Pepe Escobar: Iran Issues FINAL Warning to US & Israel – Immediate Decisive Response

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#Nima

Hi everybody, today is Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Pepe Escobar from Moscow, is here with us. Welcome back, Pepe. You are just known all around the world.

#Pepe

Tell me about it. Well, greetings, Nima. Greetings, everyone. Greetings from Moscow. It's 11:10 p.m. in Moscow. In a few hours, I have to wake up because I'm taking the first train to St. Petersburg for the International Forum, which, by the way, the inauguration was today. Tomorrow and Friday are the most important days, that's why I prefer to go early in the morning tomorrow. And today there was, let's say, a Ukrainian commemoration. Can you all believe that Starlink-guided drones attacked an oil terminal outside of St. Petersburg? It's not in the city, it's outside of St. Petersburg, not far from the airport.

So when I land tomorrow morning, I can even look at it from the window of the plane. And guess what? Do you know who's in town for the St. Petersburg Forum? Errol Musk's dad—sorry, Elon Musk's dad, Errol Musk—whom we met last year when he came to a forum here in Moscow. It was in February last year, if I remember well. So he's in town, and, you know, drones with Starlink, his son's little gift. The thing is, everything is so completely absurd. And they think that they are going to intimidate the Russians because, on the day of the most important business forum of the year in Russia, and one of the most important across all of Asia, they're going to be intimidated by that.

Here we are. Well, this is going to be one of the best discussions, but outside of the roundtables in St. Petersburg. There are some very interesting roundtables on the SCO, on BRICS, on investment. The guest of honor this year is Saudi Arabia, but that's quite interesting, Nima. MBS is not coming. Why? Because he's too afraid to leave Saudi Arabia, to leave Riyadh. Fear of flying, fear of an

internal coup, fear of what the Americans may come up with. Because don't forget that Saudi Arabia is in the peace-with-Iran camp. Sort of. But they are not at war against Iran like the Emirates are. So he's not coming.

He sent the Minister of Industry. But they are the guests of honor this year. So, okay, short story for all of you: there's going to be a lot of business deals, lots of the Global South talking to everybody else, trying to clinch deals—energy, AI, etc. And then on Friday, we have the big guy, the plenary session. So, Moscow time is usually around three or four in the afternoon. So, Putin makes a speech, which is usually around 40 minutes or so. Then he brings the guests of honor, including the Saudis. And then there's the Q&A. And that's when it gets really interesting, because I'm sure a lot of questions are going to be related to, okay, so what happens now with this war?

Are you going for the jugular like you did in the last array of Zircons, Sarmats, you name it—ballistic and hypersonics on Kiev? And the idea is to flatten the whole industrial-military complex around Ukraine for the next few weeks and months. Is that it? If Putin says yes, Nima, and all of you, this means that the bear is finally fed up. And that's it. Let's go for it. Let's destroy everything—of course, everything in terms of the industrial-military complex. And there's always the possibility of hitting the Baltic chihuahuas, because most of these drones, they're coming from outside of Ukraine as well. So we are entering a new stage of this never-ending war. And this is something that you can feel already. You know, I arrived here from Shanghai this weekend—I'm sorry—and I talked to a lot of people already.

#Nima

Take a sip.

#Pepe

And obviously, my cough is still continuing. Okay, guys. But this means that from the ground level to people related to diplomacy, think tanks, intel agencies, and tomorrow I'm going to see around businessmen, there's a consensus already that this has gone too long. And it's time to tweak the strategy. This means not only the attrition war, which Russia has been conducting since 2022, but now you have to go to the next level because now the war has changed. Now it's a drone war organized by NATO. So you have to go against the source. And everybody's talking about, do you see what the Iranians are doing? So now people who decide in Russia, they look at Iran and they see Iran as an example. Of course, you cannot compare both wars because they are extremely different.

