Pepe Escobar: Iran SMASHES US Army Radar, REJECTS Trump's Peace Farce as War RESETS

Pepe Escobar breaks down Iran’s rmassive esponse to the US’s “limited” strikes, diplomacy theater put on by Trump, and the empire of chaos at a crossroads in the war on Iran as Putin and Xi prepare to meet Trump in Shenzhen. Pepe Escobar is a leading independent geopolitical analyst and author who specializes in the US war on rising Eurasia. Pepe on Telegram: https://t.me/rocknrollgeopolitics Pepe on X: https://x.com/RealPepeEscobar Transition Protocol: https://www.youtube.com /@UCewRbK22LRnNi6N3EcGjbow / Pepe's latest article: https://strategic-culture.su/news/2026/11/09 /waiting-for-shenzhen-or-for-land-invasion-of-iran/ Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: https://www.patreon. com/dannyhaiphong SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong Telegram: https://t.me /DannyHaiphong Support the channel in other ways: https://www.buymeacoffee.com /dannyhaiphong Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: $Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: https://paypal.me/spiritofho

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I am joined by Pepe Escobar, geopolitical analyst, journalist, and author. He is joining us from Shanghai, China, to go over the latest developments. Well, Pepe, I wanted to begin with a piece you recently wrote about this peace kabuki theater by the Trump administration, coupled with this meeting coming up in Shenzhen between Putin, Xi, and Trump. As we speak, the war is in a kind of reset mode, it feels like. Overnight, Iran hit a U.S. military-linked radar in Oman after the United States conducted multiple days of limited, quote-unquote, strikes. And then yesterday, there was this massive peace propaganda push by the Trump administration, claiming that there's huge positive momentum.

All the Gulf countries want to see the war stay where it is: a blockade, no additional military operations, and the status quo kept as it is. And Iran answered back. This was Mohsen Rezaei yesterday. He said that Washington flails like a desperate gambler: “Fold your hand. Stop manufacturing fake news about imaginary talks.” That's coming straight from the top of the Supreme National Security Council. And Mojtaba Khamenei has said to the Iranian government, “It is time to end this no-peace, no-war situation,” and has ordered the Iranian government to do so. But

Pepe, I'm pulling up your article right now, "Waiting for a Land Invasion of Iran." You talk about the risks of escalation still being very much at play. However, there are a lot of moving pieces, and I'm curious what your thoughts are on these developments and how they relate to this piece here.

#Pepe Escobar

Thank you. Thank you, Danny. Greetings from Shanghai, everybody. It's 11 p.m. now, so everybody's basically in bed because Shanghai goes to bed early. They wake up very, very early. Since I published this column, which came out, I would say, around 24 hours ago—that was last night in Russia—a lot of pieces on the chessboard have moved again. So I have some sort of breaking news, but I cannot give you all the details because after I talk to you, I'll be doing my transition protocol thing, where we're going to examine the latest intel report that we got from Iran. But I can give you, Danny, and our audience a preview of a lot of stuff that has moved in these past 24 hours. Basically, it's a Qatari ersatz deal.

It's what the Qataris are basically spinning as a compromise between Tehran and Trump. Well, before I even talk about it, my personal point of view is that this thing does not hold, even though we received this information from somebody inside Mohsen Rezaei's office in Tehran. But basically, what he was relaying to Larry Johnson and myself is what the Qataris have been doing in terms of mediation. This does not necessarily mean that Mohsen Rezaei and the top leadership in Iran agree with this kind of proposal from the prime minister of Qatar. By the way, Trump received him face-to-face yesterday at the White House. And apparently, after that, Trump spoke to the Emir of Qatar and said, "Look, I'm not interested in attacking Iran at the moment."

"Or maybe I am." That kind of stuff, right? Anyway, the current Qatari-mediated, let's say, ersatz crypto deal is that Iran receives $8 billion. $8 billion. Not $6 billion, not $12 billion. I'm sure all of you remember there was a lot of discussion about $6 billion, which was part of the $12 billion. Now it's $8 billion. So it's a sort of compromise. And, of course, the U.S. ends the naval blockade. Okay, except the U.S. will not end the naval blockade before Iran does anything. We all know that. If that happens—the $8 billion plus the end of the naval blockade—Iran opens the Strait of Hormuz. So does anybody believe that Iran is going to give up its top leverage in every negotiation for a fistful of dollars and a promise to end the naval blockade?

