

Pepe Escobar: Iran Blockade: Strategic Failure or Power Play?

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#Nima

I think that's really the big picture, as you've mentioned. The big picture is they did that in Venezuela. Yes. No export from Venezuela to China. Right now they're trying to do the same in the Strait of Hormuz. But the problem in the Strait of Hormuz is Iran is not Venezuela. And China knows that the United States is getting closer. This is the problem that the United States is facing. I don't see, you know, if we assume that Donald Trump came up with this idea of a blockade to make some sort of balance in the propaganda machine in the West. See, they have this trade that promotes, I have the blockade on them. Then we are in some sort of balanced position in these negotiations. So I'm not having any sort of difficulties. I have the leverage right now to blockade. Because all you need to know, we know 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 a blockade. Yeah, absolutely.

#Pepe

It's a new narrative. Everybody is only talking about this. Nobody is talking about this 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, in fact. There's no question. So we may have another—when is the end of the two-week ceasefire? It's April 24th, 25th, 26th, something like that. So we may have another meeting. We have one week ahead, yes, before the end of the two-week ceasefire, because they will 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, the numbers vary from 160 million to 170 million barrels of oil floating around in the shadow fleet. So this means that the customers, especially in Asia, are covered.

Apparently, they are covered until mid-July, assuming there is nothing extra being transported. And there will be, of course. So this is not going to affect Iran. Even if there is 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 are 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 industrial-military 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, 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 exists. They're gonna have a maritime image. This is gonna be quite something. And even without the Bab el-Mandeb and the Red Sea in the picture, the Houthis, for the moment, they 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 at the moment.

#Nima

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

#Pepe

Yes. So you see, Nima, Saudi Arabia and Iran, they 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.

#Nima

These guys, they're not learning anything, Pepe, because look at what has happened. You remember the case of the war in Ukraine, how Olaf Scholz, the Chancellor of Germany, went to China. Everybody in Europe tried. We had Macron, they had everybody.

#Pepe

This UAE is nothing.

#Nima

It's not even comparable to Germany and France. They're trying to manipulate the foreign policy of China vis-à-vis Iran. And straight away, they 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 cannot say that in Moscow. In our case, foreigners, when we start to approach the UAE angle, everybody's visibly uncomfortable because the relations between Russia and the UAE are very close. But so what? He is a bloody gangster. And look, I know people in Europe who have contacts with the royal family in the Emirates, and they say that he's worse than a gangster, in fact. And the family is the same thing. This stupid son who went to Beijing today, wow, he's even worse than the father. So obviously they don't see anything. And they are self-entitled. Because, for instance, they have unlimited oil wells from Abu Dhabi.

And because they built this giant laundry machine in Dubai, they are self-entitled. And they thought that this thing would last forever. And now it's collapsing in front of them. And they don't even understand why it's collapsing in front of them. And they don't have a plan B. The Saudis are slightly more clever. MBS is maneuvering. He's hedging, he's maneuvering. He's talking to all sides. He's even talking to Iran. It's very important. He talks to Russia and China. We cannot say that he's neutral. But he sees that the whole thing 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

Feppy, 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 the nuclear program of Iran, that wasn't achieved by war. And right now, by 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.

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 to get directions 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. Iranians got there totally prepared. You see the legal team, economic team, and all of these different teams—five committees were there to negotiate on each and every aspect of the negotiations. But you don't see that happening on the part of the United States. Even J.D. Vance needs to talk with Benjamin Netanyahu. Benjamin Netanyahu himself said yesterday that J.D. Vance, on his way back home, called Benjamin Netanyahu and described everything. They're getting these briefs daily. They're getting daily briefs from the Trump administration about the ongoing talks and messages—I don't know, negotiations, whatever they have. And this is the problem. I don't see any sort of end to these negotiations as long as Benjamin Netanyahu is running the show.

#Pepe

So this means that negotiations from the start are doomed to fail. There's no question about that. And there's another element which is parallel to all that. 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 to have a cut in the Strait of Hormuz. They wanted to have their own toll booths, with money 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 that they do. These imbeciles don't even know where Isfahan is, for that matter. Obviously, they have no idea of 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 47 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 the seriousness of the Iranian delegation. Everybody with their stacks of documents, everything outlined, the details, the whole thing by heart. But you are 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, that he feels he's Jesus? Pete Hegseth, that he feels he's running the world, basically, by standing, you know. You see Marco Rubio, since day one, he was the Secretary of State, but he's not participating in the negotiations with Ukraine, with Iranians. He's not part of that. On the other hand, you see, you know, Steve Witkoff together with Jared Kushner are doing this, and nothing is coming out of it. No, they've been negotiating with Russia since day one of this administration. They did nothing so far. I don't know how Iranians would somehow believe that they're going to get something. There is, I think, finally, the end game would be, Pepe, Iran should continue the war because it's going to hit Donald Trump the way that, because it's going to be a war of attrition. And what would bring Donald Trump to his knees is going to be the domestic policy. It's going to be the midterm election. They're going to bring him down.

#Pepe

Yes, but we cannot have a war lasting another few months, Nima Alkhorshid. 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...

#Pepe

Yes, I know that. They are desperate. The Americans, Trump and his circle, they are desperate to find... First of all, his childish psychology. We already have signals coming 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 concentrate on the American economy and on the midterms, which for all practical purposes are already lost. So he cannot have a war lasting another two, three months. Out

of the question. Their deadline, out of the blue, their deadline 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 are 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 of 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 to 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 will recognize that you have been defeated. Right? There is absolutely nothing that they can spin about "we won."

#Nima

I think if things get worse, the way that Donald Trump sees his survival—his survival being at risk or being somehow manipulated by Netanyahu and his administration—because there has to be some sort of disconnection, dismantling this sort of connection between the Trump administration and Benjamin Netanyahu. I think this breaking point would be on domestic policy in the United States and the global economy. The global economy could put that pressure on Donald Trump, and together with what is happening domestically in the United States, somehow force Netanyahu out of the policies of the United States in the Middle East.

Because right now, basically, Netanyahu is running the show. I think we have each and every piece of evidence that Israel is running the show. I don't see Donald Trump incapable of breaking with Israel. But we, I think, if things get worse—and that could happen—that would be some sort of breakthrough in the negotiations, with 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 over 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. So, you know, ideally it should have—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 balls to do that. And even if they would do that, guess who would be in power? Palantir Vance. It's not much better. A guy completely dominated by a techno-fundamentalist 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 cannot ask for a Hail Mary pass. There won't be a Hail Mary pass in this case, like the movie, where the alien is this lovely stone spider, right? 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, the consequences of the war in the Middle East are 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 the case of 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. 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 physically with the American bases in the Middle East, but psychologically, economically, what he's doing to the United States is just amazing.

#Pepe

It is. It's being blown up from the inside, which is the ideal mechanism. Absolutely. When empires collapse, blown 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. This one year and four months. In one year and four months, he accelerated drastically the implosion 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 because he's 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 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. Well, I have a mole over there, but he's never going to tell me. They have a view of secrecy, especially with journalists and analysts. They will never say what really happened.

But they must have discussed that. And they must have discussed that for them, ahead, the only way forward is to come up with another COVID, which obviously is in process. They have to come up with 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, this, what's going to be 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 one cog in this wheel, the techno-affiliatist wheel. So everywhere we look, it's really scary.