

Pepe Escobar: 12 Ballistic Missiles Struck a US Major Airbase (Jordan)

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. It's Thursday, June 11th, 2026, and our dear friend...

#Pepe

I love it.

#Nima

I love your introduction. And our dear friend Pepe Escobar is here with us. Welcome, Pepe.

#Pepe

What a pleasure to be with you, Nima, and all of you, our audience. Unfortunately, now I am in NATOstan. So no more Shanghai, no more St. Petersburg for you guys, Moscow and all that. I'm back in hell, literally, in NATOstan. So we're going to have a lot to talk about.

#Nima

Yeah. Let's start, Pepe, with the latest attacks — the American attack on Iran and the Iranian response to the American attack. And we can compare the two attacks and how successful those attacks were. But before getting there, it seems that the outcome of these attacks is not satisfactory for the people who are behind this war — people like Keith Kellogg. And right now they're talking about, "We don't have much time. We have to do something as soon as possible." And here is what Keith Kellogg suggested.

#Speaker 03

Having a protracted war is not the American way of war. It's a war we've been conditioned to in the last few decades, where we've done things in Afghanistan or Iraq. We ought to go back to the way we did it in, like, World War II or World War I.

#Nima

Pepe, let me bring another clip because the volume here was not good.

#Pepe

It doesn't matter because it's going to be by the same... absolutely bloody idiot.

#Speaker 03

Having a protracted war is not the American way of war. It's a war we've been conditioned to in the last few decades, where we've done things in Afghanistan or Iraq. We ought to go back to the way we did it in World War II or World War I, and we just finish the job — total war, obliterate them — and say, when you need to come to the table and you want to talk to us, you've got our phone number, but until then, we're done. Because right now we're playing their game, not our game. Let's play our game and force them to come to us.

#Nima

Basically, I think he's talking about using nuclear weapons.

#Pepe

Yes, absolutely. And by the way, I'm sure many of you, our audience, know that Keith Kellogg is beyond imbecile, with zero war experience for that matter. And by the way, he lost in Afghanistan and Iraq. So, you know, shut the fuck up. But look, it fits into what's happened these past few days, Nima. Last week, there was a glimmer of hope that the Americans would start listening, at least to the mediation efforts of the Pakistanis, to the proposal on the table by Iran, and at least we could have some sort of diplomatic understanding by a Mar-a-Lago–Washington combo. But this lasted only a few days. And this week it's gone completely downhill. And now we are back on stage two of this war. Now it's full-time war, stage two. And what this absolute idiot Kellogg said reflects what's in the mind of the baboon of barbaria.

He thinks that he can unleash total fury, or mega fury, or fury 2.0, or whatever, and Iran is going to fold and basically accept his diktat — not what's on the table, being discussed on the table, mediated by the Pakistanis, but his imposition, which is essentially a capitulation of Iran. And he thinks he can achieve that with non-stop bombing every night. This is where we are now. The whole thing changed from last week to this week, and we have been following the story very, very closely. And,

uh, okay, I can start talking about this now, or maybe later during our conversation. It relates to our new channel on YouTube, where last week we broke back-to-back two world exclusives with exclusive information from the table by the Pakistani mediators. And it was very auspicious.

The first one was very complicated. The Americans absolutely hated it because this was not supposed to be leaked. It was a phone call by President Poreshkin to Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where he outlined the new — I would say the new configuration of the talks, according to Iran — essentially that they were losing their patience with the Americans procrastinating and changing what was being agreed by the mediators at the table. The next day, or two days later, the Americans would change everything. So basically, Poreshkin told Sharif — this was a phone call early last week — he said, no more nuclear discussions. Because, after all, this is what the Iranians have been saying for weeks: first, you end all wars against Iran, against the Axis of Resistance.