Doesn't fly. So if all of that happens, then they will sit down and start negotiating according to the MOU. Once again, another spoiler: we all know, in Trump's own words, that he thinks the MOU is a piece of crap, literally. He tore it up. He signed it in Versailles, and then he tore it up. So this, essentially, is the so-called Qatari mediation solution. Well, the thing is, we received this from somebody inside Mohsen Rezaei's office. Does it mean that the top leadership in Iran agrees with that? No. It means that they received the Qatari idea. And, of course, they're going to look at it and say, "No, forget it. Forget it. For $8 billion, we open the Strait of Hormuz?" But obviously, Trump is using this conversation with the Qatari prime minister, and then his conversation with the Emir of Qatar, as he's trying to find a solution.

So this is the White House spin. We can understand this in terms of positioning before Shenzhen next week. Trump can try to sell this Qatari proposition as, "Okay, I'm going to finish my—which one is it, Danny? Eighth war, ninth war, tenth war? All the ones that he won. Okay, let's say, 'I'm finishing my ninth war.'" And he can sell this to the Putin-Xi strategic partnership next week in Shenzhen as a victory. He can play this card of Trump, the peacemaker, resolving the war against Iran, which he started, by the way. So that's the only way to see this possible Qatari-mediated deal as having some legs for the next two or three days, including the fact that the Qataris told the Iranians that there's a strong possibility that this could be signed within the next two to three days.

This means until Friday, right? So this is where we are at the moment. In terms of preempting the escalation ladder, let's say it's an attempt. At the same time, when you look at the facts on the ground, number one: ending the naval blockade. How are they going to end the naval blockade when they are stepping up the blockade against Iran via this Iron Gate scheme, which is essentially a task force theoretically in charge of blocking all Iranian exports through all of their neighbors, especially Pakistan and Iraq, but the Central Asian countries as well, including—and this is the craziest part—via the Caspian? So can you imagine an American task force preventing Iran from exporting whatever they are exporting? Plus, of course, diesel, which they are exporting via the Caspian to Russia.

And we're going to have an American task force in the Caspian preventing trade and commerce between Russia and Iran. It doesn't even qualify as a joke. So once again, the fact that this Qatari-mediated thing is on the table is also in direct contradiction with the fact that the Gulf petro-monarchies as a whole, including Qatar, still favor the application of maximum pressure against Iran. And one extra detail, which is extremely important: the top leadership in Iran, the Supreme National Security Council, the parliament, even the Ministry of Foreign Relations, for all their finesse—they don't trust the Qataris. They know that the Qataris essentially are an annex to Washington.

But we can say that within the next little over 24 hours, at least there is this glimmer of diplomacy on the table. Does it mean that Mohsen Rezaei and—I wouldn't say Trump—Vance will agree to it? And, of course, the possibility of Vance and Mohsen Rezaei meeting next week in Doha is still floating. But when you ask the Iranians, they tell you right away, "No bloody way." For instance, Ali Bagheri Kani, number two of the Supreme National Security Council, right below Mohsen Rezaei—who was he meeting with yesterday in Tehran? With Xi Jinping's special envoy, who's doing a tour of Iran and some of the Gulf petro-monarchies. His first stop: Tehran. His second stop: Oman. And the last stop: Saudi Arabia.

And he's doing the tour to basically impress upon all of them the Chinese position, which is: we are supporting Iran in the background. Of course, the Chinese way of saying that and making it very, very clear is extremely sophisticated. It's never blunt. But they are making it very, very clear to both sides—Iran and the Gulf petro-monarchies—that the only solution is to go back to the Memorandum of Understanding. You, all of you Gulf petro-monarchies, have to support diplomacy. We want you,

as our trade partners, to support diplomacy because we, China, support Iran as our strategic partner and you as our trade partners. So this is the Chinese position. And on top of it, we have the Russian position, which by now is very, very clear after the three-hour, 25-minute in-person meeting between Putin and Mohsen Rezaei in Moscow.