And Iran, for instance, in terms of fighting Israel, they are fighting a military power that has no red lines. It's a genocidal military power. And the Americans, in the beginning, during the war—the forty-something days of the war—they were destroying civilian Iranian infrastructure as well. The Russians still have this... they're still thinking that... and reality is saying otherwise. These are our Slavic

brothers. So, you know, maybe they'll come back to the fold later. No, forget it. They are completely brainwashed. Some sort of understanding between Ukraine and Russia is going to take at least another two generations, if not more. And the brainwashing campaign was so strong that Russophobia rules all across Ukraine—Western Ukraine, of course. So obviously Russia's approach to the war has to change.

And people are starting to direct their criticism directly now at Putin. And this is a very, very serious matter. And there are elections here in Russia in September. So Putin's party may lose a lot of votes because of that. I was discussing this two days ago with people who know how the system works and the dissatisfaction against... and a certain... I wouldn't say a perception of insecurity, but there's already, in many parts of Russia, anxiety or angst really at, okay, so we're going to have a drone attack here again. So from the point of view of maintaining stability in Russia, this is not good at all. And there's, of course, already an enormous debate on whether the Ministry of Defense screwed up, without realizing that the logic of the war changed radically, especially this year, these first few months of this year.

And now it's a terrorist drone war. And maybe they were not prepared for it. So these are, I would say, some of the most pressing questions around the St. Petersburg Forum, apart from deal-making, of course. And it's great because a lot of the Global South already arrived today and will arrive tomorrow. A lot from West Asia. Apparently, Nima, there are a lot of people from Iran. Interesting. Not only from Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, unfortunately, because the Emirates and Russia have a very close relationship. And, of course, India. A strong Chinese delegation. Lots of Africans as well. So, I would say a sizable chunk of the Global South is coming here for business. That's the good part. But, of course, everything is going to be more or less overshadowed by, okay, what happens with this war from now on?

#Nima

The situation with Russian society, you've mentioned the way they're feeling about the battlefield. It's some sort of frustration because they see what's going on with the war and how Ukrainians are using these drones against civilians in Russia. They don't see the response as immediate as they'd like. They want something more direct or harder to happen against Ukraine.

#Pepe

Much harder. Absolutely. If you talk with people related to the intel apparatus, the logic is, let's go for the head of the snake, which is something we should have done already. And people from think tanks and diplomats, they are slightly more measured, but they also say, look, there's got to be some tweaking. And in the end, this corroborates what our friend Professor Karaganov has been saying for months. And I think I commented with you that on my last day here in late February, four days before the start of the war by the Americans on Iran, it was my last night in Moscow. I had an off-the-record with Professor Karaganov at his office at the Higher School of Economics.

And I promised him that I would not publish anything about the conversation. That's why, because it was a free-flow conversation. Absolutely great. But one of the things that I can talk about is that he was already saying that the only language that Europeans and NATO understand is fear. So this means we have to tweak our approach. Apparently now, the big bear up there, who's going to deliver his speech on Friday, is getting the message. And now this is practically a national consensus, Nima, especially after the Russian Donbass equivalent of the killing of the girls in Minab, in Starobelsk, in Donbass.

This was, forgive me the horrible metaphor, but a sort of mini Minab. We didn't have, of course, 168 dead girls, but we had 21 children and teenagers killed, which is still horrible. From the Russian point of view, this is, you know, beyond inadmissible, so they are urging a very, very hardcore response. So it's up to the big bear how this is going to develop. Okay, every week, like, well, they have enough missiles to do a mega attack every week if they want, you know, and they already have the target map of all the vital installations—producing components, drone factories, links, industrial-military complex, etc. It's just a matter of doing it.

#Nima

Pepe, I think you mentioned the case of West Asia, and you mentioned how Saudi Arabia, Iran, the UAE—all these countries that are in active wars in the Middle East—they're going to be there in St. Petersburg. But we had a confrontation between Iran and the United States last night, and this is not the first time they're fighting each other. But it was important because, since the ceasefire started, this is the first time Iran had some sort of considerable attack, I would say.

#Pepe

Considerable, yeah.

