

# Pepe Escobar: Trump's Confrontation Backfires HARD

Follow me: Substack: [https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?](https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?utm_campaign=profile&utm_medium=profile-page)

utm\_campaign=profile&utm\_medium=profile-page X (Twitter): [https://x.com/Dialogue\\_NRA](https://x.com/Dialogue_NRA)

Patreon: [https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?](https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?utm_medium=unknown&utm_source=join_link&utm_campaign=creatorshare_creator&utm_content=)

utm\_medium=unknown&utm\_source=join\_link&utm\_campaign=creatorshare\_creator&utm\_content=

**#Nima**

Hi everybody, what day is it today, Pepe, in Shanghai?

**#Pepe**

I have no idea. Okay, in Shanghai, today is already Thursday.

**#Nima**

Yeah, exactly. That's why I'm asking you.

**#Pepe**

Of course, because it's five minutes past midnight. So we are already on Thursday in the cultural, business, high-tech capital of China and Asia. Welcome to Shanghai, everyone, Nima and all of you. This is the real shit, you know, really.

**#Nima**

Today is Wednesday here in Brazil, May 26th.

**#Pepe**

You mean you're still in yesterday?

**#Nima**

You're ahead of us.

**#Pepe**

You're still in yesterday, and here they are already in tomorrow.

## **#Nima**

Thank you. Thank you so much for being with us today, Pepe. And let's start with one of the most important pieces that you've written in recent months, I would say. And here is what... the title of your new article is "How China and Pakistan May Deliver the Real Deal." What is that, and what does that mean, Pepe?

## **#Pepe**

Exactly. Of course, it's not that China and Pakistan are going to deliver a deal. I cannot explain in a simple headline, as short as possible, that they are working hard to finalize a memorandum of understanding. That's a completely different story. That's the first step. And after that, we can have, according to negotiators, a period of 30 to 60 days when they start discussing the nitty-gritty, the really serious questions. So this article was quite something to do, and it's important for several reasons, because I had direct access to privileged information from people who are very close to the table — Chinese, Pakistanis, and Iranians as well. Some of these Iranians, I'm sure you know some of them, but probably you don't know some of the others. They always, in this juncture, are fantastic in terms of volunteering information, in terms of trust.

They know that I will faithfully respect what they are entrusting to me, which is an enormous responsibility. And the same thing with the Chinese — the Chinese that I talk to here in Shanghai. Shanghai may not be the political capital of China; it's the business and cultural capital, but the circulation of information here is something extraordinary. And there is a tradition of critical thinking as well. Some of the sharpest scholars and analysts are teaching in Shanghai universities. So it's the perfect place to be. I reactivated my connections with Pakistan. I am very fond of Pakistan, and it was great that these past few weeks I reactivated some very important channels with Pakistan because of their mediation efforts. So when you put this all together, it's possible to write a column like this.

Obviously, I cannot name names for obvious reasons. And the people who already read it, linked to diplomacy and intel, they love that the whole thing is, I would say, built as a very solid, realist narrative, but without naming names, emphasizing the crucial role of these three players: Iran, in terms of making quite, I would say, evident and self-evident for the Pakistanis as mediators, and for China in the background as the guarantor — their positions, which have been very clear from the beginning. And you know about that, Nima, you have been reporting about it from the beginning, and we know the essential Iranian positions have not changed and will not change. The Pakistanis, they are in a very, very tough spot, and many people are immensely impressed by how they are pulling it off.

Because they are the go-between between the extremely volatile Trump administration, where you simply cannot trust anything they say and do, the Gulf petro-monarchies, which are trying to think about the next step — and it's not going to be under an American security umbrella — Iran, of course, because Iran and Pakistan are talking all the time about the process per se; Russia, of course, because we all know the proxy war in Ukraine, the SMO, is reaching a completely different stage, and this is the Russian preoccupation at the moment. But they keep their eye on the ball in Iran because they know that the post-wars are completely interconnected. And of course, China — and it's great to be in China at this particular moment because we had three immensely important meetings, Nima, one week after another. It started with the visit by Trump, which, as we all know, nothing really serious happened.

But, of course, Xi Jinping was paying very close attention to what may be going on inside the mind of this four-year-old president of the United States. The next week, President Putin came to Beijing, and then we got the real deal, because they issued their joint declaration, which is basically laying the tracks for building the multipolar world. And they had an over-two-hour tea ceremony, very private, only Xi, Putin, three members each from their delegations, and the translators, where they discussed especially the United States out of control, the war in Ukraine, and of course, Iran. So what happened early this week, Nima?

