

Pepe Escobar: China HUMILIATED Trump's Blockade - Iran Takes FULL Control of Hormuz

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Tuesday, April 14th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Nima Alkhorshid, Pepe Escobar, is here. Hello.

#Pepe

Hey, brother. Hi, everybody. Greetings from Buddhist Southeast Asia. It's still a holiday here—very, very calm. The absolute opposite of the dementia we are all plunged into. Well, let's go back to the dementia.

#Nima

Yeah. Hit it, Nima. Pepe... I was about to speak in Portuguese.

#Pepe

Why not? When you start speaking Portuguese, our audience loves it.

#Nima

They have to learn a little Portuguese. Let's start, Pepe, with the case of the negotiations. We had the negotiation, we had J.D. Vance suddenly leaving Islamabad, Pakistan, then Donald Trump announcing a blockade on Iranian ports. What does "blockade" mean, in your opinion?

#Pepe

He's blockading himself inside his four-year-old psyche—that would be the best definition. He thinks this is a genius move in his mind: Iran is blockading the world, which it's not. Obviously, nobody

explained to him how the five-tier passage through the Strait of Hormuz works. So, in his very childish mind, "Okay, I'm going to blockade them—Iran as a whole. Not only the Strait of Hormuz, but all the Iranian ports." This is—okay, "stupid" doesn't even begin to describe it. First of all, to impose a blockade, you need an armada. Where's the American armada? Nowhere to be seen. Nobody knows where they are. In fact, people know some of it—where it is. Which one is it? It's in the Arabian Sea, but very, very far from the Gulf.

#Nima

Abraham Lincoln.

#Pepe

Sorry, sorry, sorry. My brain is mush. All right. The Abraham Lincoln is, let's say, in the eastern part of the Gulf of Oman—practically in the Arabian Sea, more in the Arabian Sea than in the Gulf of Oman. And the other assholes, they're off the coast of Namibia—the George H.W. Bush. Why? Because they're cowards. They can't cross west and go through the Red Sea. Because guess who's there just waiting? Our friends in Sana'a, the Houthis. So they're circumnavigating Africa to escape from the Houthis. This in itself is absolutely outstanding, isn't it? So they have, what, two or three destroyers? Not much. I was talking to Nima Alkhorshid before we started. I wrote two articles back to back, yesterday and today.

But because the editorial process is so slow, at the time we were talking—which is 10 a.m. in Southeast Asia, 6 p.m. in Moscow—they still hadn't been published. In the first article, which you'll see later, I detail all the minimum requirements needed for this "invincible armada" to start applying a blockade, based on military calculations. And even one of those eternally retired U.S. military men who become CNN talking heads—in this case, Stavridis—was saying, "Look, we're going to need all that, and we don't have it." So this is all detailed in the column. Until they muster this whole armada into position, it's going to take quite a while. For the moment, technically, we have a blockade because CENTCOM said there is a blockade.

But apparently it's a blockade on two parallel tracks. One targets only Iranian ships and those going back and forth to and from Iran—these are blockaded. Theoretically, everybody else is not blockaded. That means Western ships, ships aligned with the U.S., Europe, South Korea, Japan, whatever, coming from other ports in the Persian Gulf—in the Emirates, for instance. So how are they going to enforce and police all that? And considering how slow the Pentagon's machinery works, this could take months to put in place—not weeks, months. For the moment, we already had a fantastic case today: the first ship that, after the proclamation of the blockade, actually transited the Strait of Hormuz. Very important.

Chinese-owned. They were broadcasting on an open channel for every tracker on the planet to see—Chinese-owned and crewed, as everybody knows. It belongs to a Chinese company in Shanghai but

is sailing under a Malawi flag. Very, very interesting. And even more interesting, it didn't leave from Iran; it left from Sajjah, in the Emirates. So technically, it's not a target for the Americans because it departed from a port that isn't Iranian. So they passed. They paid the toll in crypto, U1—no problem. But this means that the blockade, technically, exists but isn't being applied. They don't know how to enforce it. For instance, there wasn't a single American ship sent to check whether this tanker was what it claimed to be. Nothing.

