

Pepe Escobar: Iran Wipes Out Trump's Attack – Russia & China's Massive Move

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Thursday, May 21st, 2026. And our dear friend, our brother, Nima Alkhorshid, Pepe Escobar, is here with us. Welcome back, Pepe.

#Guest

Ni hao, Nima. Ni hao, everybody. Yeah, straight from Shanghai. It's 10 p.m. in Shanghai. I apologize already to all of you because I am in a Chinese hotel and Wi-Fi is complicated — it's a tsunami of clients using Wi-Fi at the same time. So I hope this Wi-Fi here holds. And I'm on a VPN with a server from Singapore, which is the strongest I could find at the moment. So I hope everything does not collapse.

#Nima

Hope so. Pepe, let me play a clip of Xi in the final declaration of the meeting, the summit he had with Vladimir Putin. Here is what he said, because that would be, in my opinion, a good point to start with. Here is what he said.

#F2

The world today is far from peaceful, with unilateralism and hegemonism posing profound dangers. The world faces the risk of regressing to the law of the jungle. My proposal to build a community with a shared future for mankind and the four global initiatives has received widespread support from the international community, including Russia.

#Nima

Yeah, I think looking at what's going on, the basis for China, for Russia, for all these players in the region, in Eurasia, is that peace is so important. Peace is the key, in my opinion. And that's why he was talking this way. What is your understanding of what has happened between Xi and Putin?

#Guest

Well, Nima, I sent you my column, which I hope is going to be published in Russia tonight. It's one of my most important columns, I would say, in the last few years, because I dedicate most of it to analyzing the joint declaration by President Xi and President Putin, by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, which is absolutely immense, because this is it. All the blah, blah, blah that we had so far about creating a multipolar world, BRICS Summit, SCO, in the UN, in meetings between leaders, in think tanks, etc. It takes two leaders — the leaders of two superpowers. The other one is the United States. It's a completely different story.

The leaders of the two superpowers who are coordinating the integration of Eurasia. The leaders of BRICS. The leaders of the SCO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The leaders of the Global South, de facto. Together... on the same day, they have an immensely extensive agenda, discussing serious business, signing at least 20 documents of deals in absolutely every aspect and spectrum, and then having a nearly two-hour tea time, tea ceremony conversation with only some restricted members of the delegation on each side. There were three on the Russian side, three on the Chinese side, the interpreters, and Putin and Xi. And this was behind closed doors.

This was at the end of the day, and Putin left at night back to Russia — yesterday night, on Wednesday. We are on Thursday. This declaration, just to pick up on the clip that you showed us, when Xi talks about the law of the jungle, this is part of the declaration — it's the second point. The most important point, the point that opens the declaration, is the notion of polycentrism. And this is a very Russian notion. Putin has been, over the past, let's say, two years or so, coming back to the notion that the leaders of Eurasia and the leaders of the multipolar world have to establish a long-term state of polycentrism, which is another way of describing multipolarity.

The law of the jungle — she made a direct reference to it, related to the absolute collapse of international law and international relations. This is also the language of the declaration. This is how it's written in the declaration: there is a danger of fragmentation within the international community and a return to the law of the jungle. So how do we escape the law of the jungle? That's also, once again, in the declaration, calling for a new security architecture. And this is a key, absolutely key passage, because it picks up the Russian proposal at the end of 2021, when they sent letters to the White House and to NATO. This was during the previous Biden administration in the United States.

They were proposing indivisibility of security, which is exactly the language of the joint declaration. We need to reject — this is how it's written — we need to reject block confrontation. That's a direct reference to NATO. Zero-sum game strategies — that's the typical exceptionalist American approach. Oppose the expansion of military alliances — once again, this is directed to NATO. Hybrid wars — we are right in the middle of multiple hybrid wars against members of the Global South everywhere. Proxy wars — a direct reference to the war in Ukraine, which is a proxy war between NATO and

Russia. And promote the creation of an updated, balanced, effective, and sustainable global and regional security architecture. So, as you can see, Nima, and all of you, our audience, the Chinese and the Russians are once again reiterating points that they have been making for years.