That was even more extraordinary. An ultra-high-level Pakistani delegation was received by Xi Jinping in Beijing on Monday. Everybody was there — their top negotiator, Field Marshal Asim Munir, their foreign minister, their prime minister, everybody. Of course, this was related to the anniversary of the China-Pakistan special relationship, projects in the New Silk Roads, etc. But, of course, Xi Jinping needed to hear directly from the Pakistanis what they are doing in practice in the mediation sphere, with full support from China. So when we put these three visits together, Nima, and all of you, that's it.

This is the roadmap for the most important players in Eurasia trying to organize the way out of this war. Obviously, these people — the people who are at the table, the negotiators — they are very, very smart, and they are realpolitik practitioners. They have no illusions. They knew even before what's been happening these past few days that the Zionist lobby would go all out to smash, destroy, blow up any possibility of a deal, which is the stage that we are at now. So does that mean that the possibility of a memorandum of understanding is dead? No. And this is the main point in the column.

It's not dead, but it's at a very, very dangerous juncture now — this week and until the middle of next week, at least. If we, let's say, in these next six to seven days, manage to cross this abyss, there is a serious possibility that we're going to have a memorandum of understanding and, of course, the beginning of negotiations in detail. Is this a solution? Of course it's not, because we

know that, once again, according to our great friend, Grand Master Sergei Lavrov, the United States is non-agreement-capable. And all these players, Nima, they know it. And they have to deal with it. But this doesn't mean that they need to stop or despair.

No, they continue doing their job. It's amazing. It's like an ant colony building something inside the ant colony. They keep working 24/7, all that. And, of course, there are some of these breakthroughs we can actually see, which is the possibility of those \$12 billion in Qatari banks being finally released. So we are at the point that this might happen. But this is a detail because the Iranians are saying that, look, they owe us at least \$100 billion. So until we get there, it's a long, long way. And, of course, the provocations — there were provocations against Iran earlier this week, of course.

Iran decided not to respond forcefully. Why? Because of Eid, because of the Hajj. They don't want any spillover affecting pilgrims from the whole Muslim world and the lands of Islam who are currently in Saudi Arabia finishing their Hajj. Next week, this will be over, so we can have an Iranian response much more forceful than so far. So this tension between the diplomatic intel track that is progressing, even against all odds, but anything can happen along the way to collapse the whole edifice. So that's where we are exactly at the moment. And this is what I try to explain in this article.

Yes, it's a tough read, but I try to explain it in the most palatable way, straight to the point and outlining the priorities on all sides. And of course, emphasizing that if we follow a path to peace like the negotiators are trying to achieve, the whole ballgame changes completely. It has already changed, Nima, as we already know. We are already in the post-American established order in West Asia. We still don't know how this is going to be constituted, but it's already a new ballgame. And that adds to the desperation, the impotence, and the fury and rage of the American side, and especially the international Zionist side.

## **#Nima**

You know, Ben-Gvir today said Israel doesn't want to sign a bad deal with Iran. I don't know what else they can do. It's going to be a bad deal for the United States, for Israel—specifically for Israel—because I don't see that much for the United States. It's all about Israel. All the American bases in the region are fighting basically for Israel. That's why they're so desperate right now. They're attacking Lebanon in the southern part of Lebanon. They defined a yellow line in the southern part, then they're crossing that line. They're saying that yellow line doesn't matter anymore, every time. But it seems something is happening. As you've just mentioned, something is happening. I don't know how important that is and how critical and how sustainable that sort of negotiation or those talks that are happening are.

## **#Pepe**

Yes, we know a lot of things are happening, Nima. For instance, after this article, I received another batch of information, which I'll probably use for another one, maybe before the end of the week or

the beginning of next week. It is moving very fast. But, of course, they have to be prepared for ultra-nasty interference by all those usual suspects in Washington—all the neocons, all the Zionists, the Zionist international, the axis of Zionism everywhere. And of course, how are you going to respond? For instance, one of the questions that I put to one of the negotiators, and he gave me an indirect answer, in fact. I was asking, okay, assume we have the pastures adieu.

And Israel decides that, no, they will continue to bomb Lebanon and illegally annex Lebanese land, and kill Lebanese civilians in droves, which is what they have been doing for months. How is Iran going to respond? Is Iran going to stick exclusively to a deal with the United States, or will they respond to Israeli horrors, which is the only thing they know how to perpetrate? Of course, Iran will respond. And Iran will tell the United States, look, this may fall out of our deal, but we told you from the beginning that if the Zionists go on a rampage, we are going to respond. That's it. But the thing is, will the Trump administration admit that that's the case? Probably not. So, you know, we go from one dead end to another.