So once again, Nima, this is a gigantic PR operation, essentially. Nobody knows how this is going to be enforced—how they're going to manage this invisible armada, how long it's going to take. And worse, much, much worse—and I had confirmation from one of my Chinese sources—is that if they start threatening or harassing Chinese tankers, I'm not even talking about the Iranian shadow fleet tankers going to China, but Chinese-owned tankers like the one that crossed today—it's Chinese-owned with a Malawi flag—the PLA Navy is going to send a task force. And this task force will be very close to the opposing American task force. So can you imagine, Nima, between the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea, we'll have practically a face-to-face between the PLA Navy and the U.S. Navy?

And this is a done deal. The Chinese are just waiting to see if CENTCOM has the guts to, first of all, interdict a Chinese tanker. Are they going to board this Chinese tanker? Are they going to redirect it to Djibouti, for instance? Or are they going to try to sink it if the Chinese tanker refuses? So this is what the whole planet is waiting for. If push comes to shove, this is where we're heading. And all that to tell you, Nima, and our audience, that this is not a blockade of Iran. This is a blockade of China, essentially, disguised as a blockade of Iranian ports. This is the American Holy Grail, which goes in parallel with something very worrying that's happening concerning Indonesia.

The Indonesians are trying to hedge their foreign policy. So they have Prabowo going to Moscow, where he met with Putin yesterday and said, "We need more collaboration on the oil fields," etc., blah, blah, blah. But they also have their Minister of Defense signing a sort of partnership with the Secretary of Forever Wars in Washington. We still don't know the details about all that. What's being spun in D.C. is that, sooner or later, the Americans are going to start sending troops for training in Indonesia. Can you imagine the Chinese, the Russians, and other BRICS members when they look at this? Obviously, they're going to pick up the phone and say, "Okay, what are you playing at? We facilitated your membership in BRICS as a full member."

And you're coming with this gimmick now? We still don't know how this is going to evolve. But it's very, very worrying for one single, larger-than-life reason. Guess which nations border the Strait of Malacca? Malaysia and Indonesia — not Singapore. Singapore is down there. The strait itself is between... I crossed the strait, even navigated it many years ago. On one side is Malaysia, on the other side is Indonesia. This is the Strait of Malacca. And obviously, everybody who follows Mackinder, Spykman, Mahan — you name it — the whole blah, blah, blah about Eurasia, the

Heartland, the Rimland, and all that, knows that China started to diversify its sources of energy to escape from Malacca. I've been writing about this for over 20 years. This is one of the big, big stories of the 21st century.

How China has managed so far to escape the Strait of Malacca — but not all the time. Because everything that comes from the Persian Gulf goes through the Arabian Sea, has to cross the Strait of Malacca to get to the South China Sea, and then to China. So China is still, I would say, a hostage of the Strait of Malacca. But we can see that the American game is always the same thing. It's a Thalassocratic strategy — after "Britannia rules the waves," it's "America rules the waves," and rules the bottlenecks. So if they cannot get what they want from Hormuz, which would be a big, big setback, they'll concentrate on Malacca. There's no question about that. That's why this whole thing is very, very worrying. And it's happening at the same time.

#Nima

I think the practical difficulty the United States has right now, as you mentioned, is that the Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier is far from the Iranian coast. So how are they going to be able to blockade the Strait of Hormuz, or the waterway toward—

#Pepe

Good question, Nima, because they don't have the guts to go to the Persian Gulf or the Strait of Hormuz. They're going to block the exit — and the exit is very, very far away. It's in the Gulf of Oman. It's exactly in this area — the Gulf of Oman. It's the same sea. It's ridiculous, but it's the same sea. I was driving there last year when we were shooting our documentary. It's beautiful — the Makran coast in southeast Iran, in Sistan-Balochistan province, all the way to the Iran–Pakistan border. So from the port of Chabahar in Sistan-Balochistan in Iran to the port of Gwadar in the Arabian Sea in Balochistan, Pakistan, it's less than 100 kilometers.

And somewhere in between, we have this artificial division between the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It's basically the same thing, but there's an artificial border in the middle. The Americans are on the east side of that border. They won't dare to move closer inside the Gulf of Oman because they'd be very close to Chabahar — and there's a military base there. By the way, if I'm not mistaken, the Americans have already bombed that base in Chabahar. So they're going to stay very far away. The American blockade line, let's say, will be somewhere between the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea — once again, very far from the Strait of Hormuz.

#Nima

It's so wide as well, but we know they'd have to use some kind of speedboats to do that. Without speedboats, they wouldn't be able to. It's impossible. No.