#Nima

It wasn't like this before, but it was considerable because they hit many of these tankers close to the UAE. They hit targets in Bahrain, in Kuwait—the international airport in Kuwait was hit by a direct hit on the lips. This is new, and we had the foreign minister of Iran saying that every attack on Iran is going to be responded to immediately.

#Pepe

Immediately.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Pepe

Correct. And, of course, the IRGC is saying it's not going to be symmetrical. Now it's going to be one and a half times harder than the American attack. So it's not symmetrical anymore. Each American attack, the response is going to be one and a half times more hardcore. And this could go to two times more hardcore or three times more hardcore. So now there are no rules. And they're going for the jugular, you know, these bases in Kuwait, these two bases in Kuwait. Very, very important. And, of course, attack the 5th Fleet directly. That's—wow. That's quite something. And, by the way, all this bullshit about attacking the civilian airport in Kuwait was bullshit. This was a malfunction of what? Again, Patriots. So, in fact, the airport in Kuwait City was hit by American Patriots—malfunctioning American Patriots. There we go. So this will continue. And obviously, once again, proving to everyone with a brain that there's no ceasefire. The ceasefire doesn't even qualify as a joke.

#Nima

Just imagine having this war and this sort of conflict. And Donald Trump is talking today. He said that he's going to meet with the Supreme Leader of Iran.

#Pepe

Yes, he's going to call. Mustafa, can I jump in? And we're going to have an ice cream together in Tehran? Yeah, of course. And the Iranians are going to say, come. Look, we are approaching levels of senility unseen since the previous Autopen administration, right? But that's another story. So, Nima, I have to go back to the bombshell of the week, which Larry and I revealed on Monday. And for that, we are both getting a lot of flak from everywhere. Totally expected. Larry has zillions of years of experience with the CIA, and I have zillions of years of experience being a foreign correspondent everywhere. So we are used to being attacked. So when stupid people don't understand anything, they attack the messengers, which is the case. Well, very, very important.

On Monday, Larry and I, along with Zulfikar Ali, were involved in a new project, launching a new platform called PowerShift. During the past week, we got information from an absolutely hardcore, top-shelf source about what happened between President Pesachkin and Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif. It was a phone call last Thursday that lasted 105 minutes, and our source had the full briefing about the phone call. And during this phone call, something immensely important happened. President Pesachkin told Sharif over the phone that, number one, there are no more nuclear negotiations from now on. Number two, why? Because the Americans are not respecting the Iranian order for the proceedings that Iran was basically talking about every day.

First, you end all wars, including blockades, including the Israeli war against Lebanon and Hezbollah. Number two, we start discussing the Strait of Hormuz. And only in the third stage do we get to

trying to get a new nuclear dossier. So Pesachkin said, number one, no more nuclear talks. Number two, no, not even the remote idea of trying to have negotiations leading to a possible new nuclear deal, which would be a sort of diluted JCPOA. Not even that, the Iranians are saying. And number three, which is the killer—and I want to quote the words of how the source put it to us—this is, Nima, this is what Pesachkin said. So we have to assume that the conversation was, I would say, in Farsi and Urdu on the phone.

Maybe with an English translator for both sides, because Pesachkin doesn't speak English. Sharif does. So there was a translator involved. So maybe this is a direct translation from Farsi to English. So Pesachkin said, if American threats persist, which is the case, we should conduct the detonation of a nuclear device on Iranian soil, executed not as an act of war, but as an irreversible sovereign demonstration capability to control escalation dominance. Well, this is as incandescent as it gets, right? So what happened immediately afterwards? Well, first of all, Nima, you know that Pesachkin would never say that to the Pakistani prime minister without clearing it with Ayatollah Mustafa Khamenei. It's quite obvious, isn't it?

#Nima

Yeah.

#Pepe

Assuming our sources—in fact, Larry and I—we kept asking questions one day after another until he said, "Look, if I didn't want this information to be in the public domain, I would never have passed it to my Pakistani connection that passed it to you." So he, I would say, backs his information a zillion percent, because this guy is on the table design. This guy is in the direct negotiation between Iran—indirect, sorry—between Iran and the U.S. on the Pakistani side. So he's on, you know, top of the chain. So what would lead Iran to pivot from nuclear ambiguity, which is the current Iranian position, to having an undeniable demonstration on Iranian soil? And of course, everybody's asking the obvious questions.