And Mohsen Rezaei and Bagheri Kani flew from Tehran to Moscow in Putin's private plane. This means a Russian Federation private plane that was sent to pick them up in Tehran. And they discussed everything. And Putin essentially said, "Our strategic partnership has no limits." So now the strategic partnership between Iran and Russia is on the same level as the strategic partnership between Russia and China. And this is what's going to be very, very clear next week in Shenzhen, where we're going to have the two members of the strategic partnership, Russia and China, face to face with the sociopath-in-chief and heavily enfeebled leader of the dwindling empire, Donald Trump. This is going to be something to watch.

#Danny

Yes, it is. Well, Pepe, you know, given all that you just said, I guess my question to you is: what do you make of the reports that Mojtaba Khamenei has said, "We need to break this stalemate"? Because it does seem like Iran has, from the very beginning, actually offered clear terms to the United States over and over and over again. They haven't changed the content of the terms, like the substance of them, but they've changed the packaging to try to make them more acceptable, so that maybe even Trump could accept them to some degree.

But there hasn't really been much movement there. The Trump administration is now saying they're satisfied with the way things are, and it's just going to keep going. Marco Rubio has even poured cold water on the negotiations. What do you make of this? It does seem like the empire of chaos is indeed in chaos. But I'm curious about your take on how Iran is going to handle this, given that, as you just said, the Iranian leadership, including Mohsen Rezaei, isn't really trusting even these diplomatic overtures.

#Pepe Escobar

Absolutely. And an extra element, which was confirmed by this particular source of ours working closely with Mohsen Rezaei, is that they know very well in Tehran that there is a deep rift inside the Trump administration. Of course, the Iranians follow Washington politics very, very closely. So they know that the pro-war voices continue to be the tattooed secretary of forever wars and Marco Rubio. Totally pro-war. No deal. No negotiations. No nothing. And they know, of course, that Vance is trying very hard to position himself as the peacemaker, because Vance's office has been talking indirectly with the Iranians via the Qataris and the Pakistanis since the midterms. And, of course, that's why the Iranians would theoretically accept a Mohsen Rezaei–Vance meeting in Doha next week.

But this does not mean that it's a done deal. It depends on what the Americans are going to offer in practice. As long as there's no American offer in terms of concrete actions, the Iranians won't move. Period. And this is directly linked to what I would say is an intimation, a warning, and a reckoning by the leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, that this situation of neither war nor peace is not very, very good for Iranian interests. On the contrary, the Americans can keep this thing going for weeks or months: economic pressure, harassing the neighbors, Iron Gate, a naval blockade, attempts at an overland blockade, you name it. This is not good for Iran, obviously not. The Iranians want some sort of resolution.

I'm sorry, I meant resolution. I probably had the French Revolution in my mind. They want some sort of resolution. And if it has to be military, no problem, because they're ready. And they have been ready for all the scenarios. You want to snatch our islands, Kharg and Qeshm? You want to throw a nuclear device on Pickaxe Mountain? They are ready for anything. They don't want the current volatile situation, this stasis, to continue. And some very, very good Iranian analysts are using this figure of speech, this metaphor: we are in a sort of volatile equilibrium. It's a tenuous equilibrium, extremely volatile, and with any spark, the whole thing can start tumbling down. The leader already noticed that.

Everybody working at the top level—the Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, even the Minister of Foreign Affairs—already knows that. But as you correctly outlined, Danny, the substance has not changed. There's only one way out. There's only one off-ramp, which is something that, theoretically, both governments agreed to months ago: the memorandum of understanding, signed by Pezeshkian and Trump. If the Americans start fulfilling their commitments in the memorandum of understanding, then we have a path towards negotiations. And the last thing to be discussed will be the nuclear dossier.

Yes, we will discuss the nuclear dossier, but that's the last thing to be discussed. So they have not changed. It's true, they are trying to package it in a different way, even paying attention to this far-fetched Qatari mediation plan. But the deadlock essentially continues. So who's going to break the deadlock? From an Iranian point of view, there's only one way: the Americans need to break the deadlock, and then we're going to have negotiations. The Iranians have nothing to offer because, after all, they are under maximum pressure: economic pressure, financial pressure, harassment, you name it. Even on-and-off bombing of Qeshm. So essentially, we are still in deadlock territory.