#Pepe

And helicopters, Nima. To board a ship, you need a mix of speedboats and helicopters — a lot of them. Or maybe drones. Drones as well. But the Iranian defenses, they know all that, and they're pre-positioned all along the coast, along Sistan-Baluchistan too, all the way to the border. So, wow — the possibilities of serious clashes are gigantic, of course, and it's going to be really hardcore. They'd need a massive armada to do this, and they don't. They just don't. Those two aircraft carriers are going to be sitting ducks wherever they are, Nima — sitting ducks for the long-range Iranian ballistic missiles. It doesn't matter that they're 800 kilometers from the Strait of Hormuz. It doesn't matter. For the Iranian missiles positioned on the southern coast near the Persian Gulf — not a problem.

They have a range of 1,500 — no problem. So the only plausible explanation for the moment is that, once again, this is a PR coup. This is, let's say, another instrument to see if Iran cracks. Obviously, Iran is not going to crack. It's interfering, of course, with the possibility of the negotiations continuing. For instance, the Pakistanis are spinning like crazy that there's going to be another meeting on Thursday. There's no confirmation anywhere — in Tehran, in Washington, or elsewhere — that there's going to be another meeting on Thursday. For the moment, people are still digesting what happened on Saturday. And now we have a pretty good idea of what happened, via our friends like Professor Marandi and Iranian members of parliament who were inside the room.

And when you read what they were, it's mind-boggling. But it's something we already suspected — the nuggets of information showed that the Americans had absolutely no clue about the technical dossiers. They didn't know shit. We already knew that. Second, apparently, according to Araksha himself, at the beginning the conversation with Vance was relatively civilized. But after the direct interference from the genocidal in Tel Aviv, the whole thing went downhill. I think this is confirmed by every source from the Iranian side and from some Pakistani sources as well. So people are still digesting all that and saying, okay, why did they go to Islamabad in the first place? To buy time, obviously. Second, to, in a sense, throw events into the fire. Trump is a very, very nasty character.

And he knew that — that's why he didn't send Marco Rubio in the first place. They went to see a bloody UFC match on the night of the most important diplomatic negotiation in the history of U.S.–Iran relations in 47 years. It's pathetic. It's pathetic. And they put Vance in the line of fire, knowing he had no autonomy to decide anything — hence those maybe twelve phone calls to the White House. So he couldn't decide anything on the spot. And then, in the end, he came up with that stupid excuse: "Iran was not prepared to accept our final offer." What kind of negotiation is that? These idiots. Okay, send these idiots to a carpet bazaar in Iran so they learn how the art of the deal works. This is how the art of the deal works. Obviously, they have no clue about it.

Okay, so the possibility of another encounter this week — I'd say it's minimal, especially two days from now. I don't see it happening. But this is where we are at the moment, Nima. At least we now have a pretty good idea of what really happened in Islamabad. And I would say, credit to the

Pakistanis, because they tried everything — irrespective of our judgment about the current, I'd say, military junta and the civilian population, the current regime in Islamabad. But they did try very, very hard. They worked their asses off. And once again, I talked about this somewhere else, but I think for our audience it's important. There's an outstanding photo — I think it was shot by a Pakistani photographer. You see the back of Vance, not his face, but you see the face of the Pakistani foreign minister, Dar, and he's absolutely dejected.

He looks like he wants to kill himself. But on the right side of the photo, talking to Vance, we see Field Marshal Asim Munir. And you can read his face — he is pissed to death. He's pissed to death. We can paraphrase, even if we don't know exactly what he was saying, but we can understand that he was telling Vance, "So you come to my country to mess us up after all the work we did to put this thing together? You know, think seriously about what you're doing." And Munir — come on — Munir is not intimidated by anybody. A shark comes in front of Munir, the shark runs away. So I can imagine Vance, who has no international experience, especially at this level, was probably terrified, right? So I think this photo tells a lot about what happened in the background.

#Nima

I think he saw the quality of the Iranian negotiator. Basically, he's not even comparable to Qalibaf. Many people don't know Qalibaf — he's gigantic.

#Pepe

Okay, Nima, tell us what you know about Qalibaf in one minute.