And of course, on the other side, it falls on deaf ears. Their deaf ears are simply genetically incapable of understanding this new message. Once again, in the joint statement, they talk in detail about global governance. This is another Xi Jinping concept, and it was explained in detail last year at the SCO Summit in Tianjin. All of us who were there singled out that this was the most important moment at the SCO Summit in Tianjin, where China once again was projecting to the whole planet its role as one of the key drivers of multipolarity. There's a reference to the United Nations, but we all know that this is not going anywhere. The declaration calls for a reform of the United Nations.

We know, all of us know — camels on the Silk Road, on the New Silk Road know, you know, grains of sand in the Sahara Desert know — that with this current administration in the White House, there won't be a reform of the United Nations. But they make their point. And point number four, Nima, is immensely important because it's about civilization and about diversity. This is the point in the Declaration that buries all these pretensions of the exceptionalists. I'll just quote a short part of a long sentence that puts it all together: the spiritual and moral system of any civilization cannot be considered exceptional or superior to others. All countries should advocate a view of civilizations based on equality, mutual exchange of experience, and dialogue. So this is a call for dialogue — a civilizational approach to the 21st century. And it's coming, Nima.

And now we can go for broke and say out loud, that's the end of the previous indispensable nation, the United States. The new indispensable nation is China. And the new indispensable relationship is Russia and China. They are forging this new architecture of multipolarity. So that's why this separation is important. I would say this is the foundation stone of the possibility of changing the system of international relations. It should be read with a lot of care and attention by everyone around the Global South. And, of course, we know how the reaction is going to be in parts of the Global North and, of course, by the empire of chaos and piracy.

So this was the most important result of this lightning-fast trip by Putin coming here to China. And the whole day that the delegations spent together, all the way to the tea ceremony, it was quite something. And the Chinese social sphere was absolutely riveted. They were fascinated by everything. They were always stressing the respect that Putin has for Chinese culture and Chinese civilization, and the bonds between them — the direct person-to-person friendship bond between Xi and Putin that goes back a long, long time. And there was a very nice touch in all of that. There was an exhibition in the Great Hall of the People, which was basically a joint exhibition of photos by TASS in Russia and the Xinhua Agency in China.

Of all those meetings that Putin and Xi have had over the years in different forums in Russia, in China, all across Eurasia, etc., this is to illustrate the person-to-person relationship that is part and parcel of this big project, which is to have a world that is more full of equanimity and especially

mutual respect among different civilizations. So this was a pivotal moment of the 21st century. And I'm very, very privileged to have witnessed this from here in Shanghai, which is basically the capital of China in terms of culture, in terms of business, in terms of high tech.

And in terms of driving China and Eurasia towards a better future, it was quite an experience. Very important. And I was very lucky, Nima. I spent the day in a school, middle school, vocational school, university — private, one of the top ones in Shanghai and one of the best in China, the Aurora Organization. And I spent the day with the teachers and the students. And we had, of course, many opportunities during the day and at night during our dinner to comment and get into detail about all that. So once again, people-to-people exchange, to quote Xi Jinping. What a day. Absolutely fantastic.

#Nima

Pepe, we know that one of the main issues during the meeting between Xi and Donald Trump was the situation in the Middle East and the Strait of Hormuz. What do we know about the meeting between Putin and Xi? And how concerned are they about the situation in the Middle East?

#Guest

Well, there are no leaks. This is very, very important. This was not discussed in the morning, which was a business meeting. And when the delegations met to discuss business, this was discussed at tea time in that extended tea ceremony that lasted almost two hours, with, like, once again, three members of the delegation on each side. For instance, Lavrov was on the Russian side, Wang Yi was on the Chinese side. And the three main topics — this is what we know via diplomatic sources — but no leaks whatsoever about the content, because this was a closed-door meeting. But we know the three main points of discussion: the proxy war in Ukraine, the war against Iran, and the United States and the empire of chaos and piracy out of control.

And all of that, of course, is interlinked and interlocked, right? So there are projections, and based on what diplomats were able to say, that Putin explained to Xi that maybe the Russian approach towards the war in Ukraine is going to change and is going to be much more radical. And this is also based on internal pressure in Russia after this latest wave of terrorist drone attacks against civilian targets in the Russian Federation. Of course, Russian public opinion now is becoming quite exasperated. So Putin simply cannot afford not to do anything about it. And that will influence what sort of offensive or different or multi-layered offensive Russia is going to launch within the next few days and weeks.

