

Pepe Escobar: Iran's Nuclear Card: Why Tehran Is Done Waiting

See Full Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/live/c-00GQ-X7qs?si=aAurAKZCda99mhh6> Follow me: Substack: https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?utm_campaign=profile&utm_medium=profile-page X (Twitter): https://x.com/Dialogue_NRA Patreon: https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?utm_medium=unknown&utm_source=join_link&utm_campaign=creatorshare_creator&utm_content=

#Nima

The situation with Russian society, you 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 our 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, from the Russian point of view, 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. And they already have the target map of all the vital installations producing components, drone factories, links, industrial-military complex, et cetera. It's just a matter of doing it.

#Nima

Pepe, I think you've mentioned the case of West Asia, and you've mentioned how Saudi Arabia, Iran, the UAE, all these countries that are in an active war 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. 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 and Kuwait. The international airport in Kuwait was hit by...

#Pepe

Direct hit on the fifth one.

#Nima

Yeah. This is new. And we had the foreign minister of Iran saying that every attack on Iran is going to be responded to immediately. Immediately. 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 Pezeshkin said, number one, no more nuclear talks. Number two, 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 Pezeshkin 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 Pezeshkin doesn't speak English. Sharif does. So there was a translator involved. So maybe this is a direct translation from Farsi to English. So Pezeshkin 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 of 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 Pezeshkin 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. This guy is in the direct negotiation between Iran—indirect, sorry—between Iran and the US 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? 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, 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 like a kid's, 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 from 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 Ages, 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 weapons 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 is totally in effect. And 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. And 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 Pesachkin 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 20, 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, right? As inconvenient 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.