#Nima

Okay. He has a lot of experience, Pepe. He revolutionized the police — the whole police system of Iran. You know, long before, 10, 20, more than 20 years ago, he was in multiple positions. He was the mayor of Tehran. Right now, he's the head of the parliament. But he's gigantic when it comes to negotiations — his capabilities, his ability to talk, to negotiate — he's just unbelievable. He's not even comparable to J.D. Vance. I would say none of those people who were in Islamabad negotiating have any clue who these people really are.

I think J.D. Vance, when you hear him talking about before leaving Islamabad, he was basically wondering, "Who are these people?" Because they know what they're talking about. They have full authority over what they're doing. They know exactly what they're doing, and they have the whole framework from the Iranian leadership. They don't need to call anybody in Iran. But Qalibaf, Pepe — I would say Qalibaf is one of the most educated, most civilized people. He respects everyone in the room, everyone. But he's also incredibly strategic in the way he talks — so strategic.

I saw him for many years, how he was, and he's a gigantic person. I think the Trump administration would realize that as time goes by. I think after the first round of negotiations, J.D. Vance had some sort of understanding of who Qalibaf is. The guy isn't there to intimidate anybody — he just talks the way he does. He's so charming when he talks, but he knows what he's talking about. He knows what he's after. Yeah, he knows everything. The guy is, you know, I'd say one of the best negotiators Iran could bring to the table. And he's the head of negotiations right now for the Iranian delegation.

#Pepe

Absolutely. Nima, considering what you've learned and what you've heard from your connections and sources, there's a lot of talk about Iran possibly offering five years without enrichment, while the Americans from the beginning wanted twenty years. The IRGC denied it completely. And obviously, we didn't hear in detail from Qalibaf or from Araqchi whether they actually made this offer.

#Nima

No, no confirmation. Nothing from the Iranian side. We've heard nothing of that sort — five, six, two years, nothing. Nothing of that sort. And on the other hand, I think it's so bizarre to suggest that the Iranians have accepted five years of some sort of suspension of Iran's nuclear program. That's impossible, Pepe. It's impossible. Given the reality of what's going on right now in Iran, it's impossible. They're not going to do that. And the other part is that the whole negotiation over the uranium nuclear program is a very technical issue. It has a lot more to do with the technical teams than with the political figures.

I think that, technically, they can do something — they can confirm, they can negotiate together. But coming out with this idea that Iran has accepted five years, I think that's still alive. They're just putting that out there to create an atmosphere that favors them in the negotiations. It's all about propaganda. As you mentioned, it's PR, nothing more than that. And because nobody— you mentioned the member of parliament who is, I would say, a 100% reliable source — he said that. What was it all about? He said it was all about the Strait of Hormuz. The United States was asking for twenty years; they said no. Those are the main reasons he mentioned — basically, the Strait of Hormuz and the Iranian nuclear program.

#Pepe

Yes, yes, yes. There's another thing... let me see. Now it's escaped me completely. Let's see if I still remember. No, I can't remember. I'm sorry.

#Nima

Okay, Pepe. But looking at what's happening right now — we had the UAE going to China.

#Pepe

And they get slapped. I'd say they got a kick in the mouth. Can you believe, Nima, that the arrogant, self-entitled son of MBZ goes to Beijing, meets Xi Jinping, and lectures Xi Jinping about China's relationship with Iran? Can you believe this? This is what happened. And the Chinese foreign ministry— you know, "Oh, stupid towel head, go back to your place, go back to the rat place you belong to." It's ridiculous. Absolutely ridiculous. But it confirms once again that the UAE is, for all practical purposes, at war with Iran. And the IRGC is going to have to do something about it. There's no question. They already said— I'd say the most lenient observation they made in public— that they refuse to pay the toll booths in the Strait of Hormuz. So what are they going to do? Send an Emirati armada there? It's ridiculous. But for all practical purposes, this is very, very serious.

And it's indirect. And don't forget, they are a full member of BRICS, like Iran. So we have two BRICS members at war with each other. And obviously, because BRICS is in a coma nowadays— I assume today and tomorrow in Moscow, sorry, in Moscow and Beijing— now my brain is totally mush. The meeting between Lavrov and Wang Yi in Moscow, sorry, between today and tomorrow, this is part of that. They're going to have to talk about this because they are the top two BRICS members. They have two members at war. And, of course, the fact that the UAE is a Zionist station in the Persian Gulf— they are deeply linked to the international Zionist system, and especially the money circulation, with all their promises of investment in the American economy, building data centers in the UAE, etc.— I see this as the key problem all across the Persian Gulf.