Okay, what kind of bomb is that? Is this an Iranian bomb, meaning totally developed indigenously in Iran? And it's very easy, because Iran has excellent scientists. It wouldn't be a problem to develop a nuclear weapon. Did they have outside help? In this case, there are a few candidates. The number one candidate is Russia. Did they get, let's say, a ready-made bomb from either Pakistan or North Korea? It's also possible. Did they have input from North Korea? Because the discussions at the nuclear level between Iran and North Korea have been very, very strong for quite a while. So obviously, nobody knows anything about that, and the source did not elaborate on that. First of all, because he was basically telling us what happened during the phone call.

So this means that Pesachkin didn't have to explain to Pakistan anything about the Iranian nuclear program, because the Pakistanis already know everything. So what happened immediately

afterwards? Well, Sharif, the prime minister, when he heard that, he said, "Wow!" He understood the seriousness of it all. So he ordered his foreign minister, Dar, who was in New York, to call the Americans immediately. So what did he do? He called Marco Rubio. And then Marco Rubio said, "No, come to Washington." So the next day, he goes to Washington, and he sits down in front of Rubio, and he explains the whole thing. So this was on May 29th, Nima. That was last Friday. And guess what happened on May 29th, last Friday? Trump stopped talking and acting and ordering any kinetic action against Iran.

Immediately afterwards. Okay, now we're back this week. Considering, once again, that Trump's attention span is that of a kid, and he lasts only a few seconds or minutes. Perhaps he even forgot what he learned last week from Rubio himself. Rubio briefed him, right? So now kinetic action is back. But we can detect a different tone already in Trump. He's not threatening Iran anymore for the past few days. That's where we get to the, ah, okay, I'm going to stop by Tehran and have an ice cream with Mostafa Khamenei. Before, he was saying he was going to annihilate Iran, he was going to send Iran back to the Stone Age, he was going to exterminate a civilization, you name it. So the tone changed.

So that's already quite something. Because, and then there's an extra thing. Two things that Dar told Rubio in Washington face to face. Number one, Iran will not surrender any of its highly enriched uranium. Nothing. And that's a final position. The U.S. simply cannot change this position. We all know that Iran was never willing to transfer highly enriched uranium outside of Iran. We already knew that. But now the Americans have a confirmation from the Pakistani foreign minister directly to them. And number two, Dar told Rubio that China is directly involved because China has delivered state-of-the-art strategic defense systems, especially shoulder-fired MANPADS, via third countries. So they have plausible deniability. You've seen the rumors of the Americans commenting that China is supplying high-tech to Iran.

Well, they already suspected that. So now they got a straight-out confirmation from the Pakistani foreign ministry. What does this mean? This means that this trio, this triad, this strategic alignment... it's Iran, Pakistan, and China working together. So you can imagine, Nima, how freaked out the Americans are after that. And there's nothing they can do against it. First of all, because they are counting on the Pakistanis to help get some sort of off-ramp with Iran, even though the Americans obviously have no idea what they want. Number one, they keep changing their demands one day after another. If they agree on something, the next day they change again. So the possibility of having a deal between Iran and the U.S., I would say, is less than zero as it goes on. What if there's no deal? What are the Americans going to do? They're going to restart the war?

No, it's impossible for them. They don't have the means. It's totally opposed by U.S. domestic opinion. They know that every scenario leads to a quagmire even worse than where they are now. And worse, the Iranians are prepared for the war to go on. And that's what they have been demonstrating with these provocations, one provocation after another. Okay, so now we respond 1.5 times harder and soon maybe more. They're not intimidated. On the contrary. So this is where we

are. Well, in terms of this hypothetical nuclear bomb, I am waiting for a response from Iran. And Nima and all of you, this is with our friends at The Cradle. I'm sure you all know that I am a columnist for The Cradle as well. So I sent them the article that I already wrote, which is basically what I have been explaining to you these past few minutes. It's inside the column.