Maybe each week we are at a different point on the escalation ladder, going up or down. This week, for instance, we're lower on the escalation ladder, at least at the start of this week. This has much to do with the preparations for Shenzhen. But after Shenzhen, we can make an educated guess about Trump's reaction to what Putin and Xi are going to tell him. Naturally, he's going to say, "No, I'm not going to do that," meaning return to diplomacy. So, after Shenzhen, all bets are off again. It's very, very dangerous. So, the leader was very smart to understand that, for the Trump administration, this "neither war nor peace" volatility works, but it doesn't work for Iran.

#Danny

Great point.

#Pepe Escobar

The question is, Danny, how are the Iranians going to break out of this logic without provoking a return to war? That's something they still don't know how to do.

#Danny

I'm wondering too, Pepe, if Trump is simply waiting for the USS Theodore Roosevelt to come into play. A lot of people have cast doubt on the significance of that. But we know that it will probably be there in the next week or so, right around the time of the APEC summit. And then there are a lot of rumors that it will simply replace the USS George Washington. But there's no guarantee of that. Given that there's so much open-source intelligence and so much tracking of the movement of these carriers, I can't imagine that the Trump administration isn't going to keep all three of them there for at least a period, to ensure that it doesn't look like they've simply given up on the escalation card. Which means, in my opinion, escalation is still very much on the table, given what you just said about diplomacy not being taken seriously.

So Iran has been responding, though. A lot of people who watch this program have maybe been frustrated about Iran's response to these limited strikes on its territory, on Qeshm, for example, or Jask. But they have been responding quite significantly. Ships have been burning. They hit the radar station. Ships are burning, yeah. Ships are burning at a rate far higher than had been the case before the U.S. started these limited strikes. So, your thoughts on this? You said Iran is having trouble knowing how to avoid restarting the war. Is Iran concerned about what that would mean? What are the considerations if Iran, while of course being the target of aggression, were to make the first move in a bigger escalation? I'm wondering what the considerations are in terms of why they would want to avoid that in this case.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, first of all, in fact, they explained to the whole planet that if they detect a whiff of preparation for a renewed attack against them, they will act preemptively. The thing is, how do they evaluate these American bombings on and off? There's a serious risk that they could interpret one of these bombings of Qeshm as the beginning of an offensive. Okay, their local intelligence is good enough, and their intelligence analysis is good enough, to see, no, no, this is a one-off. For the moment, it has been a one-off from the Americans. But there are other very, very, very complicated scenarios in play. One of them is what was leaked to the Iraqis about a possible land invasion of southern Iran by mercenaries coming from Iraqi territory.

Well, that's a major red flag. They are paying attention to their borders very, very closely. They are also paying very close attention to Balochistan because they know that the CIA and MI6 are extremely hands-on in Pakistani Balochistan. And for them to organize an incursion into Sistan and Balochistan using the Balochistan Liberation Army would be very, very easy. So they are paying very, very close attention to these possible land invasions, much more than to these sporadic bombings of islands in the Persian Gulf. But they don't want to take the initiative. They want the Americans to start it because then, of course, they will have the whole Global South on their side again.

And, of course, they don't want to give away their secrets. It's like they are waiting for the big one. If the big one comes, like a concerted American-Israeli attack, then they're going to lash out, including with their latest-generation weapons. So that's why they are waiting, essentially. Because they know that if the war is back, it's not going to be fought like the first one. They are really going for broke this time. This is the only logical explanation. And, of course, we should never forget that the Persians are extremely logical, rational characters. They are not emotional at all. And they are not a bunch of scurrying cockroaches like the Trump administration. It's a completely different story.

#Danny

Well, great points. I'm glad you mentioned Israel because I'm hearing reports that Netanyahu is asking the Trump administration, maybe Donald Trump himself, to strike every day. And, you know, this has just been reported, but if anybody follows the media reports on the calls between them, it almost feels and sounds like that's been the case, actually, for quite some time. So, Pepe, I'm glad you mentioned Israel because it begs the question: What role does Israel play in all of this and in what transpires from here?