What is Iran going to do with the UAE? Not the UAE—Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Dubai, there's not much to do, because the business model of Dubai is already dead. But Abu Dhabi is another story. How they're going to deal with Abu Dhabi is still up in the air. But it can't go on like this, because for all practical purposes, coming from Abu Dhabi, it's war. And when you compare it to Saudi Arabia, which used to be pro-war against Iran, now they're practically begging the Trump administration— this in the past 24 hours—to stop the blockade of the non-blockade, because they know what could happen.

Geo-economically, obviously, the Trump administration never considers these details. It's too sophisticated for them. They don't even understand the ramifications. But the Saudis do. The whole GCC thing is collapsing fast in front of our eyes. Not only is it already split, but it's disintegrating internally on the side that's, let's say, more pro-war against Iran. Qatar and Oman already know what they're going to do. They're neutral. They're trying to establish a relationship with Iran. They know where this is going. The new juridical regime in the Strait of Hormuz is going to be between Iran and Oman. They've already started talking about it.

On the Iranian side, it's more or less defined. Then they have to discuss sharing... the Tobus, exactly. And none of that is going to change. The American blockades imposed by a four-year-old who now thinks he's Jesus—they're not going to change anything. Anything. And that's the thing, Nima, because once again, this whole mess pushes us toward the big picture, which is yet another

chapter of the big, big war: the U.S. against China. And they're starting to use every trick in the book. So if they lose the Strait of Hormuz, that's it. They'll attack in Malacca or somewhere else. No question. No question.

#Nima

Yes, go ahead. I think that's really the big picture, as you mentioned. The big picture is they did that in Venezuela—no exports from Venezuela to China. And now they're trying to do the same in the Strait of Hormuz. But the problem in the Strait of Hormuz is that Iran is not Venezuela, and China knows that the United States is getting closer. That's the problem the U.S. is facing. I don't see—if we assume that Donald Trump came up with this idea of a blockade to create some sort of balance in the Western propaganda machine—like, "See, they have this trade route, I have the blockade on them," then we're in some kind of balanced position in these negotiations. So I'm not having any sort of difficulties; I have the leverage right now to block it. Because, you know, we understand how it works in the West.

#Pepe

Exactly.

#Nima

You have to feed the public—the domestic audience. You have to feed them the proper way. That's why I think he came up with this idea of blockading Iran. Absolutely.

#Pepe

It's a new narrative. Everybody's only talking about this. Nobody's talking about the strategic defeat, which is there. After all, they were begging for a ceasefire. And after the first chapter of—let's say—the first negotiation inside the ceasefire collapses, because they collapsed it, he needed another narrative. Enter the blockade. So this could go on for another few days and vanish, or if it goes on more than a few days, then the whole planet will be asking, "Okay, are you going to implement your blockade? Show us. Are you going to stop Chinese tankers in the Gulf of Oman? Let's see that." And obviously, it's going to be total humiliation. We all know whatever happens is going to be total humiliation. So that's why they, in fact, need another round of negotiations. There's no question. So we may have another—when is the end of the... the two weeks' fire? It's April 24th, 25th, 26th, something like that.

#Nima

So we may have another meeting.

#Pepe

We have one week, yes, before the end of the two-week ceasefire. Because they'll be desperate again. This is not going anywhere. And, of course, oil continues to be—and will continue to be—over 100. This is not going to affect Iran, because Iran has, depending on the source, between 160 and 170 million barrels of oil floating around in the shadow fleet. So that means the customers, especially in Asia, are covered. Apparently, they're covered until mid-July, assuming there's nothing extra being transported—and there will be, of course. So this is not going to affect Iran. Even if there's a blockade, it's not going to affect Iran. The thing is, if it affects China directly, in terms of Chinese tankers being intercepted, then we're in a completely different ballgame—much more dangerous. Is Trump willing to pay the price for that? I doubt it. He's a coward, essentially. And then people in the military-industrial complex say, "Look, we cannot do this because we're going to be humiliated."