Second, we discuss the Strait of Hormuz. And the third stage is to discuss the nuclear dossier. Number two, Poreshkin told Sharif once again, no discussions leading to what could be a new JCPOA. It's not the order of the new procedure; we have to follow the order of the procedure. And number three — and this is what drove the Americans absolutely nuts, because this information ended up with Marco Rubio in Washington — Poreshkin basically told Sharif that if the Americans keep going over the threshold and imposing their own red lines without discussing with us, after all, this is a mediation effort and it's theoretically a diplomatic conversation, we might entertain the notion of testing a nuclear device on Iranian soil as a means of affirming our deterrence.

Very important, Nima. And I wrote about this in every podcast that I've been on these past few days — the same thing. This is what Poreshkin told Sharif. And it's true because it was not denied by the highest levels of the Iranian government, even though they didn't like that this was leaked. In fact, it was leaked through our Pakistan connection. And then he told us. And then we questioned him and the source over and over again before we went live last week. And the source said, no, this is exactly what happened. I stand by it. And this comes straight from the table, and it comes with the full support of the highest levels of the Pakistani government. So this is an immensely serious story. The thing is, what happened after this phone call? The foreign minister of Pakistan, Dar, was in New York. He picked up the phone.

He called Rubio and said, look, I have something very, very important to tell you. And Rubio immediately said, come to Washington now. So the next day, Dar went to Washington, and they had a face-to-face with Rubio. And he told the story that I just told you and our audience. And obviously, Rubio told Trump about the story. So what happened on the very same day? This was May 29th. All that rhetoric from Trump, the kinetic warmonger rhetoric, stopped right away. The tone changed. And Trump was even contemplating, ah, there's going to be a deal, there's going to be a deal. Okay, he already promised that the war — the last count is that he promised that the war was over 37 times. Probably it's going to get to 40 this week, right? And another piece of information that we had from — just moments ago, CENTCOM — sorry to interrupt you.

#Nima

The breaking news that CENTCOM just posted is that the Strait of Hormuz remains open for transit, right?

#Pepe

Bullshit. I read that before we started our conversation. Total bullshit. But that's another story. CENTCOM, they lie every day. It's an empire of lies in itself. Anyway, the conversation between the Pakistanis and the Americans and the reaction by Trump — the thing is, Nima, this didn't last too long. This lasted a few days last week, maybe this weekend. And after the Apache story, which is an absolute mess because nobody really knows what happened with this Apache, it changed completely. And the Pentagon, which has still not solved the mystery of the two Tomahawks killing the girls in Minab — they're still investigating, by the way.

It took them less than 24 hours to discover that it was a Shahed drone that was the origin of the crash of the Apache helicopter. And the pilots miraculously survived and were rescued by an American boat. Isn't that a beautiful Netflix plot? Nobody explained how this happened. But that was the excuse that the Americans wanted to go back to war. So who profits from this going back to war? Who fabricated this whole Apache story? So all these questions are now on the table. And the change of tone again by Trump and the people around him. When last week we thought that, okay, maybe it's in their minds that the only way out, the only off-ramp for Trump, is to get to some sort of memorandum of understanding.

And this is exactly what the Pakistanis were breaking their backs 24/7 to get. The Pakistanis are working very closely with the Iranians. They are also working very closely with the Saudis. It's part of their military pact, and the Saudis want an accommodation with Iran. They're also working very closely with other Sunni actors, including the four original Sunnis who met in Islamabad even before the first Islamabad meeting when Ghalibaf was there and Vance was there as well. Once again, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Egypt. These four are working very hard to get to the memorandum of understanding. And on top of these, Qatar and Oman as well. So everybody is working seriously.

Let's try to get this memorandum of understanding. And of course, they are putting their own pressure on the Trump administration. After all, they have their own channels to talk to the Trump administration. But as we can see, the whole thing was turned upside down these past, let's say, three to four days with the Apache story. The Apache story was the catalyst of the change of, I wouldn't say the change of heart, but once again, the change of tone. And Trump is back to his best emperor of barbaria impersonation. Okay, we're going to bomb Iran to smithereens every night, harder and harder. We're discussing how to bomb their bridges and electrical installations. We're going to take Karg Island.

