

# Pepe Escobar: Iran & Yemen Escalate – The House of Saud Will Collapse

Pepe Escobar is a journalist, a political analyst, and author. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: [https://x.com/Glenn\\_Diesen](https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen) Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: [buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng](https://buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng) Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Buy Diesen merchandise: <https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

## #Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined today by Pepe Escobar, a journalist and political analyst who devotes much of his focus to Eurasia. So thank you for coming back on the program.

## #Pepe Escobar

Always a pleasure with you, Glenn.

## #Glenn

So, it doesn't appear to be a military solution to the Iran war, but the conclusion would then be that we end up in another forever war. And I know that many people have discussed whether or not the Iran war is another forever war, but the problem here is that the U.S. doesn't have escalation control like it did in the wars over the past 30 years, and this is also escalating out of control, and the U.S. can't even afford to keep this war going forever. So, it's an interesting problem, but it would suggest that we need a negotiated settlement at some point. But how do you see the prospect now for negotiations?

## #Pepe Escobar

Well, Glenn, well, first of all, congratulations on your trip to China. We were talking before we went on the air, and Glenn enjoyed it immensely. Of course, he had to. And all of us, every time we go to China, it's always a tsunami of hyper-modernity. And then we know that we are in the future, literally. Here in Southeast Asia, it's similar in different points. Like, I am in Thailand at the moment, and in my neighborhood, my neighborhood looks like China. And you feel that you are in China, in this particular part of Bangkok, because it's mega, mega, mega-modern. Well, to answer your question in a straightforward manner, the Iranians, with the help from the Chinese, and the Chinese themselves, they tried everything in terms of trying to find a diplomatic off-ramp.

The most recent, let's say, blitzkrieg, if we can put it this way, the New York channel, which was being conducted by Araghchi during the UN General Assembly, all the discussions that they had in New York. Pezeshkian, when he was there, he got people from the think tanks, top journalists from the top newspapers, explaining the Iranian position. Everybody was livid because it was the first time they actually saw the president of Iran face-to-face defending the Iranian position in the enemy's lair in New York City. So many of them were, I think, they had a road to Damascus moment. Then we had President Xi, three-hour meeting face-to-face with Trump, with the translators at the Oval Office. And Xi handing over Iran on a platter to Trump: look, this is your off-ramp.

It's called a memorandum of understanding. If you go back to the memorandum of understanding that you destroyed, of course, he didn't say that, but implicitly, this is why he said, "We, China, we will support you because we want a diplomatic solution. We discussed this with Iran." And there is a direct alignment between Beijing, Islamabad, and Tehran until a few days ago, the famous mediation process. And China was, we can say, leading from behind, literally. So this was presented by Xi to Trump face-to-face. Two days after that, that was on a Thursday. On Saturday, Trump said no, just like that. And that's his off-ramp. And there's no other. There are no other off-ramps in the market, and everybody knows that. So after that, and this was, what, two weeks ago, roughly, the Iranians, obviously, they are fed up.

And the latest offer was the seven-point offer, which was negotiated between Araghchi and, of course, the mediators once again, presented to the Americans, and the American response came indirectly once again: no. Once again. Or a few things, maybe. Maybe. This is what Araghchi had been saying in the past few hours, in fact. Yes, they agreed to some of our proposals, but that's not enough. Mohsen Rezaei, in the past few hours, said also the same thing. Seven points. They agree only to a few, and maybe it's not good enough for us. Why is Tehran reacting like that? First of all, because they run the clock. They're not in a hurry.

Second, they know that each passing day, this, for Trump and his paranoia of what might happen in the midterms, is driving him completely nuts. And this is something that we have from our friends in New York and Washington. They confirmed that. And all across the Republican Party, yes, desperation is setting in. And there are some internal polls that are absolutely catastrophic in terms of what might happen in the midterms. And still, he doesn't take the off-ramp. Well, Glenn, if we go to the ultra-simple Jungian psychology explanation, a guy with that monster narcissistic ego, he simply cannot admit something that resembles diplomacy, and especially to solve a problem that he started in the first place.