Are you willing to have one of our aircraft carriers disabled by Iranian missiles and drones? We cannot pay that kind of price. In fact, their strategic capabilities are already degraded everywhere. Everybody can see that—in Latin America, in Africa, in Australia, in Southeast Asia, in Central Asia. Everybody already knows. But when you have an image like this, a graphic image... We had the aerial image, right? The disaster with the famous pilot—which, by the way, remains invisible. Nobody knows where this pilot is, or if this pilot even exists. Now they're going to have a maritime image. This is going to be quite something. And even without the Bab el-Mandeb and the Red Sea in the picture, the Houthis, for the moment, are in the luxury VIP seat, you know—just watching.

#Nima

Exactly. They're not doing anything right now—they're just watching.

#Pepe

They don't need to do anything for now.

#Nima

Yesterday we had a phone call between the Foreign Minister of Iran and the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia. They talked to each other, and I think Iran sent a report.

#Pepe

Yeah. Yes. So you see, Nima, Saudi Arabia and Iran are talking to each other. The Emirates goes to Beijing, basically telling the Chinese, "You have to go against Iran." So that tells you everything about what's really going on in the Persian Gulf. Yeah.

#Nima

These guys, they're not learning anything, Pepe. Remember what happened with the war in Ukraine—how Olaf Scholz, the Chancellor of Germany, went to China? Everybody in Europe tried; we had Macron, we had everyone. The UAE is nothing—it's not comparable to Germany or France. They're trying to manipulate China's foreign policy toward Iran, and they just don't understand the balance of power. They don't know what's going on.

#Pepe

And MBZ is a bloody gangster—one of the worst. This is complicated, for instance. You can't say that in Moscow. In our case, as foreigners, when we start to approach the UAE angle, everybody gets visibly uncomfortable because the relations between Russia and the UAE are very close. But so what? He's a bloody gangster. And look, I know people in Europe who have contacts with the royal family in the Emirates, and they say he's worse than a gangster, in fact. And the family's the same thing. That stupid son who went to Beijing today—wow—he's even worse than the father. So obviously they don't see anything. And they're self-entitled, because, for instance, they have unlimited oil wells from Abu Dhabi.

Because they built this giant laundry machine in Dubai, they're self-entitled. They thought it would last forever, and now it's collapsing in front of them. They don't even understand why it's collapsing, and they don't have a plan B. The Saudis are slightly more clever. MBS is maneuvering—he's hedging, he's talking to all sides, even to Iran. That's very important. He talks to Russia and China. We can't say he's neutral, but he sees that everything is changing, and he still doesn't know where he's going to place Saudi Arabia in the middle of all these cataclysmic changes, right?

#Nima

Seppi, the United States wants to achieve through negotiations what they couldn't achieve by waging war on Iran. Basically, you know, the enriched uranium in Iran—and we know that the main goal was regime change. But after all, if we assume that one of the goals was to stop Iran's nuclear program, that wasn't achieved by war. And right now, through negotiations, they're trying to impose that on Iran, impose these terms on Iran. I don't see Iran accepting that. And I don't see Donald Trump—well, you mentioned Professor Miranda. I talked with him yesterday. During the negotiations, guess who was calling Washington and other places to get some sort of suggestion or direction from them? It was J.D. Vance calling Washington. It was J.D. Vance calling Benjamin Netanyahu. It wasn't Iranians calling Tehran to see what they would do.

This is the problem. The Iranians came totally prepared. You could see the legal team, the economic team—all these different teams. Five committees were there to negotiate every aspect of the talks. But you don't see that happening on the U.S. side. Even J.D. Vance needs to talk with Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu himself said yesterday that J.D. Vance, on his way back home, called him and

described everything. They're getting these daily briefs from the Trump administration about the ongoing talks and messages—negotiations, whatever they have. And that's the problem. I don't see any kind of end to these negotiations as long as Benjamin Netanyahu is running the show.

#Pepe

So this means that from the start, the negotiations are doomed to fail. There's no question about that. And there's another element that runs parallel to all this: the Vice President of the United States has no leeway and is basically a vassal—a vassal of the President and a vassal of the war criminal in Tel Aviv. It was leaked by another Iranian source that one of the things the Americans wanted in the negotiations was money. They wanted a cut in the Strait of Hormuz. They wanted their own toll booth, with the proceeds going into the pockets of the Trump family and their cronies. That's why we had Tweedledee and Tweedledum, Heckle and Jeckle, Dumb and Dumber—Witkoff, Kushner—over there.

#Nima

The agenda is to make money.