And of course, more mid-term, if there's going to be an effort this year still to really finish that off, which is becoming the absolute majority opinion all across Russia. Of course, they discussed Iran, because both of them have strategic partnerships with Iran. Iran is supported by Russia and China, and Russia and China together at several levels, most of them we don't see. And they go way

beyond diplomacy, way beyond very important military details like the Iranians having access to Beidou satellite information 24/7, way beyond military equipment that Russia transferred via the Caspian from Astrakhan to Tehran in that famous shuttle.

And of course, first question, classified intel information by Russia to Iran, which is part of their military cooperation. It's not a military treaty. So they discussed all that. And of course, Xi told Putin face to face what he discussed with the emperor of Bavaria last week. So the interval between the two visits was a matter of five days or so. And of course, because they have a strategic partnership at the highest level, as was reiterated during the whole day yesterday on several occasions. And of course, because they are both conducting, and if you look at the joint statement once again, they are conducting a process, a very complex process, as deep as it can get, of changing the whole system of international relations, they have to know what the current leader of the empire nowadays is thinking, not thinking, or thinking that he's thinking, because after all, he's not a thinker.

So yes, Xi explained to Putin what happened last week in Beijing. So these are the three top themes, Nima, and all of you in the audience. Once again, there are no leaks about the substance, and there won't be, because this was a closed meeting, and this is a matter of state secrets between Moscow and Beijing. But the thing is, what's very important is that they are totally in sync, Nima, and all of you. Russia and China, when it comes to the ongoing wars, to the possible solution of these wars, and how to contain and manage an empire completely out of control, they are completely in sync. So that's the major takeaway of this tea ceremony conversation.

#Nima

Yeah. What is your understanding, Pepe, of what's going on in the Middle East between Iran and the United States? Donald Trump said that he wanted to attack Iran. One hour before that, he decided to cancel the attack because Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and these countries were asking him not to attack Iran. We have this gathering of people in Saudi Arabia because of this period. We have this particular time of the year when everybody goes to Hajj, as they call it, goes to Saudi Arabia to be there for a short period of time. It starts between May 24th and May 30th, if I'm not mistaken. But was it Saudi Arabia and Qatar asking, these two countries asking Donald Trump, or was there something else going on between, you know, the United States and Europe?

#Guest

Everything about what really happened, Nima, is spin. We cannot trust anything, especially what comes from Zionists working with American mainstream media. They are specialized in spreading all sorts of bullshit, unqualified bullshit, and sometimes stratospheric bullshit. Saudi Arabia, they are hedging carefully their bets. They know that on a financial spectrum, they are hostages of the Americans because all their money is in Wall Street and in the City of London. It's in the West. It's not across West Asia or even across Eurasia. Very little. They are very, very important. They are not part of the warmongering camp. In the Persian Gulf, the warmongering camp is the UAE. The UAE is

directly aligned with the Zionists and with the Americans. They are going to pay a very heavy price for that, sooner rather than later.

Saudi Arabia is part of what we called a few weeks ago the Four Sunnis, those that first got together in Islamabad, exchanging ideas to see if they could come up with a sort of mediation plan between Iran and the US. Once again, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. So they had their first meeting in Islamabad. The next day, the foreign minister of Pakistan had to hop on a plane and go to China to explain to Wang Yi what they were talking about. And Wang Yi essentially said, look, this is not so good. You have to up your game. So China, in the background, started to become more active and, of course, helping Pakistan to solidify its position as mediator. Now, it's much more complicated after Islamabad I, which was, by the way, in the end, destroyed by the Americans. And after Islamabad II, we are at an interregnum which is very, very dangerous.

We are in a—I wouldn't even call it the calm before the storm. We are in a sort of fake calm because a practically inevitable storm should be coming, maybe sooner rather than later. According to the words of the vociferating emperor of barbaria himself, every day the zillions of posts—everybody's fed up with all this stupidity. The problem is he controls the news cycle. He vociferates, and then stupidity controls the news cycle for hours until the next vociferated stupidity on social media. So that's an infernal machine, in fact, with everything—debasement of language, debasement of critical thinking, hurling accusations, flights of fancy, completely hysterical attacks. And that's the problem, because this conditions everyone, and it's reproduced all over the world. Does that affect the behavior of serious players?