He launched this war, and he doesn't know how to end it, but he needs to end it. Otherwise, the war will end his presidency. But he still cannot make this connection in his brain. So that's where we are. We still depend—everything, all this enormous diplomatic activity, which still goes on, even with the escalation ladder going on in parallel, but still there—the diplomatic push is still there. But it depends

on, I would say, a road to Damascus moment happening with the president of the United States, which, as you know and all of us know, is extremely unlikely.

## **#Glenn**

But if one would begin to unpack what would be required in a peace deal, I know we have the memorandum of understanding, which kind of lays it out, the key issues. But the big pieces here, I mean, of course, how to end the war, because I think there's very few ways to find common ground, because the Iranians want the U.S. out of the region, and the U.S. wants to reassert its dominance in the region. So it's very—yes, it's hard to find common ground there. But in terms of the nuclear deal, I mean, this seems to be problematic in many ways. On one hand, the Americans would like to address this first. The Iranians would first want all the other issues resolved. But let's say this could be agreed upon. Are you more optimistic there that a deal can be made? But also, if it can't, do you think there's a possibility that the Iranians could escalate in terms of actually leaving the Non-Proliferation Treaty and going down a different path?

## **#Pepe Escobar**

They don't even need to actually leave the NPT, the whole bureaucratic process of leaving the NPT. They can simply not say anything and get ready with tweaking their nuclear doctrine, which is an ongoing discussion already in Tehran. And that involves everybody. It involves the Supreme National Security Council. It involves the diplomatic wing. It involves the IRGC wing. It involves the Majlis, the parliament. Everybody is discussing, okay, what's possible? What will have to happen? And, of course, the ultimate decider, we all know, is Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. And, of course, if push comes to shove and he has to alter the doctrine, the ramifications are mind-boggling in terms of complexity, in theological terms, military terms, geopolitical terms, you name it.

We're still very far away from that. What has already changed, and we all know that, is the military doctrine. It's not defensive anymore. It's offensive and includes preemption. And this is being repeated day after day by IRGC commanders, by Mohsen Rezaei himself, you name it. If we detect, I would say, a whiff of movement by the Americans and Israelis to try to come up with another attack against Iran, we will launch our own preemptive attack. And they have a target list which includes everything from what's left of the military bases that are not totally destroyed to, of course, naval assets in the southern Indian Ocean. Everybody in Iran knows that, and everybody in the Persian Gulf knows that. The petro-sheikhs are aware of that.

And that was part of the previous petro-sheikh pressure over Trump not to launch another attack against Iran. But as we all know as well, considering that Trump is not exactly a Bismarck, he already said that he's going to attack Iran after the midterms, based on words. So the Iranians are not only ready for a possible resumption of the war after the midterms, but for what might happen in the next three weeks, in fact, literally three weeks before the midterms. But now, Glenn, the most crucial sector of the chessboard is Yemen. The whole thing changed completely in these past few

days. And, of course, this is something that I've been impressing on everything that I write in my podcast, is that Iran and Yemen come as a package.

And the Yemen part of the package now is prominent, because they finally know. They decided that this is the right moment to go after Saudi Arabia all the way. It was part of what they had planned before. They were expecting that the Saudis would at least try to invest in a diplomatic front. The latest that we have, which we confirmed yesterday, is that MBS actually asked the Chinese to step in as a mediating force. Obviously, the Chinese will not confirm that. This is not how Chinese foreign policy works. But it makes sense that he's so desperate that the only possibility of—obviously, he will not ask Iran to do that. Iran is already doing it.