#Pepe Escobar

Well, we are in this very, very dangerous window, Danny, because the genocidal character is still prime minister. We don't have a new government yet. We are in the middle of this window. No wonder he's calling Trump every day. The attack was supposed to be immediately after the midterms. Once again, we are in this window. And obviously, he doesn't know how much longer he's going to be in power. Then it's over. So that's why it's so dangerous. The next few days and weeks, possibly, are so dangerous. And that's compounded by the bruised intergalactic ego of the victim of the blue tsunami. And we know that he's vengeful.

We know that he harbors a lot of hatred. He's already trying to find scapegoats for the whole disaster, including the midterms. The Secretary of Forever Wars is the first one to have his head dealt with, Madame Guillotine-style. There's the head of CENTCOM. There's the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So there's already a short list of who's going to pay the price for the war that he started. And, of course, there's the revenge. He doesn't have the intellectual capital to understand that voters in the U.S. voted against his war. If he starts looking at it, he will simply collapse psychologically, because this is a personal rejection of everything that he embodies.

So this is too much. In terms of self-protection, he cannot go down this path. So he may feel free, now that he has this window between now and January 3rd, to do what he really wants to do in terms of the Iran war, which is to go there and finish the job. That's why it's so dangerous. And when we have these two psychopaths working together, and one of them enticing the other by saying, "Look, we should go there and finish the job," he may actually believe it's time. Immensely dangerous. Immensely dangerous. I think we are in a much more dangerous situation now than a few weeks ago.

#Danny

Yeah, I would agree with that. I think when it comes to the U.S. empire of chaos, quiet is not always our friend.

#Danny

Pepe, now to the Russia-China, Xi-Putin-Trump summit at APEC. I know you're in China. I wanted to ask you, though, about Russia and China's role now, not just in this war, but in the larger world order. As the days and weeks go by, you know, we have a pretty clear picture of the landscape. We don't necessarily know how the U.S. will react and how Israel will react, but we know what the landscape is and how the world situation has turned on its head since this war began. So, given this, how are Xi and Putin going into the summit in terms of how they would like to address issues of concern to them? And what kind of position are they in vis-à-vis Trump at this time? Your thoughts on this?

#Pepe Escobar

Well, they have all the cards, Danny. And when you see them as a strategic partnership, the two top players in Eurasia and the two top leaders of the drive towards a multipolar, multinodal world, wow, they have everything on their side. And they're facing a deeply enfeebled empire led by a psychopath—a sociopath, in fact—lost in his own maze. Well, in practical terms, the Russians are already taking care of their war. As we all know, the talks in Abu Dhabi started today, with the Americans over there as some sort of circus ringmasters or whatever. When you look at the composition of the two delegations, the Ukrainians and the Russians, the Ukrainians are three gangsters and a fake diplomat, essentially.

And in the stands—because, according to the fabulous Ushakov story, they can buy tickets, but they won't be able to sit at the table—we have the UK, the EU, and NATO watching from afar, with tickets that may or may not have been bought, proving once again, graphically, that Europe is less than zero geopolitically. Now look at the composition of the Russian delegation. They are taking this very

seriously. Basically, they are going there to say, once again, "Look, these are our terms. You don't want them? Okay, it's our way or the highway." Literally, American style. And next time, it's going to be even worse. This is what they discussed the last time they were at the same table.

And it's going to be the same thing today and tomorrow in Abu Dhabi. The leader of the delegation is Medinsky, a historian, ultra-well-prepared. He knows everything about everything—the whole history of Russia and Ukraine and the Slavic lands. Alongside him are two deputy prime ministers, including our friend Sergei Ryabkov. Ryabkov is on Lavrov's level. They don't even need to send Lavrov. They send Ryabkov; it's the same thing. He's as "highway to hell" as Lavrov. Another one is Kostyukov. Kostyukov is the head of the GRU, Russian military intelligence, meaning he's there for the military terms that will have to be accepted by the other side. There's another guy from the Ministry of Defense alongside Kostyukov.