We are already stealing their oil. So the whole thing is back to where it was during the war. And that's why it's so dangerous, because apparently now the Trump administration has made up its mind, and Trump, a desperate Trump who needs an off-ramp for a number of reasons that we know very well—who controls and who runs the show—and of course, because of his totally unhinged mind, he actually believes, coming back to the beginning of our conversation, he actually believes that he can bomb Iran into submission. And that's where we are now. And that's why it's so dangerous. The situation now, this week, is much more dangerous than a week ago, and even two, three, four weeks ago.

#Nima

Yeah. I think the scale of attacks somehow, looking at the way the United States attacked Iran last night and the Iranian response, you see the two sides are reassessing each other, in my opinion. Because in the initial hours of the attack, the initial minutes of the attack, you see Iran, instead of responding to the United States, was attacking Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan.

#Pepe

True. The first targets were Erbil. Later, the American bases. But when they attacked the American bases, Nima, this was pretty hardcore, including for the first time direct attacks on Jordan. Jordan now is a legitimate target. That was not the case before. And the attacks in Kuwait were ultra hardcore as well. So they attacked at the same time Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain. That's very, very serious. And they attacked what remains of the 5th Fleet base in Bahrain, plus another naval base in Bahrain. So they are attacking across the spectrum and expanding the spectrum because now it includes Jordan. And this also falls in the IRGC order from early this week, that there is a continuum from the Bab al-Mandeb to the Persian Gulf. It's the same theater of war, which means that the Houthis are progressing. Little by little, the Houthis are coming back. And this is going to be the next stage.

If there is more American bombing tonight and tomorrow, there's no question that we're going to have action. Well, we already have action. The Bab al-Mandeb is already totally vetoed for any Israeli-linked tanker. So this is just the first stage. So now we have the full spectrum, the maritime spectrum, from Bab al-Mandeb to the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Are the Americans ready to, you know, suffer the consequences of all that? And now, of course, this is a discussion that, for instance, last week in the St. Petersburg Forum, this was part of the discussion. We were discussing, of course, the war in Ukraine practically full time. But when the discussion came to Iran, they started discussing the possibility of whether the ultimate agenda of the people who actually manipulate Trump is to crash the global economy. That's quite possible. It's absolutely possible.

And then restart in more favorable terms for them. It's absolutely possible, because if it continues like this, if the escalation that started this week again continues like this, the situation of the oil market and the bond market especially is going to go completely out of control. And it will be a

global crash. There's no question about that. Trump is just, once again, Nima, we all know, Trump is just a grifter, a low-life street gangster employed by the people who run the show. These are the people who control the agenda and are looking long-term and are the controllers of the forever wars in West Asia and in Ukraine. And at the same time, we are seeing that these two interconnected wars, they are both on an escalation ladder. The war against Russia by NATO, especially by MI6, it's going up and up.

And now there are no limits. There are attacks against Crimea practically every day. Black Sea, Crimea, over the Urals, you name it. Swarms of drones everywhere. Swarms of drones against Moscow. For instance, the day that I left Moscow, my flight to Istanbul in the middle of the night was delayed for two hours. Why? Because there was a threat of a swarm of drones over Vnukovo Airport in Moscow. And this is something that is happening now every day. It's normal. And people are getting really, really pissed. Russians are starting to become very, very angry with all that. So obviously, the big guy, Minister of Defense, they're going to have to answer for that. So, escalation ladder in Ukraine, escalation ladder now in West Asia. And it's all interconnected, and it's becoming more dangerous by the day.