In fact, there was a letter that was... And Pakistan is also trying to help, even though Pakistan is directly implicated because of the Mecca Defense Alliance. And that's also something that we confirmed in the past few days. There are Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia. They were there before. There are Pakistani JF-17 Chinese fighter jets as well. But their mission is to protect Mecca and Medina, and they are not near the Saudi-Yemeni border. So we had official confirmation of that. In fact, Larry and I, we pressed for a definitive answer, and they gave us this answer. But this is how it stands now. We don't know what might happen if, for instance, we have Pakistani troops by accident killed in one of those ballistic missiles being launched by Ansar Allah.

Anything can happen. But the mediation efforts continue. Ansar Allah sent an official letter to the Pakistani government, proposing and suggesting, "Why don't you mediate between us?" And we'll be very comfortable if you mediate between Saudi Arabia and us. And the Pakistanis are considering. The problem is, once again, Glenn, how are you going to convince somebody so remote from reality as MBS? He's even more remote from reality than Trump, if that's possible. But that's the case. And everything that is happening now, he also started. He decided to basically renew the war against Yemen last June, and now he's paying the price. Because this time, the Yemenis, they thought it over carefully. They said, "Okay, we're going to start our campaign in stages. It's going to be first here inside Yemen, the West Coast."

We're going to recover everything in the West Coast, bordering the Red Sea. Then we move to Taiz, the most important city in the Southwest. Then we move to Marib, where the oil is. And when we secure all that, which is basically a unification of Yemen under Ansar Allah, then we start thinking about southern Saudi Arabia because these are our lands. These are Yemeni lands stolen by the Brits. And Yemen will go for them. There's no question about that. Once they go there, that will be the beginning of the end of the House of Saud as a whole. Now we are already seeing the beginning of the end in financial and economic terms. They are paralyzed. They cannot export oil. Their debt is exploding. Their airports are being bombed. It's something that, for Saudis, is beyond unimaginable.

And now it's normalized, and it's happening practically every day. So this is the most important vector of the front of the battlefield at the moment, even more than U.S. and Iran. And U.S. and Iran, maybe we're in the middle of a lull, a calm before the storm, because we are three weeks away

from the midterms. Of course, everything will go completely crazy again after the midterms. But we can have two escalation ladders in the next few weeks, I'm sorry, progressing in parallel, one as dangerous as the other one, and converging to something, Glenn, that was sticking in my mind for a long time. It was an answer by one of my Yemeni contacts when he told me, "Look, we knew that the Americans were ready to launch a massive offensive against all of us."

Axis of Resistance. So we decided to go preemptive. So Ansar Allah, they already knew that a concerted attack against themselves, Iran, Lebanon, Iraq, everything was in the works. So because they went preemptive, now they have the initiative. And of course, this also suits their particular, I would say, specific agenda in terms of Saudi Arabia. They are not thinking about the, I would say, the great, great game in West Asia. They are thinking about, okay, let's teach the Saudis a lesson, considering everything that they did to us since 2015. They bombed Yemen all across the spectrum, and they killed at least 60,000 people. When you do this to a race of fighters, Glenn, they never forget it. Blowback is inevitable. And we are right in the middle of the blowback now.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, I think, well, what you argue now about them starting to do these preemptive strikes, that's something I warned about for months. That is, with the Iranians as well, that it's a huge mistake for Iran to allow the United States to have this escalation dominance, to decide when fighting begins, when it ends, what kind of weapons can be used, what targets are acceptable. I mean, by handing over this full escalation dominance to the Americans, I mean, they're giving up something big. So it is interesting that they're kind of taking this back, because even the word "preemptive" now, it might not even be the right word because they're already in the war. It's kind of like letting the Saudis and the U.S. decide when to reduce the tensions, when to bring it back up.

I mean, this escalation control, I mean, this is a disaster to hand over. So I can understand what they're trying to do. But on that, I want to get a bit back into the Iranians again, because we often assume, as you said, that the U.S. can say, oh, let's wait until after the midterm, and then we'll strike them a bit more. But the Iranians themselves, they have their own internal politics. And we see that the foreign minister, Araghchi, is under some growing pressure at home because, again, they also have some who want to talk to the Americans. They have others, the hardliners, who say, no, why are we doing this? We know they're not going to negotiate today. It's all a ruse. So how do you explain the problems he's under now? Is this an indication that the hardliners are, I guess, seizing the initiative or taking over?