And supervising all of them is none other than Ushakov, who is Putin's top foreign policy advisor. No comment, right? So this is Russia solving their problem, caused by the US and NATO using Ukraine as cannon fodder. China, well, they are winning the technological war. They are about to win the AI war. They already won the tariffs and sanctions war. So they are not worried. They have, once again, all their cards, just like the last time Trump and Xi met. Now put these two together: the Russia-China strategic partnership at the highest level, the leaders of BRICS, the leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the leaders of the push towards multipolarity.

And look at what we have on the other side: a dwindling empire in internal chaos, and the chaos will continue after January 3rd. You're going to have deadlock, paralysis, the revenge of the Democrats against the Trump grifters, cronies, etc. Which cards do they have to offer Russia and China? Nothing. Very important: this is not Yalta. This is not Yalta 2.0. It's not that three victors are going to define spheres of influence. No, Russia and China are not worried about spheres of influence. China knows that its sphere of influence is the reach of its trade influence, which is global.

China is the number one trading power on the planet, and they want it to continue this way. And they have all it takes to continue this way. Russia is different. Russia is basically saying, "Leave us alone. Stop with this NATO bullshit. Leave us alone. We don't want spheres of influence. We don't need that. And if Europe doesn't want to do business with us, we don't care anymore." They used to care until three or four years ago. Not anymore. Go to Moscow today. Talk to the people in power. They say, "Europe, wow. They missed the high-speed train of history. Our partners are the Global South and Eurasia." So what does the U.S. have to offer Russia and China, essentially, in practice? Not much. So it's going to be an extremely uneven meeting.

Of course, it's not a Yalta 2.0 meeting, because it's not about spheres of influence. It's about two responsible, realist powers that now happen to be in the middle of a strategic alliance, which has been the worst nightmare of American, Anglo-American, and Anglo elites since forever, starting with Mackinder all the way to Brzezinski. Now that's it. They already are rulers of Eurasia, and their soft power extends all over the Global South. And in terms of geoeconomics, it's China's rule, essentially.

So what can Trump possibly say to destabilize them, seduce them, offer them something? There's nothing. So the one little thing in his little brain that could make a difference is that he arrives there posing as a peacemaker.

"Look, guys, I managed to solve the war on Iran. I won the war in Iran again. I made a deal. I made them make a deal with me." Can you imagine Putin and Xi looking at him and saying, "Oh, really? Do you know who is backing Iran, by the way? Us. Both of us. Have you read the news? Yes, we are both behind Iran." So this is what it's going to be like next week. No wonder he's probably extremely disturbed by the prospect of arriving in Shenzhen almost like a beggar. He's not going to be the master of ceremonies. On the contrary, Xi will magnanimously receive him as a commoner. So, in a sense, it will be Trump paying tribute to Xi again in China, with Putin on the side. This is going to be quite something.

#Danny

Yeah, the optics of it are going to be very, very, very interesting. And I have to say, too, that when it comes to Russia and China's backing of Iran, The Washington Post said that Scott Bessent has tried to call whoever he has a line to in China. I don't know who that would be. But it is said that he was already begging China to put pressure on Iran to come to the table. Isn't this a familiar story, Pepe? How many times have we heard this with regard to Ukraine, where the United States is saying, "Oh, China, you have to rein in your best friend, Russia"?

Now they're doing the same thing with Iran. I think it really does expose that dynamic you just outlined, where China and, of course, Russia, too, don't just look the part. If we look at this clearly, the Trump administration literally behaves in a way that demonstrates this dynamic, whether they think they are or not, whether they mean to or not. I'm not so sure about this. So, your thoughts on this, though, Pepe?

#Pepe Escobar

Well, no wonder the Russians and the Chinese at the highest level look at it and say, "What the hell? Who are we dealing with? These people are a joke." So they cannot be taken seriously. And, of course, Putin is very, very clever because he knows how to run rings around Trump without Trump even noticing it. It's not that the Russians believe that Trump is going to help Russia reach a solution in Ukraine.