No, it does not affect the behavior of Iran, as you know very well, Nima, and it does not affect the behavior of Russia and China. So now what is emerging—and this is not in the headlines—this is part of some privileged information that I received from diplomatic channels, and we need to work very carefully around it, and we cannot publish what sort of conversations they are having. Because now we have Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and China, and guess who—North Korea—discussing together a new possible system of security for Eurasia as a whole, including West Asia.

This is immensely important, and it's something that I will be working on in the next few weeks here in China, when I go to Moscow at the end of next week, and then when I continue in Europe, and, of course, with all our connections across Eurasia. The Saudi position is relatively aligned with, let's say, this quintet, if we think in terms of Iran, Pakistan, Russia, China, and North Korea. And the key point is missiles. There is a missile discussion about all of them because the main deterrent against the follies of the empire of chaos and piracy across Eurasia is missile potential. Very, very important, as Iran has demonstrated. And this leads us, Nima, to something I may be able to quote from a correspondence that I received these past two days.

And it directly concerns Iran, Nima. And you can tell me if you agree with this assessment, which essentially comes from Iran, from some of the highest circles in Iran. They are now confident in a manner that they were not 20 years ago or even 10 years ago. So this is the key to the whole

argument. They are confident that they can absorb an initial strike, which is what, once again, the Zionists are considering as their next step, sooner rather than later, and still deliver a devastating second-phase response through layered retaliation. I am quoting from my correspondence. And that includes missiles, drones, maritime disruption, proxy activation, cyber operations, attacks against energy and financial arteries across West Asia.

This is something that Iran can do with no problem, as you know very well, Nima. And Iranian authorities have already warned that if that happens, this is what they're going to do. So what is the strategic message of all that coming from Tehran? It's that if they renew the war, if a new attack comes, the opening act will not determine the outcome. The retaliation cycle will determine the outcome. And that, Nima, was certainly discussed by Putin and Xi face-to-face. Because, of course, their diplomatic and their backdoor networks are very active with North Korea, with Pakistan, and, of course, with their strategic ally, Iran. Very important point.

The Americans are completely unaware that this is going on, because this is a collaboration and practically invisible negotiation track which involves Eurasian players. It does not involve the U.S., much less the rest of the fragmented West. This is centered essentially on Iran, Pakistan, Russia, China, and North Korea. And the Saudis are outside observing, because once there is a sort of new framework for security across Eurasia, including these five partners as participants, Saudi Arabia will be part of it. Because Saudi Arabia, after all, already has a military pact with Pakistan. So the Saudis at the moment, their position is, okay, let's not ruffle too many feathers, let's be quiet for the moment. But once again, it's a completely different position compared to the completely demented, I would say, MBZ UAE. And not all the Emirates, only Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and especially Abu Dhabi.

So he made his bet, MBZ. His bet is the Zionists and the Empire of Chaos. So, you know, when things start to really happen, he'll be one of the first to go down, assuming that he knows, or he's gangsterish enough to know, that sooner or later he's going to be in deep, deep trouble. He was already betrayed by the Israelis. And he can be easily betrayed by the Americans and Israelis over and over again. So this is, I would say, the architecture of what's going on underground at the moment. It's an immensely complex process, Nima. Very, very complex. The good thing is that, once again, because China and Russia are in the driver's seat, because the presidents of China and Russia yesterday were discussing, among other things, how this architecture of this indivisibility of security is going to progress from now on.

And at the same time, they know, if we read once again the joint statement, that they need to control an empire completely under this president, totally untrustworthy, and even more dangerous because they're out of control. So that's why we have this, what is on the headlines, which is more or less obvious day after day, but these underground parallel negotiations, these ones are the real deal. Just like the subtext of the Russia-China strategic partnership, which is the methodology or different methodologies that they use to conduct this process towards the multilateral world. You don't see that in the headlines as well. It was discussed in a closed private session yesterday between both of them.

#Nima

When it comes to the war with Iran, Pepe, I think that the calculation or the understanding on the part of the Iranians is that the war is coming, not because the United States is in a good position right now—they're having some sort of level—but because Israel and Benjamin Netanyahu are desperate right now. He falters domestically. He has to do something about it. That's why they're feeling that the United States may attack Iran. And the response is obvious for us, because you remember before the war, the second round of war happening, they said it's going to be a regional war. If you start a war, it's going to be regional. Right now, the IRGC announced just yesterday that it's going to go beyond the region.