And it's going to land on the desk of one of the members of Mojtaba Khamenei's inner circle. And that's the great thing. And he said, yes, I will respond. It was supposed to be tonight. It's probably going to be tomorrow night. Tomorrow night, I would say, Iran-Moscow timeline. So when we get to Friday, we already have a response that is practically official because this guy is at the top of the food chain in Tehran. And then I want to publish the column telling the whole story, including the official Iranian position. And then that's it, you know. So we can imagine that the Iranians are going to go probably for plausible deniability because this is immensely sensitive.

But it doesn't matter. They can phrase it in a way that will be what the Americans call a no-response response. And it can be sophisticated enough, and the Iranians are masters at it, that you can read it any way you want. Because obviously they're not going to say that their president was lying to the Pakistani prime minister. That's not the case. And if Raisi actually said that to Sharif, he had a go-ahead from above. No question about that. And obviously showing that we are fed up with all your bullshit. And that's it. If you keep provoking us, this is what we're going to do. You should take this into consideration from now on. So this is where we are, Nima.

It's an extremely complex, sensitive conjunction, but we were lucky to have the trust of people who are part of the negotiations to pass this information to us via our Pakistani connections. And Larry and I, we have been in a few podcasts trying to explain, and now with you, trying to explain where things are and why we trust the information. This is the most important thing. I'm not talking about agendas, hidden agendas, is there anything behind it and all that. For instance, a lot of stupid, idiot people are already accusing us of being ISI agents. Give me a break. Look, I worked in Pakistan a lot. Can you imagine that 25 years ago, I was being accused of being an ISI agent because I was doing the back and forth between Pakistan and Afghanistan?

Same thing. So some things never change, right? But these people have no idea how information at this level works. And of course, our role as independent analysts, if we stumble into something like that, we have to make it public, as incandescent as it is. Okay, so this is a short version of a very complex ongoing story. This is ongoing. We're going to have more news tomorrow, and we already have something that we can disclose next week, which is the Iran-Pakistan nuclear-related relations for the past 40 years. And we have this documented. This weekend, Larry and I will be reading the documents. So that's where we are.

#Nima

Pepe, did the source say what was the necessity of Iran announcing this right now? Because it didn't seem to me—because looking at the war, they don't need to. They have it. They somehow defeated

the United States with conventional weapons. They have the Strait of Hormuz. So what was the necessity? I'm talking about what was the context of the talks between the two presidents that made Iran need to mention that.

#Pepe

You're absolutely right. And before all that happened, I published a column... Oh, God. Yes, I published a column early this week, basically tracking what happened last week before this phone call. Let me see if I can find it here. Yes — "Iran: The Art of Controlling Escalation Dominance." This column was published, if I'm not mistaken, on Monday. Saturday? No, on Monday, I'm sorry. On Monday, on Strategic Culture. And then I talk about what was happening in terms of American provocations, one after another. And of course, CENTCOM talking about attacks on Iranian radar and command sites, including Qeshm Island — CENTCOM terminology, self-defense strikes.

And the IRGC Aerospace Force, their response — they targeted a Kuwaiti air base already, saying that predicted targets were destroyed and the American regime is lying, as usual. So we're already starting a very dangerous escalation cycle. This is what was happening last week before we had this phone call. What the source didn't say is who called whom. For instance, they didn't tell us if Sharif called Pozeshkin or vice versa. But they gave us basically the heart of the matter during the very long, 105-minute conversation. So this could be the Iranians trying to tell the mediators, of course, look, we are fed up. That's it.

And we've been trying to tell you all the time that we are fed up. We have tried everything diplomatically. The Americans keep changing the rules of the game, and they keep violating the ceasefire. So all that, for Iran, comes down to the same thing. They are untrustworthy, and they only understand a stark message if we deliver a stark message to them. So, obviously, they talk to the mediators and tell the mediators, look, you should tell the White House now, this is our definitive position. And if they don't stop the provocations, that's the third stage of what Pozeshkin said. If they don't stop the provocations, we are willing to end our nuclear ambiguity.

