that. This was Xi basically accepting the photo opportunity because he knows that this photo opportunity forces Modi to accept what Russia and China want to do, essentially, inside BRICS. This is the hidden meaning of those photos. And Modi obviously was thinking in terms of, "I have a wonderful photo opportunity. I can distribute all over India. I'm rubbing shoulders with the big guys." It's more complicated than that.

The big guys are pulling you in, and you're going to have—who's driving the agenda for Eurasia integration? It's not India. It's Russia, China. So India is one protagonist among others. And Iran is as important as India. So this was the game being played in New Delhi, you know. And by the way,

Putin was ultra-relaxed, so he didn't want to monopolize attention and all that. His speech, though, was very, very forceful. And Xi was like, you know, a sort of Zeus-like entity, you know. He descended on Earth a little bit, distributed some wisdom, and left. Right. It was fascinating to watch. And he set the agenda already for the summit of 2027 in China with this list of projects of increased cooperation and all that. And of course, the subtext is we'll continue to go for more and more trade among ourselves in our own currencies.

#Danny

Yeah.

#Pepe Escobar

This is the subtext of BRICS as a whole, in fact. So it was fascinating to watch the ballet. But at the end, we could feel already that the Chinese were saying, okay, this photo op is over. The real hard work is going to be next year in China.

#Danny

Yeah, and the world, Pepe, especially the Global South, will be flocking to China and Russia to lead integration projects, the infrastructure, the integration projects. This is the ironic thing about the United States trying to destroy the chessboard, is it ends up destroying a lot of infrastructure. It ends up pushing countries further and further in need of what China can provide, and in part also Russia. We only have one question, Pepe, and I think it was a bit—maybe this is a little bit—maybe there's some confusion. I think they mean Saudi Arabia here. Pepe, what's the point of that? Yes, I see that.

#Pepe Escobar

The question, military agreement with Saudi Arabia, absolutely.

#Danny

Right, right. Didn't they see this as a ploy for getting them to fight Iran on behalf of the U.S., Israel, and the UAE? Are they dumb? I guess they're all about Saudi Arabia. Thank you, Rodney.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, the name itself tells a story. Is Saudi Arabia trying to convince the Ummah, the lands of Islam, that this is a Mecca defense alliance, implying that this is a defense of the Muslim world? And it's not. It's not at all. Not only is it not that, they never bothered to release the full text. Nobody knows what's written in this alliance text—the footnotes, the conditionalities, nobody knows. Nobody

knows. So essentially, it was a photo op in Mecca, of course, to say, ah, you know, all of us Muslims are united, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But apparently the Pakistanis and the Turks, they have some very precise ideas of if and when these conditionalities will be utilized. Certainly not in the current situation. Both already said that, directly and indirectly. So how long did this follow up for MBS? It lasted for a few days. And now people are not even talking about the Mecca Defense Alliance. It became an instant paper tiger, you know.

#Danny

No, that's where we are. Well, yeah, Pepe, I think that sums up everything. We covered a lot of ground today. I want to make sure everybody knows that your X, your Telegram, and, of course, the link to your new article, they're all in the video description below. So everyone should check those out after you've hit the like button, the free way to support this channel and to make sure Pepe and my conversation is seen throughout. All the places to support this channel are also in the video description: Patreon, Substack, and more. Again, go there to find Pepe's work. Until next time, everybody, hit that like button before you go, and I'll see you all again tomorrow. Bye-bye.