#Guest

But that's exactly what I told you five minutes ago, Nima. In the assessment by the Iranian leadership, the response is going to be the real deal, not the first strike by the Zionists and the Americans. What you're saying is absolutely correct. That's it.

#Nima

And they're honest in the way they're expressing themselves. We've seen that before. They have no reason to lie about it.

#Guest

And they spell out their position clearly over and over again, every day. And obviously, those clowns don't listen, because it's genetically impossible for them to listen and admit that the rules of the game have changed.

#Nima

And I would assume they're going to hit Diego Garcia. They're going to hit somewhere close to Greece. All those bases that were used during the war, the second round of war, they're going to hit them.

#Guest

Yes, because they are all legitimate targets. Absolutely.

#Nima

Yeah. And putting that aside, Pepe, we had something from Saudi Arabia. They call it a non-aggression pact. How does that fit into the new picture that you gave us about the Eurasian

concept? Are they prepared to accept something from Saudi Arabia and the GCC countries to be on the sideline, to be at the margins of the new security architecture?

#Guest

No, if there is a new security architecture guaranteed, especially by Russia and China, this will encompass the GCC. And in this case, the umbrella will be provided by Pakistan. That will be the major, major game changer. It will not be the U.S. anymore. It will be Pakistan. And of course, Pakistan supported in the background by Russia and China. So no direct involvement of Russia and China in a new security umbrella for the Persian Gulf and for the petro-monarchies. But because of the close relationship between Pakistan and the GCC, it's self-evident.

And of course, Iran would agree with that, based on what they are discussing with the Pakistanis and based on the role of guarantors by both Russia and China. So now we're talking about, and it applies, it's a multipolar negotiation between all these Eurasian players, which is how are we going to secure West Asia again in a completely different framework that we across Eurasia control, and not controlled by the empire of chaos, plunder, piracy, everything that they do so well, right?

#Nima

I don't know what that tone was about. Did they talk about the situation with Taiwan? Because during the meeting between Donald Trump and Xi, I'm sure they were talking about it. But how about Xi talking to Putin, or maybe considering the case of Taiwan, and how does Russia see the case of Taiwan?

#Guest

They don't need to talk about that. The Russian position is very, very, very... In fact, the Russian position is so obvious that Putin once again reaffirmed the One China policy, totally supported by the Russian Federation. That's all you need. You need one phrase, one sentence, and that's all. Because they know, and obviously Xi knows how Putin feels about Taiwan, and he knows the official position of the Russian Federation, so you don't need to spell it out over and over again. You do that in 10 seconds, and that's it. Okay, let's talk about something else. With the Americas, a completely different story, Nima, and all of you, and I'm sure all of you are aware that the Taiwan issue is completely prefabricated by the exceptionalists. It's a non-issue.

And China has been saying this for decades: there will be peaceful reunification, period. And we are not in a hurry. We have until at least 2049, according to Deng Xiaoping, for peaceful reunification with Taiwan. So they're not in a hurry. It will happen. It's going to be similar to the process with Hong Kong. It's going to be probably one country, three systems. We have, for the moment, one country, two systems with Hong Kong. With Taiwan, we're going to have one country, three systems. They will be relatively autonomous. It's an industrial powerhouse that will continue to be

so. But, of course, the overarching framework will be the Chinese mainland from Beijing. This is a non-issue everywhere across Asia, Nima. Nobody in Asia discusses Taiwan.

Everybody knows what's going to happen. It's a Chinese problem, and it is a Chinese domestic problem, of course. From the point of view of the dwindling empire, of course, they need reasons to harass, contain, encircle China. So Taiwan is one of them. The South China Sea as a whole is another one. The Strait of Malacca, if they decide to block it, is another one. The Chinese are fully aware, you know, trying to block the Chinese inside the first island chain, not to mention the second. And the Chinese, of course, have been working on it at military levels to break this American-imposed encirclement inside the island chains. And this is something that they already can do, but they don't need to advertise it too much. This is not how China works.