When we saw it only a few days ago, maybe there were possibilities of accommodation. The Russians know that there is less than zero probability of any sort of meaningful diplomatic discussion with Europeans, and they are working accordingly and planning accordingly. From the Iranian point of view, let's say that until two or three days ago, they still believed that it was possible to have some sort of diplomatic understanding with the Americans. The Pakistani mediators are very, very important. I would not say that they are losing their steam, but they have worked so hard to establish these connections, to do the back and forth between the Americans and Iranians, to get everybody on their side — Saudis, Qataris, Omanis, Turkey, everybody.

#Speaker 03

And now we are in the middle of a war again.

#Pepe

So they work like hell for nothing. So obviously they start to have second thoughts and say, do you really want us to mediate? And mediate what? You don't even listen to us anymore. You are bombing Iran again. What kind of mediation can we do in the middle of that? It's impossible.

#Nima

No, yesterday, while the United States decided to attack Iran, we had a Qatari delegation in Iran talking with the Iranians. Right. And they were there. This morning they left Iran.

#Pepe

Exactly.

#Nima

The whole time that the United States was attacking Iran, they were in Iran. I thought they had left Iran before that.

#Pepe

No, they were in Iran. It's like they were in Tehran. Absolutely. So once again, there are no more limits to the dementia, literally, of the emperor of barbaria, of his secretary of forever wars, who is a very dangerous clown, and the people he listens to, which are what? Four or five people, not more than that. And sound people with sound judgment? Forget it. He doesn't even try to listen to them. And it gets more and more dangerous, Nima. Because, of course, he's not a strategist. The only thing he sees is the quagmire that he put himself in, and he cannot extricate himself. That's why he started entertaining these notions: "Okay, I'm going to bomb them to death, and they're going to come to me and beg for it."

The latest lie, which was, I think, last night, is that Iranian officials are now calling me directly and begging me to stop bombing Iran. Everybody but a two-year-old knows this is bullshit. And he sells this like a fact, you know. So that's why it's so dangerous. He's completely removed from reality. And there is not a single bloody idiot in his circle who can just get five minutes, "Mr. President, this is the real situation. This is what the Iranians are doing. This is what the Iranians are announcing they're going to do if you restart the war against them." Nobody. And because he controls the news cycle all over the planet, he opens his mouth, he vociferates wherever he wants. So this goes all over the world and it passes as truth, when it's a Himalaya of lies day after day. Very, very, very, very dangerous. It's total alternative reality. Extremely dangerous.

#Nima

Pepe, I really believe that Iran has total escalation dominance.

#Pepe

Yes, I completely agree. I completely agree. The escalation... The title of my article that was published, I think, a few hours ago in Russia, is "Escalation Blues." The Escalation Blues is for all of us. We are singing the blues of escalation, and we thought that this was avoidable. No, now it's inevitable. But the difference is that the escalation ladder itself is controlled by Iran. It's not controlled by the Americans. And Iran has not even started to really escalate the responses. And so the Americans have not seen how far Iran can go. Ah, yeah? So you're planning to destroy our civilian infrastructure again? Just wait.

#Nima

Because if they go after civilian infrastructure, you know that they hit two water tanks. They did. Two water tanks on Sirik Island, which is the water supply to the island.

#Pepe

You're right.

#Nima

Yes. But Iran didn't escalate that. Iran didn't respond the same way. They keep focusing on the American bases, the strategic points in those countries as they attack Iran. They mentioned, the IRGC mentioned that 12 ballistic missiles were used to attack this major air base in Jordan, as you mentioned.

#Pepe

And apparently a lot of F-15s, F-16s, F-35s, they turned to dust. Yeah, it's quite possible. Absolutely.

#Nima

And just imagine what the easiest target for Iran is going to be: Ben Gurion Airport.