That's, of course, the ultra bombshell in this phone call. So whatever the response we're going to get from this person, who is very close to Mostafa Khamenei, and I'm very curious to see what they're going to say, it will probably leave the whole thing open. For instance, he can tell us something that will be extremely plausible in terms of Ayatollah Mostafa Khamenei reviewing Iran's nuclear posture, which is something that is already being discussed in Iran, right? Seriously. These fatwas by Khomeini and Khamenei's father — should they be adapted to a new situation where Iran is under existential attack? Quite possible, feasible, logical. And of course, this would imply Mostafa Khamenei leaving his mark already, already defining his legacy. And this is something that can be framed to Iranian public opinion, and everybody would understand — look, we are compelled to do this, otherwise the provocations will never stop.

And we're going to enter into a never-ending toxic cycle of American provocations, false flags, trying to implicate us into a response. Then we are blamed for our response. And then there are more American attacks. And this ball keeps rolling nonstop. Obviously, the new Iranian leadership doesn't want that. They want all wars to stop. How do you convince the Americans that all wars should stop? There's no other way, considering their obsession with nuclear weapons. They actually say, look, now we are the new North Korea. You want to come here and attack us? But of course, Nima, you know this better than I do or anybody else. There is the theological aspect of Iran, the Shiite theological aspect of Iran, and Mostafa will go directly against the policies of Khomeini and his dad.

So this is the most fateful decision imaginable, right? But I would say that the reality on the ground is forcing a restudy, at least, of Iran's nuclear posture. Because the empire and Israel will never give up, Nima. You know this very well. Everybody in Iran knows this very well. Only if you have deterrents like that. For instance, Iran has other forms of deterrents that they haven't even used, that can be even more lethal than holding a nuclear bomb. But they are saving them for the right moment. And they also know that the only language that these obsessive killers understand is, okay, if a country has a nuclear weapon, there's nothing we can do about it. The North Korea lesson, right? Compared to the Libya lesson or the Iraq lesson. Well, so that's where we are, Nima. It's serious. It's very complicated.

#Nima

I think the points that you've raised are so important. One of them is that Iran doesn't want to continue with this sort of, because Iran says that, yeah, exactly, with these cycles of attacks, and it's the same strategy as we've seen with the case of Gaza, with the case of Lebanon — continuous war. And that's why I think what the United States is trying to do in the region is the same. They want to continue this sort of company, go on and on, fighting, attacking, and this sort. Iran doesn't want this. I can assure everybody that nobody wants this in Iran. They want to put an end to the war permanently. That's why they're so — I think they know what they want. And the outcome, I'm talking about the outcome. But the means could be through talks, negotiations, messages, or war, which nobody believes so far in Iran.

Nobody believes that — I'm talking about decision makers — that they can get everything by negotiations. That's why you see the head of the Iranian parliament saying that everything's gonna be decided on the battlefield, then documented on paper. And this is the first time you see the head of the Iranian parliament talking this way. And he said, who wins the war? The one that is prepared for tomorrow, the day after the deal, the day after the agreement, to fight. And he's talking about basically that there is no talk or negotiation — it's all about fighting on the battlefield. The battlefield would decide the future of the conflict, of the situation between Iran and the United States. I think that's one point. When it comes to the nuclear program, which is so sensitive, Pepe, so sensitive.

Nobody's talking, you know, you look at the mainstream media in Iran, Persian media, they're not talking about it. But what I feel about what's going on with the discussions, with the few discussions that are happening in Iran is, my understanding is that the new supreme leader of Iran didn't change the policy of his father, who was the previous supreme leader of Iran. This is my understanding. I think they still consider the nuclear bomb as this mass murder, something that Iran at this particular moment doesn't want. This is my understanding. And with the situation with the war, we know that Israel is — we heard the Israelis talking about using nuclear weapons. Even Benjamin Netanyahu said the final solution for Iran. What is that?