## **#Pepe Escobar**

Well, the most important thing, Glenn, is the decision process in Tehran now. Who is—okay, the ultimate decider, we all know, is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. But the most important man in Iran now, apart from the leader, and the guy who is coordinating the debate and, of course, the most important decisions, is Mohsen Rezaei. Mohsen Rezaei is ultra-experienced in everything, starting

with the trench war during the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s. Everything. He did everything. He is more powerful than the head of the IRGC, to give an idea to all of you, our audience. And he's the personal representative of Mojtaba.

So he's coordinating the discussions inside the Supreme National Security Council and, of course, the discussions between the different, let's say, power vectors: military, diplomatic, academic, think tanks, parliament, etc. And that includes, for instance, this widespread debate about, shall we finally tweak our nuclear doctrine? That's one part of it. The second part of it, which is also very, very important, is: yes, now that's it. Defensive, decentralized, mosaic, etc. is over. Now we're going on the offensive, and we have our hand on the trigger. And if we suspect they're going to attack us, we'll attack them first.

This is now a consensus all across the spectrum in Tehran. There's another factor which is immensely important as well, which is the price that Iran is paying in terms of their economy, which is in an extremely fragile state. No question about that. Nobody knows how much a toman is worth anymore. It falls every day. Inflation is high. But, once again, 47 years of dribbling sanctions. What the Americans thought that they could achieve in a matter of a few days, according to that ghastly Soros asset, Scott Bessent, is not going to happen. Because they have all sorts of mechanisms in terms of barter trade, and bartering and trading with their neighbors as well, which is still in place.

With Iraq, with Central Asia, with China via Central Asia, with Pakistan, with China via Pakistan. It's all there still, of course. And on top of that, there's a lot of oil changing hands by all sorts of smuggling operations you can imagine. So there is a lot of hard currency entering Iran because of these oil smuggling operations. So the Iranian economy can go on like this for a long, long time. Of course, average people in Iran, they are paying the price. But nobody's complaining. You don't see street protests. You don't see, when you survey Iranian media, people are not complaining. They know that this is a price to pay because at the end of the road, that's it.

It's an existential war. It's our sovereignty, and that's it. And once again, the Shiite mindset: sacrifice. We need to make serious sacrifices, otherwise we will never get our total sovereignty again. So the guy who is basically controlling all these vectors and shaping the debate is Mohsen Rezaei. And he's speaking almost every day; there is a nugget coming from him. And if we follow that closely, they seem to be undisturbed. They know what could happen next. They know that there might be another offensive after the midterms. If it is in the next three weeks, they are also ready. They have no illusions on any solution for this war, which could become a forever war.

They know that they cannot trust anything the Americans say or do or sign or don't sign. The only thing that they believe is American threats. So it's a pretty realistic position. They are analyzing, and this is the Persian mindset. The Persian mindset is very logical and realistic, right? So is anything coming from the other side going to disturb what they know? Okay, this is our path. No, it won't

disturb the path that they carved for themselves from now on. And once again, if there is an attack, they all say, everybody you ask, they say the same thing: "We are ready, and we have been ready for quite some time, and we know it's coming." Can you make a system like that fold?

No, you cannot. Especially because now you have a popular consensus. This position is supported all across the country now, because everybody understood that this is a do-or-die war. It is an existential war. And what we can describe as the abstinence syndrome will stop at nothing to destroy them. But they are ready. It's immensely impressive. Okay, I may have, you know, I didn't get into a lot of detail, but this is the big picture, I think, to give you and our audience how, I would say, ironclad is this consensus that we know what we're doing. We all agree that this is the only way to do it, and we are ready to pay the price, which is going to be—it already is—steep. Very, very serious.

