

Pepe Escobar: The Eurasian Shift: Bypassing US Chokepoints

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#Nima

The world today is far from peaceful, with unilateralism and hegemonism posing serious dangers.

#Guest

Yeah, I think...

#Nima

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?

#Pepe

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—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 that 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 at 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, from ear to ear. Their deaf ears simply are 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, we 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 is a reference to the United Nations, but we, all of us, 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 in the Silk Road, in 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... the 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, 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

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

#Pepe

Well, there are no leaks. This is very, very important. This was not discussed in the morning, which was a business meeting, when the delegations met to discuss business. This was discussed at tea time, in that extended tea ceremony that lasted almost two hours, with 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 it's 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-class 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 Arabia 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 throughout 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 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 the 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 from May 24th to 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 the United States and Europe?

#Pepe

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're 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 a calm before the storm. We are in a sort of fake calm because of a practically inevitable storm that should be coming maybe sooner 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 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: the debasement of language, the 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 it means 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 sound disposition 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, 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 the 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 present regime — 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.