#Pepe

Of course. This is something that Iran can do with their hypersonic missiles. They can totally obliterate Ben Gurion Airport if they want. Absolutely. Absolutely. And that train station—there's only one big train station connecting railways in Israel. They can destroy that train station. Same thing. I think they are saving it for the right moment, because they know that if the escalation continues, this is just the beginning. And that will be the kiss of death for the Israel-U.S. alliance. They are saving it for the right moment. Absolutely. Absolutely. But coming back to the possibility of any sort of diplomatic understanding between the U.S. and Iran, now it has vanished. Unfortunately, it's back to less than zero after all these efforts.

#Nima

I think here is what the head of the Iranian parliament and chief negotiator, Qalibaf, said. He tweeted that wrong strategies and impulsive actions will reset the entire board for the worse, explode energy infrastructure and markets, and create an endless quagmire that you will be stuck in

forever. For years. And you'll see a different Iran. I think we are witnessing, at this particular moment, a different Iran. That's why they're attacking Israel without being attacked by Israel—because of Lebanon. That's the whole game. The whole game has changed.

#Pepe

You're right. This is the major game changer. And this is the proof that this is an axis of resistance process. It's not only Iran. And the fact that this interconnection, the maritime interconnection uniting Bab al-Mandeb to the Persian Gulf, is exactly the same thing again. This is a unified axis of resistance fighting U.S.-Israel from now on. There's no division. Okay, inside there may be some division of labor—okay, who's going to attack what and how, etc. The overall concept of unified resistance, now it's in practice. It has been put in practice. And once again, maybe they accelerated this process because of the warmongering of U.S.-Israel. Obviously, they know that it's inevitable.

But all that, once again, it's the road that is leading all of us—it's the most dangerous road possible. And especially when you have an unhinged president of the United States contemplating all sorts of absurdities, including hints of a nuclear attack. Well, he already tried. Remember when he tried to get the nuclear codes in that famous meeting with CENTCOM? So it's, wow. It could not be worse than what it is now. And how fast it changed. Well, anyway, coming back to what we were trying to do, Nima, Larry, and I, we still believe that we have to try to support diplomacy and mediation efforts. So our idea with this channel, which was, by the way, personally canceled by the U.S. government—I cannot get into names.

We have the names. We know who did it. We know who ordered Google to cut off this channel. Obviously, we cannot say it. But we know how it works. And our interlocutors know everything, how it works. So we set up a new channel. So I call all of you who follow Nima and myself, please go to Transition Protocol. It's a new channel on YouTube. It's very small. This week, we already did three shows. Larry did the first one on Monday. I did the second one on Tuesday. And yesterday, on Wednesday, Larry and I were on the same show. And there are a lot of nuggets. If you see it, it's not too long. It's 40 to 50 minutes, the show yesterday. You're going to see nuggets here and there. And this is hardcore intel straight from the source.

Very, very few people have it. And that's why we are involved in this project. There you go. Here's Transition Protocol. And what Nima is showing now is the three shows that we did this week—Monday, Tuesday, and yesterday, Wednesday. So we're going to have to start from scratch. It's very, very hard. The first breaking news that we had, we got some Nima-style audience. We got 125,000, 130,000. So now we have to start from scratch and build it all over again. But that's it. This is something that is very rare to find. For instance, the Americans have Israeli IDF soldiers posing as journalists. We don't do that kind of shit. We are real journalists delivering real intel from real negotiators.

And he comes from Pakistan, but is Pakistan talking to Iran? And then we have the background of Pakistan talking to Saudi Arabia. Then we have input from Turkey. Then we have stuff that we can confirm with our sources. Larry can confirm in the U.S., I can confirm with Russia and China, plus stuff that we can ask our Iranian friends and connections. So this is what it is. This small channel is about real intel with all the players. And, of course, the main focus is, let's try to solve this forever war before it gets totally out of control. And that's the problem, Nima. This week that we are in, we are heading towards totally out of control. Nobody wants that, except, of course, the usual suspects, right?