## **#Glenn**

Well, in the U.S.-Iran war, though, if one of the key objectives, or the overarching objective, of Iran is to get the U.S. out of the region, then, of course, Saudi Arabia has a key role in this. But you also made the point that in these regional wars now, the main theater is the war between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. So again, Saudi Arabia has done a lot of mistakes under MBS. It just seems to me, if this conflict is going to spiral out of control or you're going to see some huge shifts, it will be something happening within Saudi Arabia.

And they do have a lot of problems, though, building up from not being able to export their energy, the economy itself being weakened, and might need to sell more of their American bonds. They have a domestic legitimacy crisis as well. They have political infighting. I mean, the list is pretty long. How do you see the possibility of the Saudis trying to rescue the situation? Because there was a lot of focus on perhaps the Pakistanis or the Turks coming in to save the day. I know MBS called Trump quite a few times, trying to get the Americans to come and help. Do you see anything on the horizon that should give the Saudis any reason for optimism?

## **#Pepe Escobar**

Well, they are in, I would say, total desperation mode. They're asking for help from anybody, from everybody, from everybody they know and even people they don't know. What is already on the terrain is a very, very toxic combination. Another thing that we confirmed yesterday: there are Israeli advisors already on the ground, including an Israeli general. So this proves to us that CENTCOM, Israel, and Saudis are working together already on the ground. So now this is, for all practical purposes, a coalition war. The role of Turkey and Pakistan, because of enormous public opposition in both Turkey and Pakistan for both armies to be involved in a war that's happening, it's completely absurd from Islamabad and from Ankara's point of view, because they have to fulfill the commitments of the Mecca Defense Pact.

And now it's clear why there was a Mecca Defense Pact in the first place. It was, of course, to facilitate things for Israel, because this was admitted by one of the spokespeople of the Saudi government himself. He said, "We need to do this because the port of Eilat in Israel is totally isolated." Can you imagine that an official spokesperson for Riyadh goes on the record, and he knows that the whole Ummah, the lands of Islam, is paying attention to what he's saying? And he's basically saying that they are involved in a war against another Muslim nation to protect Israeli interests. You don't need enemies when you have somebody like that, when you have people like that in the House of Saud. So that's very, very serious.

But the other objective of the Mecca Defense Alliance was to go against Yemen in the first place, from a Saudi point of view. And that's why both Turkey and Pakistan, they are caught in a trap. It's visible how uncomfortable both are in Ankara and in Islamabad. But because they signed this Mecca thing, they cannot just say no. But they are emphasizing virtually every day, this is only for defensive purposes. Yes, we have Pakistani advisors, we have Turkish advisors, etc., but it will be only for defensive purposes. And the Pakistanis are, you know, they are, you know, desperate to look, we are there to protect Mecca and Medina, and that's it. But this is very, very dangerous because it takes a flash like that for all these good intentions to dissolve.

And sooner or later, they will be in the middle of a hot war against Ansar Allah. And Ansar Allah already told the Pakistanis indirectly, if you attack us, you're going to be in deep, deep trouble. And obviously, the people in Islamabad, the military establishment in Islamabad, they are not fools. They know what that means. So it's immensely uncomfortable for both Turkey and Pakistan, the position that they are at at the moment. They will not facilitate strikes by the Saudis against Ansar Allah and Yemeni armed forces. But the Israelis and the Americans and CENTCOM will. That's the difference. And this is what we're going to see in the next few days: how much we're going to have of direct implication of the Americans and Israelis in the next Saudi attacks against Ansar Allah.

And will Turkey and Pakistan remain in the background? Or will they be, I wouldn't say forced, but called once again by Riyadh to go on the front lines and participate in strikes against Ansar Allah? If they do that, wow. Then we have a much, much wider war with unforeseen consequences. Then this thing is going to get totally out of control, which is something that both Ankara and Islamabad don't want. But, of course, we never know what CENTCOM actually wants or what CENTCOM is being forced by Trump to do. For instance, yesterday we had another confirmation which is deeply worrying. There are a lot of American reservists, like Navy SEAL reservists, who live— a lot of them live around San Diego. They have been told to mobilize to go to Riyadh now.