China works in silence, and with lots of hard work, and with extremely long-term planning. It's not an accident that they have successive five-year plans, and you have to fulfill all the targets explicitly outlined in each five-year plan. The one that starts this year, 2026—we were discussing this yesterday at the School University here in Shanghai. Just to give an idea, a simple detail for all of you: until 2030, the plan is to have 70% of the Chinese economy directly interconnected and linked to artificial intelligence. And this was one of the key points of our discussion yesterday. And I had fantastic questions from the kids, from the students. And they were worried: are we going to have jobs in this future?

And of course, this is an open discussion in China everywhere. It's a big discussion on Chinese social media everywhere. Is AI going to end up destroying jobs everywhere? And what are we going to do with these populations that will need to be retrained because they lost their jobs taken over by AI? This is what China is thinking nowadays—how they're going to modernize even faster than they have been modernizing so far. When you look at the obvious signs of modernized China all across Shanghai, it seems that people in the West have no clue about it, how advanced it is. It's immensely impressive. And I have had the chance this time to go to many parts of Shanghai, not staying in the original clusters, you know.

And you see the modernization spreading to everyday life everywhere you go. It's immensely impressive. So this is what they discussed. And foreign policy for them—they know. They know that they have their alliances across Asia. They know that the relationship with Russia is very strong. And in terms of providing the energy that they need, it's a deal. For instance, yesterday, one of the conclusions was, okay, we're going to speed up Power of Siberia 2. It was supposed to be inaugurated by 2030 or so. No, they want it to be inaugurated possibly next year, by the end of 2027. And then the Americans want to blockade the Strait of Malacca. Who cares?

They have two mega gas pipelines from Russia: the SPO, the Power of Siberia 1, which is already at maximum capacity, and they're going to have the Power of Siberia 2 as well via Mongolia. No problem at all. So that's why they can allow themselves to say, okay, let's concentrate on our internal domestic problems—loss of jobs, there is inflation. It's not stratospheric like in many

Western places, but inflation is growing in China, so they're concentrating on tweaking the model, which essentially works. So that's the number one preoccupation, and it's the preoccupation of the five-year plan. The only external problem that they have is American harassment—containment of China by any means necessary. And of course, these direct and indirect wars against China. They know perfectly well that the war against Iran is also a war against China. Everybody knows that. If you ask kids in college, they know about this.

#Nima

Yeah, it's so amazing because some people are trying to say that the only thing that matters to China is making money. They don't have any strategy. They don't. It's just...

#Guest

Nima, look, maybe I'm getting too old for this shit. I don't have patience for stupidity—not with my age and not after what I've lived all across the world for the past four decades. So when I come here, I come here as a student. And yesterday they were telling me, "Ah, you want to go back to being a student?" I said, "Oh yes, if I could, I'd be here in the classroom with you as a student, learning." And when you come to China, you learn nonstop about everything—everything: civilizational aspects and modernization aspects, and of course, daily rituals, especially the mutual respect that people have, the way people treat each other, the way they treat their elders, how they follow the rituals of daily life.

There is a deep respect for these rituals, for the hierarchy of these rituals, and how to respect the other, especially. And all these rules of politics and civilization—it's extraordinary. It's always a learning experience and a humbling experience. You're learning from them all the time. And, of course, they are hardworking. They don't want trouble with anybody. They want to make money with the whole planet—of course they do. They are a merchant system, of course, and they are doing that. But they want to do business on a win-win basis with everybody, including their opponents, including the empire of total chaos.

But, of course, they know that it's going to be very hard, especially now that they are already the number one geoeconomic power in the world. And the people who run the show in the U.S., Nima, they will never accept that. They will try to undermine, harass, do all sorts of horrible things against China. And this is not going to change. But the Chinese are ready, and that's the main difference. I would say this attitude started to solidify last year, when Trump launched his first tsunami of sanctions against China. I remember well, I was here in Shanghai at the time.

And we could see that the reaction was completely different compared to the past. They stood up and they said, ah, you want to mess with us? Okay, just wait. So now it's a completely different story. Now the Americans are learning that they cannot mess with China. And China knows how to, or at least like Xi demonstrated last week, he managed to treat the Emperor of Barbaria, and at the

same time he was smacking him on his teeth with such subtlety that the Emperor of Barbaria didn't even notice. This is what civilizations do. They are sophisticated enough to go for broke, but of course in a very civilized way.