#Nima

You know, what's so fragile about the argument on the part of the United States about that Apache helicopter is that they said the Apache helicopter was hit by a drone. Then the two pilots are alive, and they were not injured during this attack. But before that, to understand what was the main reason for the United States to attack Iran, I think we can go further. You know, we have to understand what happened before that attack on the Apache helicopter. That was the Iranian attack on Israel because Israel attacked Lebanon. Iran responded to Israel in the northern part of Israel, then the Israeli attack on Iran, then the Iranian response.

The Iranian response, it seems that it was so hard. And they said, Israelis said that they intercepted each and every missile that Iran fired at Israel. Later on, we had some sort of footage showing that Iran hit Ramat David Air Base in Israel. Yes. And here is the new satellite image, a high-quality satellite image. It shows how Iran hit that building. The left one is before the attack, and the right one is after the attack. You see, they basically destroyed the building in that area. Absolutely. And I think the reason the United States decided to go with the attack is that Israel was not capable of attacking Iran and doing what they had in mind in terms of having some sort of equal response.

#Pepe

Not only do they not have what they can do, but their interceptors and their defense capabilities are extremely reduced. Exactly. So Iran can bomb Israel practically with impunity from now on. If they decide to reach the escalation ladder in terms of bombing Israel, it's not a problem for Iran now. And obviously, the Americans freaked out completely with that. No question. No question.

#Nima

That has changed. I don't know what Donald Trump can do for Israel because they were in the region. They had everything in the region when Iran attacked Israel. And as was mentioned by the Israeli media, the United States was trying to intercept those missiles and they couldn't intercept

them. This is the reality. Their defensive capabilities have been reduced drastically. This is the problem the United States is facing right now. I don't know if these offensives are going to help the Trump administration or the Israeli position. That's not going to happen.

#Pepe

No, of course not. And because of the response by Iran, we just saw the beginning of the response from Iran. When we have, I would say, a coordinated response by Iran, including Israel, not only Jordan now as a legitimate target, re-attacks on all those bases, attacking the Fifth Fleet—what remains of the Fifth Fleet—the Fifth Fleet again, but also Israel altogether, wow. But will that be enough to instill some sense into the four-year-old brain of the Emperor of Barbaria? We know it won't, Nima. Unfortunately, for instance, I discussed with Larry a lot. Larry thinks there is less than zero possibility of a diplomatic agreement. I think there is zero.

#Nima

He's totally right.

#Pepe

If we ask our friend Alastair Crooke, Alastair has been basically writing and analyzing that a diplomatic agreement is practically impossible. So what's left after all these efforts by the Pakistanis? Of course, we receive news from the Pakistani mediators now every day. They are still... okay, to be realistic, they are relatively optimistic because they are always saying, the last we heard, for instance, last night, "Look, the deal is not dead. It's very dangerous. We are at a crucial juncture, but we are not abandoning the table. And we are telling the Americans all the time, look, ourselves, our connections with Tehran, everybody behind it—Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar—everybody wants at least a memorandum of understanding."

So you cannot go against everyone. And at the moment, you are going against everybody, not to mention your own interests. But try to explain that to... okay, you can explain that to maybe American negotiators. But how do you explain that to Trump, Nima? We know it's impossible. Nobody can do that. The only one who could, if he picked up the phone again, would be Putin, which is what he tried to do a few weeks ago when they had their phone call. Putin tried to explain to Trump, look, take something—a memorandum of understanding. It's your only way to get an offering. Nobody is going to give you another offering. That's it. There's nothing else. Do you need help? I can help you. So obviously, he didn't listen.

#Nima

And today Russia said again, Vladimir Putin said the only solution would be negotiation and talking to each other.