That's very, very—it's a worrying sign, an extremely worrying sign. This means that there may be, sooner rather than later, a direct American attack against them, even though the echoes that we hear from the White House is no. And Trump himself said no. But, you know, Glenn, we cannot trust anything he says, or nothing. So anything is possible. Once again, are the Yemenis worried about that? They are not trembling in their sandals. Definitely not, because they were expecting, okay, the backlash is going to be serious, but we are ready. And they are advancing in their pre-planned

campaign in stages. The most important for them now is to consolidate what they gained on the western coast.

Conquer Taiz without bloodshed, which is what they are right in the middle of doing. Conquer Marib without bloodshed once again. When they unify all these lands, then they will start to think about the next stage. And, of course, if MBS refuses to sit down for a diplomatic arrangement and continues to bomb—not only civilian, okay, military, but basically civilian targets. Sana'a is not a military airport. I was at Sana'a airport. It's not a military airport. It's a civilian airport. And it continues to be bombed by the Saudis. Then they're—wow. Because they already said, look, it's simple. It's a blockade against a blockade, an airport against an airport, an attack against an attack. And this is exactly what they're doing.

The Saudis bombed Sana'a again. They bombed the Saudi airport in Riyadh. Simple as that. Of course, if we look at the way—the absolutely disgusting way Western mainstream media is covering it—it's like, out of the sky, those terrorists in sandals decided to bomb a civilian airport in Saudi Arabia. Because there's never the context. They were responding to the bombing of their own airport and other airports in Yemen. And this did not start today. This started in 2015. So once again, Glenn, the political council of Ansar Allah, they know exactly what they're doing. They planned this to be in stages. They already launched perhaps earlier than they thought. But now that it's launched, you know, it has a life of its own already, the campaign.

And it would only stop if they sit at a table with mediators and they strike some sort of deal, which, by the way, they had a memorandum of understanding before, which was broken by the Saudis when they bombed Sana'a's airport last June. So that would be the same thing. They sit down at the table and they go beyond the memorandum of understanding. They try to finally work out a modus vivendi between the House of Saud and Ansar Allah. Is that possible? Very, very, very difficult, because their views for Arabia as a whole, it's a total clash. So it's going to be one or the other. And that's, once again, why this is so complicated. It's very hard to find a diplomatic settlement.

## **#Glenn**

But in terms of just assessing the purpose of these U.S. soldiers being sent to Saudi Arabia, in response to what do you think they will be there? That is, who scares who? What is Yemen's objective here? Because, as you mentioned before, some of the lands of Saudi Arabia could be claimed by Yemen. So it's not unthinkable anymore that Yemen, with the territorial successes it's having within its own borders, will march into Saudi Arabia. Do you think that could be a key purpose? Or would they want to start a war again with Iran? I mean, there's this...

## **#Pepe Escobar**

But this is further on down the road, Glenn. It's not going to be now. It could be in a matter of a few months, let's put it this way. Once their control of center-west and western and southern Yemen is

consolidated, then the next stage will be, okay, now let's get our provinces back, the three southern Saudi provinces. But this is much, much later. Well, if we see the House of Saud collapsing from the inside, this could happen in a relatively short time. Apparently, the situation in Riyadh now is absolute hell. Internal infighting. Basically, two clans: Khaled, the Minister of Defense, and MBS. Then all those princes who were sidelined in that famous Ritz-Carlton episode years ago.

They are looking around and saying, maybe it's time for us to start making our moves. Then there are the hundred tribes that are completely sidelined from everything. They're wringing their hands and saying, okay, now it's our moment. So you have all the conditions of the beginning of a major collapse of the House of Saud. And obviously, the Yemenis are looking at it and saying, okay, if we have an opening and we see that the whole thing is disaggregated from the inside, we can make our move as well. And for them, it would be very, very easy because there's no border. I was very close to the border last year. There's no border. They're all cousins. They speak the same dialects.