What does that mean? This is a historical sort of term used by Benjamin Netanyahu. Many people are arguing, what does that mean with the behavior of Israel? And they know that Israel is not going to be able to defeat Iran with conventional weapons. And these are, as you mentioned, we are witnessing some sort of fluid conditions that, as time goes by, everything is so fluid. And we don't know what's going on. The war in Ukraine was the same, as you mentioned. We started this war, all of us, we thought that this war was going to end in one year, then two years. And right now we're approaching five years of war. This is the strategy of the Empire, Pepe. They want to trap Russia, they want to trap Iran in continuous conflict and war. Absolutely. Absolutely.

#Pepe

And so far they are succeeding. But the Iranians can break the cycle. And they know how to break the cycle because their response now is going to be, from now on, unbearable for the other side. There's no other way. It's the right strategy. They have to escalate the tempo. There's no question about that. And, of course, the Russians are looking at it and thinking about the same thing. We have to escalate the tempo. And they're fighting... Russia is fighting the whole of the West at the same time. That's quite something. But Iran, they're fighting everything that the empire has thrown against them and Israel together.

The two most... Okay, consider the Israeli army is not exactly on the field, they don't exist there. They are specialized in killing from the air and bombing from the air and killing innocent civilians. But it's still an enormously devastating fighting force. And Iran is fighting against both by itself. It's quite substantial. But what they managed to do in less than three months is already absolutely remarkable. And that explains this feeling of self-confidence. Okay, we are going to achieve what we want, as you said, on the battlefield. And then they're going to have to recognize what we achieved on the battlefield.

So the strategic defeat of the U.S. will, wow, be for all the world to see, in fact, right? And that brings us to the key point of how can any leader, irrespective of Trump—Trump is a lowly, minor character—any president or any leadership in the U.S. simply cannot admit that the empire has been

strategically defeated like that by a mid-ranking power under sanctions for 47 years. It is absolutely remarkable, and that's why this war is changing the geopolitics of the 21st century, much more than these very polite discussions about multipolarity. They have not achieved much so far.

#Nima

And what's making, Pepe, the situation even worse is the case of Lebanon and Israel. Just moments ago, the Iranian foreign minister said Iran's armed forces are ready and willing to resume war against Israel at any moment. If Israel strikes Beirut, Iran will respond. This is not a question of if Iran would respond. Iran will respond to Israel if they attack Beirut. And I don't see Donald Trump being able to do anything about Israel. And Israel is just getting out of hand. They're doing whatever they want to do.

#Pepe

No, it's impossible, Nima. First of all, he doesn't care. Number two, he doesn't care about civilian victims in Gaza or in Lebanon. Second, he wants an off-ramp because he finally realized, in his own non-strategic way, that he messed up big, big time. And nobody's going to save him from his decision. He was misled by the leader of that death cult over there. Of course he was. He was sold a quick war that would last a weekend. And now he's in a quagmire with no way out, unless he admits that he was strategically defeated. And that, from an imperial point of view, is when an empire does that, that's it—that's the end of the empire. So what's the most plausible way? What do we have now, which is no war, no peace.

And no war, no peace can go on for days, weeks, months. He cannot go through months because he has an election, which, by the way, he already lost the midterms. And he's going to become a lame duck. And he's going to have to live with it. And probably people will go after his throat to impeach him, go after his family, his cronies, etc. He can feel what's ahead. And of course, how can he extract some sort of deal, let's put it this way, that he can sell as a victory, domestically and globally? Impossible. The Iranians will never allow him to do that. And that's the beauty of it. Who holds the cards? Tehran. Who controls the possible escalation or de-escalation? Tehran. Who controls when the war will actually end? Tehran. There you go.

#Nima

Let me read the breaking news here, Pepe. Yes. Here is what Iran just announced: the Iranian Navy announced that it targeted a U.S. warship in the Sea of Oman a few hours ago, and they released this footage here, Pepe.

#Pepe

Because CENTCOM was saying this was not true. Ah, so now we have the footage.