On the contrary, they know that even with all the centrifugal and centripetal forces in action in Washington and, you know, in the military-industrial complex and all that, and of course Russophobia all across the spectrum, they know that, okay, what we are conquering in this war, where Ukraine is the battlefield, is through the way we do it. That's why we are achieving a military victory. And obviously, as victors, we dictate the terms. So the Americans are not going to dictate anything to Russia in terms of the NATO war in Ukraine. Forget it. And once again, NATO is not even

at the table in Abu Dhabi. It's beyond a joke, you know. And the Chinese, for instance, they have been very circumspect these past few days.

I've been looking, especially at semi-official media, not official media, like the Global Times. And on Friday, I'm going to meet my friends at Guancha here, and we're going to talk about this a lot, pre-Shenzhen, right? But for the moment, they are looking at this Shenzhen thing as, yeah, once again, he's going to show up, put on a show. Trump is going to go there, and the next day we forget about it. Because they know, of course, what comes from the Trump administration is basically spin, spin, spin, and narratives out of control and colliding with each other all the time. So they're used to it. For instance, here, 24 hours after the whole thing exploded—the Jensen Huang adultery scene—the verdict everywhere in China was, of course, "This is another CIA operation."

#Danny

Yep.

#Pepe Escobar

100%. Jensen Huang knew exactly what he was doing from the beginning. And Huang Lei, who is a very, very clever businesswoman, knew what she was doing from the beginning. So that's it. And obviously, it will be all over American mainstream media: "Ah, Chinese spy," blah, blah, blah. So, you know, it's terrible for an empire, Danny, not to be taken seriously anymore. And even Chinese public opinion—they don't take it seriously anymore. Of course, they can go to endless McDonald's and Starbucks here in Shanghai, for instance, but it's just convenient. It's not that they are adopting the American way of life, you know? Not anymore. And of course, at the highest political levels in Beijing, they have much more important fish to fry. For instance, at APEC next week, the Chinese emphasis is to discuss trade with all of the APEC members. "Okay, let's improve our bilateral trade." That's it. That's the number one focus.

#Danny

Yeah, well, that story, the NVIDIA story, I mean, isn't that just such a big demonstration, too, of how much of a push there still is to put pressure even on a Trump administration that's been very focused on the key priorities of the Empire of Chaos and what it has sought over all these years and decades, especially since the fall of the Soviet Union? But it's still not good enough.

And so they need to throw this in there. It seems like it's supposed to revamp this tech war, right? Because they don't like NVIDIA. There's a big section of the U.S. oligarchs that do not like any kind of cross-pollination. Cross-pollination, you bet. Yes. So, of course, there has to be a spy. And I'm curious about your thoughts on this, given that you're in China right now. Is there any political

impetus in China for what could be considered pretty desperate measures? This idea that a Chinese spy is in with NVIDIA's CEO in order to facilitate some kind of double game where China wins out in the tech race—does this even make sense, Pepe?

#Pepe Escobar

And it's childish. And they see it for what it is. It's a childish play. What they're doing here, in terms of the tech war, is creating a technological environment throughout the country. The plan is basically to technologize China to at least 70% by 2030. Everything here is going to be technologically state-of-the-art, in every aspect of everyday life, in fact. This is what they're worried about. They don't care about stock market valuations of big tech companies. They don't care. It's a different mindset. It's very practical. It's commercially minded.

It's the famous dual approach of paying attention to the domestic market and to China's role as the top geoeconomic power in the world. They pay attention to both. But to professionals, these are childish games. That's how they are seen here. And it makes total sense. Makes total sense. There are new technological parks everywhere in China, including here in Shanghai. Over the past few days, there was the China Import Fair here. Wow. The whole planet was here. Once again, geoeconomically, you need to be here to do business with the Chinese. And you need to come here. Gigantic place, people from all over the planet.

#Danny

This is what they do.

#Pepe Escobar

And on the other side, we have, you know, I would say, this circus mentality with lots of grifters, spies, desperate people, speculators, opportunists, you name it. Wow. But the contrast is so brutal, really.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, I always find these stories so interesting. The whole Russiagate fiasco, for example, and these Chinese spy stories we've heard—you know, a California politician, Jensen Huang. It comes up every so often. And I always wonder, like, what does it say about the United States' intelligence apparatus? And what does it say about the U.S. power structure that it constantly puts out these stories that make it look like it is actually weak and that it can't actually face up to its adversaries as much as it says it can? As much as it says, “Oh, we are number one, we're still on top.”