Very, very, very important. Nobody has intel on northern Yemen, on Ansarallah, because you have to speak the local dialect. If you open your mouth, they already know that you're not one of them. And these guys in the southern provinces, they speak the same dialect. They're literally cousins, brothers, cousins, extended families, etc. So for Yemen to go there and take over would not be very complicated, considering that, obviously, all hell is breaking loose in Riyadh itself. You know, the circles of power fighting for, okay, is there going to be a House of Saud after that? The question, you know, it's not a far-fetched question anymore.

## **#Glenn**

Just as a last question, how vulnerable are they now, though? I mean, you already spoke about the internal fighting, but you have all these other variables, like the economics of it, because they're putting in such a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, which is what Yemen has been doing. I mean, if you have the Iran war blocking off the Strait of Hormuz, and then you have the Yemen war, where they not just block off the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, but indeed the entire Red Sea that is going up north as well. This is a disaster for Saudi Arabia, the fact that they're also attacking the airport now. I mean, for a country dependent on exporting energy and foreign workers... I'm just curious how long you think they can hold on here, because is it going to be an economic crisis that breaks them? Is it going to be military faltering? Will it be the political class beginning to fight each other? I don't know. How do you see this? Again, if one of these pillars begins to fall, then it will impact others as well.

## **#Pepe Escobar**

It has already started, Glenn. Literally, all hell is breaking loose in all these sectors. Infighting inside the House of Saud itself, in the periphery of the House of Saud, princes that are excluded from the decision-making process, tribes that are excluded from everything. They don't have a functional army. Literally, it's a joke. The concept of a Saudi Arabian army, you know, American generals joke about it openly, you know. And now they cannot export oil. They are blocked. They're literally

blocked inside. Both sides of the East-West pipeline were bombed and will be bombed again. The East-West pipeline itself will be bombed again. They reconstruct. When you're 90% reconstructed, you bomb again. And the results of that secondary bombing are even worse than the first bombing. And, of course... Do they have 100,000 American or Israeli soldiers ready to invade Yemen to end the war? Of course not.

## **#Glenn**

So that's it. They don't have any solution for it.

## **#Pepe Escobar**

And the crazy, the absolutely crazy thing is that MBS brought this on himself and on the House of Saud. These are his decisions. There is enormous speculation across, I would say, the lands of Arabia. Was he forced by the Americans last June to go after Yemen again? There's no definitive answer about that, and there's no evidence. So as far as everybody knows, this was his decision. But obviously, to do something like this, he would have to consult with CENTCOM and with the White House. Look, I'm going to attack Yemen again. Are you with me? Well, remember April Glaspie before the fall of Saddam?

It's the same thing. Yes, we are with you. And then we saw what happened. This could be another example, especially because the Americans have their own man in Riyadh, Prince Nayef, who continues to be under house arrest. Their man in Riyadh is not MBS. MBS made himself the man in Riyadh because he got rid of everybody else, including Prince Nayef, who was supposed to be the heir to the throne. So, that said, there are a lot of subplots behind which remain extremely murky, including the very possibility of, okay, let's throw MBS under the bus.

## **#Glenn**

Well, that's a thing the U.S. has been working to do, though. I mean, if you take a step back from this regional war in the Middle East and look to the wider shift in the distribution of power, you see the U.S., given that it's in a relative decline, is seeking to outsource a lot of its wars. You see this in Europe and the Ukraine war over to the Europeans. And in the Middle East, you also see the United States wanting others to do more. But also, if you're sitting in Saudi Arabia, though, you're MBS, and you saw this mistake.