In fact, that's why it is so dangerous. But still, we have to keep a positive attitude about all that because there is a strong possibility on the table being discussed. So I think all of us, we have to insist on that. Otherwise, Nima and all of you, we give up. There's going to be war all over again. And this war is going to destroy what has not been destroyed yet, not only in West Asia but the global economy. Are these people, these lunatics, these terrorist lunatics, lunatic enough to do that? Yes, they are. They don't care. And that's why it's so dangerous. You are dealing with a bunch of killers. You are dealing with a gigantic killing machine, one of the most, one of the nastiest in modern history and history as a whole.

## **#Nima**

Pepe, how do you see the role of Qatar? You mentioned the Iranians. We know that the head of the Iranian parliament, together with the head of the Central Bank of Iran and the foreign minister of Iran, went to Qatar about that \$12 billion that you just mentioned. That is half of the frozen Iranian assets abroad. How do you see the role of Qatar? Are they getting more involved? Because before we had Pakistan, and you mentioned that Pakistan is playing a very important role right now, but how do you see the role of Qatar and the GCC?

## **#Pepe**

Yeah, the top mediators are Pakistan. Qatar, they don't want to get involved. Qatar, they want to protect themselves from any extra effects, nasty effects on their economy. They already suffered a lot. So for them, to unblock these funds which are in Qatari banks is not such a big deal. It's not Qatari money. It's in Qatari banks, and they can do it. And even Trump can sell that inside the US to domestic public opinion: look, we didn't do it, the Qataris did it. So this is something that arranges everybody. And the Iranians know it, and that's why they sent this ultra high-level top delegation to Doha.

So this is something that can be done. It's an example of things that can be done. But when we get to the ultra-intractable deals—everything from the nuclear dossier to Iran's ballistic program, to support for the axis of resistance, to the new status of the Strait of Hormuz—then we know that it's hell. Then we could have years of negotiations on any of these issues, right? So, just to give you an idea of what the mentality of these negotiations is at the moment: they know that, okay, we can have an incremental success here, another one over there, and that maybe starts building momentum.

And then maybe this will show, especially to the West—forget about the bloody Zionists—especially to Trump and the people around him, that this is inevitable, that there's only one way out for him, which is to strike some sort of deal that he can sell to domestic public opinion as victory, Trump-style, like if this was an MMA show. Who cares? As long as Iran gets the respect for their rights and their sovereignty and their independence and the sacrifices they made, they don't care how this is going to be sold inside the U.S. Because the situation is not sustainable for Donald Trump, Pepe.

## **#Nima**

You know, domestically and in terms of the global economy, that's why he's so desperate to get a deal as soon as possible. And he's trying to do his best to, you know, as you've mentioned, with Qatar paying Iran and other countries. I don't know if the United States is going to do that much, because how is that going to be possible? How do you see Donald Trump with the blockade? Are we going to see the blockade being removed? I'm talking not only about the blockade itself, but also about American forces. Because if that were the case, in the last two days we've seen the confrontation between the two parties. As you mentioned, Iran didn't respond because of the Hajj in Saudi Arabia. That may happen anytime soon, as the Hajj is over next week, as you've mentioned. This is going to be the second phase of the conflict.

## **#Pepe**

If they don't reach an agreement before that, well, uh, Nima, the blockade was another one of those three-in-the-morning ideas in the mind of a four-year-old. It's his total responsibility, this absolutely stupid idea to blockade all Iranian ports, as if the U.S. Navy had the means to implement this blockade. And now we know that tankers and supertankers are doing the back and forth, paying the tolls or, let's say, administrative or environmental fees, which is another way of describing it—a wonderful way of describing it. Of course, if we're using this waterway, you have to pay transit. It's normal. It happens in other parts of the world as well. So there's no blockade. Once in a while, we have a Netflix show of, ah, we boarded an Iranian tanker in the southern Indian Ocean or in the Arabian Sea or whatever and all that.

So we have all those images. A few hours later, nobody's talking about it. So it's not working. Everybody knows it's not working. But because it was his idea, for him to backtrack, Nima, once

again, it's ego, ego, ego, ego, ego, plus ego. We are dealing with an immensely insecure character. And everything about him is, of course, Narcissus, that intergalactic ego. And, of course, the total impossibility to admit that he committed zillions of very serious mistakes. He never admits it. I'm sorry. That's the call that I got in my last week in Shanghai. So this is not going to change. And to compound the problem, the level of mediocrity around his team is something so—I've been trying to define it as intergalactic because there's no other way.

It is. It's something beyond the spheres. There's nobody that can take five minutes, enter the Oval Office and say, look, you're going to have to take these decisions now because blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Otherwise, you're dead. Nobody has the guts to do that. It's not going to be the Secretary of Forever Wars, who is beyond a clown. It's not going to be Vance. On the contrary, Vance—Trump is trying to find a way to get rid of Vance. And this is something we know via people who have access to Vance. So there's nobody to talk to him. There's nobody capable of convincing him about his mistakes. And then it all comes back to the way he was indoctrinated by those sub-mafia types when he was growing up and he was a young man.