#Nima

Pepe, did Trump try to convince Xi to buy energy or oil from the United States? And what was Xi's response?

#Guest

This is what they say. Once again, bullshit, spin. You don't see this anywhere in any of the official communiqués by the Ministry of Commerce. And obviously, the Chinese are not going to buy American energy. For what? They're going to buy energy from their enemy? No bloody way. No way. No, this is American spin. And that's the problem, because they spin all sorts of bullshit. This is picked up by everybody around the world, including independent analysts, and they reproduce it without checking with the Chinese. And, of course, the Chinese are not going to tell you all the details, but they can simply issue a "No, this is not true," which they do all the time. There you go.

#Nima

Just to wrap it up, Pepe, can we say that Trump's agenda to dominate the energy market is over because of what has happened in the Middle East, because of this summit between Xi and Russia about the new pipeline you mentioned between Russia and China? And how is the energy market in Eurasia as time goes by?

#Guest

Well, no, Nima, it's not over. They're going to try to pull new tricks, of course. They are absolutely desperate because the whole Hormuz operation failed. Because one of the key objectives of this war from the beginning, not stated publicly, was to take control of Iranian Persian Gulf ports and the Strait of Hormuz. They were not even talking about the Caspian — that's a different story. It was centered on the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. You control most of the flow of Iranian energy outside of Iran, all the way to Asia. So that's why this was a war from the beginning against Iran and against Asian customers of Iranian energy. As we can see, the whole thing was a major failure and will continue to be a major failure. So they're going to try something else.

They're going to try to pull some tricks. The Malacca angle is still on. They can try to do something, I wouldn't say short-term, but at least mid-term, based on this. The Indonesians, sometimes they can be quite something. Indonesians do a military agreement with the Americans, so they're going to regret this big, big time. The Americans could use this military agreement to pressure the Indonesians. And we're going to have military vessels in the Strait of Malacca, close to the

Indonesian coastlines in Sumatra. Anything is possible. And the Chinese are ready for that. And the other players in Asia are also ready for that. But if there is a strategy in mind, with the Americans, they don't do anything strategically. It's always tactics, one tactic after another.

The overall desire, not strategy, is to block choke points that are used by the Chinese anywhere. The problem is, they are running out of choke points to block them, because the options for the Chinese are multiplying by the day. Guess one of the most important discussions at the St. Petersburg Forum, which is going to be, what, in two weeks from now? I hope to be there. Once again, the Northern Silk Road, as the Chinese call it. The Northern Silk Road, the Russian denomination. The Polar or Arctic Silk Road, the Chinese denomination. That's it. Once again, bypassing the Suez Canal. The International North-South Transportation Corridor, which is, once again, Russia, Iran, India. Maybe India will be out of the picture sooner rather than later.

Who will jump in? China, once again. Especially now that the port of Gwadar is being used like an Iranian port. This is one of the most fascinating developments of these past two months. In the beginning, intuitively, there was this feeling that Chabahar was competing against Gwadar. Chabahar, as you know, Nima, in Sistan-Baluchistan in Iran, and Gwadar in the Arabian Sea in Pakistan. Distance, 80 kilometers. Very, very close. So they were natural competitors. Now, not anymore, because the Iranians are using the port of Gwadar as well, which is part of the New Silk Roads. It's the terminal in the Arabian Sea of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. And what this spells out once again, very close collaboration between Iran, Pakistan, and China.

#Nima

Exactly.

#Guest

So, exactly, Nima. But do the Americans think about stuff like that? Obviously not. Never. Because they don't think strategically. They don't think that their enemies or rivals or malign creatures, or whatever stupid terminology they use, are capable of thinking strategically and organizing themselves strategically. That's another example.

#Nima

Thank you so much, Pepe, for being with us today. A great pleasure, as always.

#Guest

Enormous pleasure, Nima. Thank you. I assume our Wi-Fi held. Thanks to our Singapore server, Tanji. Thanks, everybody. Greetings to all of you from Shanghai, the capital of the 21st century. We remain here. Next week, we'll still be talking to you from Shanghai. Thank you so much, all of you.

And thank you, Nima. Nima, you are in a different galaxy in terms of being a gentleman. You are very, very special, as you know. Muito obrigado, querido.

#Nima

Thank you. Kiss, bye.