I mean, the main mistake of the Iran war was that if it would fail, there's no going back to the old status quo. That is, you know, when they bombed Yemen last year, it didn't work. Okay, just declare victory and go home, and you go back to the old status quo. Well, you couldn't do that in Iran, and now it's proven you can't do that in Yemen either. If you want to end the war, go back to the old

status quo, you have to end the blockade on Yemen. Then you're going to have it grow quite a lot stronger, which means the dynamic will change forever. I don't understand the strategic thinking, though, why some of this wouldn't be predictable.

## **#Pepe Escobar**

But here we are. Any final thoughts before we finish off? No, no, no, but your question is wonderful. We could do another show only to answer your question: why? Why they didn't see this coming? Yeah. No, nobody saw this this way. It's true, the way it's coming. And nobody could ever imagine that Yemen would launch a concerted campaign to undermine the House of Saud from the inside.

## **#Glenn**

Nobody predicted that. Well, that's a good point, actually, because, you know, some of the general movements for how states are expected to behave could be seen as predictable. But what I didn't predict was the performance of Iran first and then of Yemen. The fact that they were able to have these spectacular successes, and then you have this huge crisis among their opponents. I mean, I didn't see the success of it. I just thought, in general, what direction the states were headed. But nobody did, Glenn. Nobody did. Well, that's what I hear from the Iranians as well. They didn't expect this success either. But again, it's world order shifting very, very fast.

## **#Pepe Escobar**

And yeah, I think these wars are—you're right—in unexpected ways. Glenn, before we wrap up, can I ask you a question? Yeah, sure. Changing the subject a little bit, give us your reading of the Trump-Putin diesel deal.

## **#Glenn**

Well, I'm a little bit perplexed because it's not that much diesel. It's not much. So, to shake the whole thing up, I'm wondering if it is about the diesel, wanting to really push the prices down. Is it just to do a little PR stunt, or is it to reshuffle or move away from its current position in the Ukraine war? But again, it's same as with the relations now, all these new criticisms coming from Trump against Zelensky. After all the elections, all this stuff, I'm thinking, I'm not sure how to assess it because it can be many things. One, you can look at the power politics of the region. That's obvious. Ukraine is now definitely defeated. There's no way of reversing this.

So this could just be Trump's, you know, washing his hands of the whole thing, because whatever he throws away, the Europeans will be outraged, and they will pick up wherever America left it. So this could be a way of further outsourcing it. But that would be very strategic thinking on his part. It could just be Trump lashing out. That is, you know, because Zelensky was criticizing the diesel deal. And then, of course, Trump has to, you know, be even meaner. And so it could be this, or it's part of

Trump's negotiation tactics. You know, he tends to—we've been here before, when they were in the Oval Office—you know, Zelensky is horrible, and then he goes back to, oh, we can work with Russia.

And then back to, well, the situation is changing now. We're going to help the Ukrainians. So I think going back and forth, it gives them some space for maneuver to negotiate. And each side, you know, if you're locked in a position, there's no point in talking to you anymore. But if the Russians, Ukrainians, Europeans know that America can switch back and forth from day to day, they will be willing to offer America much more if you have to buy their love, effectively. So I'm not sure what it is. Is it great power thinking? Is it just lashing out? Negotiation tactics? I don't know. I don't have a window into his head. I just know it's very unpredictable, and whatever he says today, he might say the opposite tomorrow.

But if he thinks the Russians will make huge concessions now, I think the main thinking there now is, we're not going to fall for this nonsense again. But if there is any possibility for a deal now, if they see Trump squeezing Zelensky to accept concessions, I think the Russians could jump at it because, if there is a political settlement—because this war, a bit like the Middle East, it doesn't have a natural end to it. I mean, even if Russia conquers everything east of the Dnieper, the Europeans would still want to use the western part of Ukraine as a launching pad into Russia. So it's, yeah, no, it's a very difficult situation to assess, which is why a fairly straightforward question is nonetheless very difficult to answer.

**#Pepe Escobar**

Thank you. Shall we wrap it up? Thank you.

**#Glenn**

Yes.

**#Pepe Escobar**

Thank you so much, and I hope to see you again soon.