How many times do you have to hear Scott Bessent, Trump, and Ratcliffe and all these guys? They always say this, but they put out stories that make them look like little puppy dogs that are being terrorized by the big bad, you know, the big bad dog owners of the world, Russia and China. To me, I think this is the ultimate example of narrative collapse, it seems like. But, you know, I know we only have a couple of minutes left, Pepe. So, your thoughts on this and how your trip to China can help us better understand what's actually happening in the world right now.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, Plato's cave, once again. When they play these childish games, a lot of people who live inside the U.S. with no information about the world at large may be fooled. But the rest of the planet and the Global South, who live outside the American Plato's cave, see it for what it is: childish games. Well, it's a great time to be here at the moment. Absolutely. On Saturday, it was great. We were at Fudan University with our friend, Professor Zhang Weiwei, and Jeffrey Sachs gave an outstanding presentation covering 3,000 years of history, basically showing how Eurasia was at the center of everything and how it will continue to be. And it was great to later talk to some other professors at Fudan.

Of course, during lunch, Jeffrey was once again absolutely appalled at the sociopath in chief. He doesn't even have adjectives to describe Trump anymore. So this week I'll be talking to people from Guancha, and next week in Shenzhen, it will be great to talk to other members of APEC. For instance, the Peruvians are going to be there, so we can talk about the South Atlantic Silk Road, the famous Chancay connection. It would be great to meet people from the port of Chancay in Peru—not here in Shanghai, but in Shenzhen. How is the Maritime Silk Road in the South Atlantic going? You know, that kind of stuff. It's great. Absolutely great.

And maybe we can have a piece of history next week, depending on how the meeting goes and what they discuss. The Russians and the Chinese know exactly what they want to discuss. They want to instill some sense. But the problem is, on the American side, they don't have a rational character to talk to. They are talking to a simulacrum, completely. He's a simulacrum of a human being with the worst aspects put together. And at the same time, they know that he doesn't decide much. He's not a decider in the Putin or Xi mold, you know. But it is a historical moment. And even in Shanghai, you know, you drive or you walk around town and you see—wow, you know—the social organization, how they are organizing the technological race, the next steps of the technological race.

And when you compare it to the recent past, I remember when I was here, for instance, 20 years ago, or at the end of the millennium, you know, I stayed in Pudong at the time. There was only the Oriental Pearl Tower, and the new tower was the Jin Mao Tower with the Grand Hyatt Hotel. And I still have this footage. I was looking at the footage this week. I always try to go back, and I was

like, wow, there was nothing in Pudong. Literally. They were starting to build the whole thing. You arrive here today, and it's the 22nd century. And they did this in less than 25 years. It's not with childish games that you do stuff like that, right?

#Danny

No, definitely not. Definitely not. I highly recommend that everyone visit Shanghai and look across the Huangpu River at the skyline now. It’s the Pearl Tower.

#Pepe Escobar

Yes, you bet.

#Danny

It's incredible. I mean, as you just pointed out, to know that a lot of that development happened within the last 20 years or so is incredible. It's jaw-dropping. It should be jaw-dropping to anyone who comes from, let's say, the U.S. or the West. And we have a hard time building the foundation of a house in 20 years. Yeah. Let alone all that China has done for its standard of living. But Pepe, this was great. Hopefully we can do a report on the APEC summit.

#Pepe Escobar

Yes, we'll be talking next week, definitely.

#Danny

Yeah, sure. And I'll be in touch. Your article, as well as your Telegram and your X account, are in the video description below. So people should check that out—all of it. Be sure to follow Pepe and all of the work that he does, because he's working every day, every day. We were talking before the show—every day, he's working very hard. Everyone, hit the like button before you go. Support the show in that way. It's completely free. I want to thank the Super Chat here. And then I want to be sure that you go to the video description below, where you can check out all the places to support this channel too. All right, everybody. Pepe and I are out of here together. See you tomorrow. All right, and I'll let you know what's happening November 11th. Bye-bye.