That's why it's so... If the situation was not volatile enough, and it already is, it makes it even more complicated because we are dealing with an absolute idiot on an intergalactic level. But dangerous. Immensely dangerous. And every day that passes, even more dangerous, because then you are confronted with your own mediocrity. And nobody can escape that, Nima. When you look at yourself in the mirror and you know that you fucked up big time and you are an immense mediocrity, life as a whole corrodes, you know. And you become completely putrid, fetid. And that's what's happening with this character right now. The problem is we all pay the price of it. It's a very nasty spectacle to watch, to follow, but we are all victims.

## **#Nima**

The sad reality is, Pepe, if we compare the Trump administration today to what it was when this administration started its work, there are more Zionists right now than there were before. We don't have Joe Kent, we don't have Tulsi Gabbard. You know, many people—J.D. Vance somehow disappeared from the scene.

## **#Pepe**

Completely. And now it's exactly that—it's a Zionist state that took over completely the administration of the United States. And of course, all the levers of power, the important levers of power in Washington and across the Beltway. Terrifying, terrifying, to say the least, you know, makes us want to disappear. But we can't. And it's part of our job. We have to keep pointing out the absurdities, the discrepancies, the immense amount of stupidity after stupidity—the killing of international law, the killing of diplomacy, the killing of critical thinking, the killing of respect for the other.

And when I say other, that includes everybody else, includes every interlocutor—not only Iran per se, but everybody else. For instance, Trump is... I wouldn't say standing by Pakistan for the moment, because his only calculation is, okay, maybe Pakistan can get me out of this jam. So it's a very, very petty personal interest. It's not about the bigger questions provoked by his decision and questions that interfere with the way the global economy is functioning. In fact, it's getting into a black void each passing day.

## **#Nima**

It's so funny when they're talking about international law. Just look at what the United States did in the last several decades. Look at Cuba. Look at Venezuela. Look at Iran today. Look at Syria—what they did to Syria, occupying the land and selling their oil and selling that to Israel. You know, where is the international law? There is nothing called international law.

## **#Pepe**

No, no, that's a... you attack on your own. Yeah, that's a way. It's not over, it's not even six feet under, Nima. It's a million miles under by now. But one thing—I'm sorry, I have to finish because tomorrow is my last day in Shanghai, and it's going to be totally frantic. So I apologize to all of you. But as a wrap-up, it's extremely difficult to explain to all of you, to Nima and to all of you, the sensation of following these absolutely extraordinary events from China here and from—okay, that's the capital of it. There are several important capitals of Asia. Moscow is a capital of Eurasia.

Bangkok is, let's say, the super agreeable capital of Southeast Asia. Shanghai is the capital—could be the capital of Asia as a whole. And it's so... this dementia which is now corroding the West from the inside. It's so far away when you compare how they are living their lives here, how they are building a society that works in every sense, how you learn how they are making this work. Shanghai is a megacity where everything works. It's astounding, in fact. So the contrast between the future being forged here in Asia and the dementia corroding the West, very, very far away, it's something—once again, let's go back to the galaxies. It's a Star Wars trip, really.

And they look very far away from, you know, from the Bund, where they have Lujiazui, the financial district on the other side, with those absolutely incredible towers and the architecture that the Brits organized in the late 19th, early 20th century, that now has been upgraded and modernized by the Chinese especially. And you go to their fantastic restaurants, and you see their technological progress everywhere. And it's so far away from all this mess, which was caused by the West itself, by Western arrogance and ignorance, where you have a president of the United States who is the embodiment of arrogance and extreme ignorance, and you have the European elites who are very, very busy fleecing their populations because they must get into a war against Russia until the end of this decade. So the Chinese look at all that and they say, have they gone mad?

## **#Speaker 03**

Yes, they have gone mad.

## **#Pepe**

Do we Chinese care? No, we don't. We'll continue doing what we are doing, which is forging a future for ourselves and for our partners across the world that is livable and not dominated by folly—absolute folly—which is what the West is now, the empire of folly, essentially.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. Muito obrigado, Pepe. Thank you so much for being with us today. We know right now it's 12:30 a.m. in Shanghai. It's 12:35 now. Tomorrow.

## **#Pepe**

Thank you, Nima. Thanks, all of you. I'm sorry this is shorter, but I think you have a pretty good idea of where we stand at the moment. Rational players on one side and extreme folly on the other. Thank you. Thanks, everybody.