#Pepe

And the agenda is, "Okay, let's make a deal. Let's get some money out of this thing," which is the only thing they do. These imbeciles don't even know where Isfahan is, for that matter. Obviously, they have no idea about the technical details—you name it. But they were there to, "Okay, let's extract some cash for our pockets in this whole thing." It's pathetic. It's absolutely pathetic. It tells you everything about the level of unpreparedness of this so-called negotiating team. And when you don't even send your Secretary of State to the most important foreign policy meeting in the history of the U.S. and Iran in forty-seven years, it's because you're not serious. You are a joke.

You should be laughed at by everybody. And it's amazing when you compare that with the sobriety and seriousness of the Iranian delegation—everyone with their stacks of documents, everything outlined, the details, the whole thing by heart. But you're negotiating with a bunch of grifters, con artists. It's pathetic. It's pathetic, but it's good, once again, to have a crystal-clear image of the decadence of the empire in every possible sense—moral, spiritual, educational, diplomatic, of course, geoeconomic, geopolitical, military, you name it. It's the whole thing collapsing in front of our eyes—and worse, hostage to a genocidal regime in West Asia. That's even worse. Okay, go ahead, please.

#Nima

Who's serious in the administration? Donald Trump himself—does he feel like he's Jesus? Pete Hegseth—does he think he's running the world, basically, by sending... you know, you see Marco Rubio, since day one he was like the Secretary of State, but he's not participating in the negotiations

with Ukraine or with the Iranians. He's not part of that. On the other hand, you see Steve Mnuchin together with Jared Kushner doing this, and nothing is coming out of it. No, they've been negotiating with Russia since day one of this administration. They've done nothing so far. I don't know how the Iranians could possibly believe they're going to get something. I think, finally, the endgame would be—Pepe—Iran should continue the war because it's going to hit Donald Trump. It's going to be a war of attrition. And what will bring Donald Trump to his knees is going to be domestic policy—it's going to be the midterm election. That's what's going to bring him down.

#Pepe

Yes, but we can't have a war lasting another few months, Nima. Then the whole global economy collapses.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Pepe

This is the problem.

#Nima

Because that should hit Donald Trump. It doesn't seem that—yes, I know that.

#Pepe

They are desperate—the Americans. Trump and his circle. They're desperate to find... First of all, his childish psychology. We already have signals from him that he's bored, he wants a quick end to the story, he's pissed because he was led by Israel—you name it. And he needs a way out to focus on the American economy and the midterms, which, for all practical purposes, are already lost. So he can't have a war lasting another two or three months—out of the question. Their deadline, out of the blue, is the end of April. And don't forget, if it goes on like this, the trip to China will be postponed again by the Chinese. In fact, the Chinese are going to say, "Okay, what are you going to discuss?"

And now you want this blockade—and your blockade is against us? And you come here to Beijing to talk to us about that? No, we don't care. So their window to have some sort of agreement is—today's the 14th—it's two weeks from now, maximum. And the Iranians know it, because the Iranians are ready for a war of attrition lasting months. The Americans are not. They cannot afford it. Not to mention the global economy. And not to mention how everybody on the planet is going to blame

Trump and company for what's happening. In fact, they're already blaming Trump and company for what's happening. After all, it was a war of choice. So their war of choice—the rest of the planet is paying the price for it.

It's a war of choice by two war criminals together. And the whole planet is hostage to this war of choice. So if this thing goes on for another month or two—wow. Okay, now, coming back. Realistically, Nima, how can the Americans possibly end their war within the next two weeks without admitting that they were strategically defeated? Overall, in every aspect. And this is exactly what he's trying to do—or the idiots around him. How can we spin our defeat as some sort of victory? And they can't. Everywhere you look, there's no way. It's zugzwang. There is no way out. Any move you make, you acknowledge that you've been defeated. Right? There is absolutely nothing they can spin to say, "We won."

#Nima

I think if things keep getting worse, the way Donald Trump sees it—his survival being at risk, or being somehow manipulated by Netanyahu and his administration—there has to be some sort of disconnection, a dismantling of that link between the Trump administration and Benjamin Netanyahu. I think the breaking point would come from domestic policy in the United States and the global economy. The global economy could put pressure on Donald Trump, and together with what's happening domestically in the U.S., it could somehow push him to ignore or to force Netanyahu out of influencing U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Because right now, basically, Netanyahu is running the show. I think we have every piece of evidence that Israel is running the show. I don't see Donald Trump as incapable of breaking with Israel. But I think if things keep getting worse—and that could happen—that might lead to some sort of breakthrough in the negotiations, in what's going on diplomatically between Iran and the United States.