#Nima

They released the video showing that they targeted the American warship in the Sea of Oman, and they released that to confirm what's going on. I think there are many things, many targets that were hit by Iranian missiles and drones in Kuwait, in Bahrain, in the UAE, I would say, that we are not aware of because they are too sensitive in these countries.

#Pepe

And, of course, U.S. Navy vessels are somewhere in the Sea of Oman. No question. Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah, I'm trying to find it here. Yeah, right. Yeah, yeah. So we are back to provocation, escalation, and response. And the response from now on is going to be much more hardcore. And when they say that, they follow it. It's not an empty threat.

#Nima

Pepe, the other point, the other dimension before wrapping up this session, I think, is what's going on between Iran and China. We know how deep the relationship is between Iran and Russia, but it's getting the same with Iran and China as time goes by. And as Qalibaf, the head of the Iranian parliament, is responsible for the discussion of the new connection between Iran and China, they're deepening the relationship.

#Pepe

They're deepening the strategic partnership. Absolutely. Yeah, yeah. This is immensely significant because he is arguably the most, I wouldn't say competent, but the best-prepared member of this new governing setup. And it's not an accident that they gave him this opportunity, a strategic post, in fact, as the coordinator of the strategic partnership with China. And in the larger picture of this China-Pakistan-Iran alignment, to try to find some sort of accommodation with the empire running out of control. Of course, the Chinese know very well that this is a war against them as well. And they are the main target of the Americans. They know everything. Is this you showing—I saw you were showing the missile again.

#Nima

No, this is, yeah, this is the article in The Cradle today. On The Cradle, yeah.

#Pepe

Principal is a strategic partner. There's no question about that. The number one strategic partner for Iran is China. It's not Russia. It's China. No question about that. And it's part of, according to our source, what Dar, the foreign minister of Pakistan, put to Rubio: look, the Chinese are actually

helping Iran with high-tech military materials. And there's nothing you can do about it, or any of us. It's part of their strategic partnership. Don't expect the Chinese to announce that or to admit it officially. It's not how it works in China. This is all made very discreetly through third countries, always.

So China always has plausible deniability. So all of that stuff is going through Southeast Asia, Kazakhstan. There are many possibilities, never tracked directly to China. And in discussions with Chinese scholars, for instance, they are paying a lot of attention to Iran. When you look at the best analytical articles in some Chinese media not regulated by Beijing, most of them are connected to Iran, and they rarely talk about Ukraine. Because now they are concentrated especially on the EU and this new stupidity beyond anything imaginable coming from the EU—that they want to criminalize Chinese overproduction. How can you be so stupid?

The Europeans are incapable of producing stuff that other people want to buy, but the Chinese produce stuff that the whole planet wants to buy. So now they're going to be criminalized by the Europeans. It's beyond stupid. So obviously the discussion in Chinese media is about that. So they barely talk about the war in Ukraine. But Iran, oh yes. And there's some very, very good analysis, and they respect the fact that Iran is a key strategic partner for China in West Asia. Although they have close relations with almost everybody—the Chinese way, right? They do business with everybody. But in terms of a strategic and pinpointed anchor of a post-American West Asia, the Chinese are betting everything on Iran, no question.

#Nima

The world is changing, Pepe, drastically.

#Pepe

Like Xi Jinping told Vladimir Putin, Nima. Exactly. It was in 2023, and only a few days ago in Beijing. Exactly. Obrigado, Pepe. Obrigado a você. Thank you. Opa, meia-noite. Daqui a pouco... Vou dormir duas, três horas e aí acordar e ir para o aeroporto.

#Nima

Exactly, exactly. Have a good trip, Pepe.

#Pepe

Thank you, thank you so much. Next week we talk about what happened in St. Petersburg. Sure, sure. And see you soon, Pepe. See you soon. See you soon, Nima. All the best. And all the best to all

of you, our audience. And thank you for being so patient, following one of the most demented stories ever. And now with this twist, let's see what's inside this information that we received. We'll go back to it next week as well. Cheers. Cheers. Thank you.