#Pepe

He's not the baboon of barbaria, as I've been calling him. He's not powerful enough to do that. The compromise is gigantic. We all know—we don't know the tone and the depth of the compromise—but it must be something absolutely devastating. So if he tries to get rid of his partner in crime, literally, the compromise is going to fall on his head. It's going to be quite something. And of course, he's completely manipulated. He's manipulated by Paula White, which is a wow. And he has a messianic complex now. He actually thinks that he is Jesus, God, or the Holy Trinity—you name it, the Holy Ghost, everything together. And of course, he's impervious to real dialogue with real people, well-informed people. Forget it. He's surrounded by sycophants, vassals, and grifters.

Impossible. Impossible. You know, ideally it should be—of course, it's not going to happen—but it should be the 25th Amendment. Send this guy to a lunatic asylum. The Americans won't have the

guts to do that. And even if they did, guess who would be in power? Palantir Vance. Not much better—a guy completely dominated by a techno-futurist lunatic. So all the options are horrible, Nima. We have to be realistic. It's our job as analysts. All the realistic options are impossible. And you can't ask for a Hail Mary pass. There won't be a Hail Mary pass in this case. Like in that movie where the alien is this lovely stone spider—there's not going to be a stone spider named Rocky coming here to save the plot. No, it's not going to happen.

#Nima

I think looking at the full picture of the United States today, as an outcome of the war in the Middle East, is unbelievable for the United States as an empire. You look at Spain today—they went to China, they said no to the United States, they have their sovereignty, they want to define the future together with China. I'm talking about Spain. You see what's going on with Canada. Canada said 70% of our defense budget was going to the United States each and every year. Right now, that's not going to be the case. You know, Donald Trump is achieving something that no one could have achieved before, in terms of defeating or demolishing the U.S. empire. It's not just physical, with the American bases in the Middle East, but psychological, economic—what he's doing to the United States is just amazing. It is.

#Pepe

It's being blown up from the inside, which is the ideal mechanism. Absolutely. When empires collapse, they blow up from the inside—it's much, much better. It's theoretically less painful for everyone. We still don't know, because the process is ongoing. There may be other wars ahead. But now we can see that it's irreversible. And he accelerated the implosion. In one year and four months, he drastically accelerated the collapse in every sense. And he's picking fights with literally everyone—even the Pope. Why do you need to pick a fight with an American Pope? It's beyond childish. So this interpretation of senile dementia mixed with an apocalyptic streak, and basically being manipulated by this demented Paula White, makes a lot of sense.

Makes a lot of sense. And, of course, his natural incoherence—he doesn't read, he doesn't get himself informed. He despises people who are informed, or who contradict him, or try to engage him in anything remotely analytical. That explains the whole thing. The psychological landscape is pretty well mapped out. The problem is, he's still in control. "In control," in quotes, right, Nima? Because we know who is really in control. He's just their messenger. So, well, there were no leaks about what they discussed at the Bilderberg in Washington, by the way. I have a mole over there, but he's never going to tell me. They have a culture of secrecy, especially with journalists and analysts. They'll never say what really happened.

But they must have discussed that. And they must have discussed that, for them, the only way forward is to come up with another COVID—which obviously is already in process. They have to create something as traumatic as COVID to regain some sort of control. And this is what's going to

be next. Scary. It's scary. And, of course, what's coming next is directly related to the global economy melting down. They're going to use the meltdown of the global economy to come up with something. There's no question about that. And once again, even if there was the 25th Amendment, Nima, and we get Palantir Vance—Palantir Vance is just one cog in this wheel, the techno-affiliatist wheel. So everywhere we look, it's really scary. Yeah. Yeah.

#Nima

Pepe, muito obrigado.

#Pepe

And you? I'm sorry, but we have to be realists, right?

#Nima

Exactly. There's no way.

#Pepe

There's no way. We have to see it the way it is. Yeah, yeah.

#Nima

Thank you so much for being with us today, everyone. Thank you.

#Pepe

And to our audience, Buddhist greetings from a relatively normal latitude in Southeast Asia. Thank you, thank you.