#Pepe

Of course. It was one of the themes in St. Petersburg last week. And, of course, the Russians have no illusions about the backup of the Americans to this escalation ladder by the Europeans against Russia as well. They know who they're dealing with. But in terms of Iran, once again, Putin reaffirmed their strategic partnership. One of the things that he said was immensely intriguing. He said, look, the Iranians did not ask anything from us, which is true. You know the Persians, right, Nima? They are very, very proud. No, we can do everything by ourselves. And they can. But if they asked the Russians for some pretty hardcore military gear, Russia would have given it to them without even blinking. What Putin did not say, and this is as important as what he did say, is that Russia provided a lot of first-class intel to Iran. And this, in many cases, is much more important than weapons. Much more important.

#Nima

But we've seen a significant improvement in Iran's air defense system.

#Pepe

Oh, yes. And this is Russia and China's very, very discreet help in the background. Of course. Of course.

#Nima

I don't know, Pepe, when it comes to the big picture, when it comes to Russia, because when Vladimir Putin is suggesting the only solution would be negotiations, they have the same case with the United States. There is nobody there to negotiate with.

#Pepe

No, no, absolutely. The only thing, in terms of the Russians, they know that the only thing that may come out of what's going on nowadays is maybe a few trade deals or commercial opportunities. Because this is both oligarchies talking to each other — the American oligarchy and the Russian oligarchy. And obviously, the Kremlin looks at it, okay, if they want to do business, no problem, as long as it does not interfere with our national security projects. For instance, an example: let's say one of the oil majors in the U.S. wants to go back to exploiting energy in the Arctic. This is going to be very circumscribed, very specific. And the Russian government, of course, will say, okay, you can do this, you can do this, but you cannot do that.

It's fine. That's it. But very, very circumscribed. There were American businessmen in St. Petersburg. Not an enormous delegation, but there were American businessmen exploring business opportunities. So, but in terms of a government-to-government breakthrough and diplomacy

advancing, they have no illusions whatsoever. And obviously, the Russians are paying now much more attention to the European dimension — their escalation ladder against Russia using Ukraine. So this is their number one problem to deal with now. But at the same time, they are paying attention to Iran a lot. And of course, if Iran needs anything from Russia, they will get it. But so far, they have not asked.

#Nima

Pepe, do you think that the United States is still thinking of invading some of these islands? Because Donald Trump today said that Hark Island, we want to invade. Part of the operation tonight, he said that this is going to be—we want to invade. If you're going to invade an island, you don't talk about it.

#Pepe

Try to explain that to somebody who still doesn't understand Sun Tzu, Nima. Yes, we're going to invade your island tonight, tomorrow. How fucking stupid can that be? Okay. But that's who we are dealing with. These people are not very bright. They are dangerous, but they're not very bright. And the guy who's running the Pentagon, he's not even bright. He's an absolute idiot. So what to expect, right? But it's dangerous. Kellogg, this absolute idiot — you played the clip at the beginning of our conversation — he was so stupid that he's marginalized by everybody. The Russians said, we will not allow this idiot to sit at any table discussing anything with us.

#Pepe

But it's tough, Nima. It's tough because if you look at the big picture around, if you look at how these wars are intersecting, if you look at the level of desperation of the people who run the show in the US and who run Trump and the European elites, their intersected level of desperation is mounting day by day. It gets extremely worrying because we are on the razor's edge of slipping into something very, very nasty — in Ukraine and against Iran, and perhaps even simultaneously. It's very, very worrying. Very, very worrying. And once again, every time that we think there are off-ramps and diplomacy has been given a chance, the thing collapses abruptly, which is what happened these past few days.

#Nima

The other problem, Pepe, is between Israel and Lebanon. It seems that the invasion of Lebanon is becoming a great pain in the neck for Israel.

#Pepe

They're having their asses kicked by Hezbollah. Period. Again. Why? Because they didn't do their homework, Nima. They may have Mossad cells in Beirut, which they do everywhere. They know where the leadership of Hezbollah goes. They can plant exploding smartphones or whatever, but they don't understand the Hezbollah way of war and how Hezbollah, in their own terrain in Lebanon and in southern Lebanon, are unbeatable. Period. They still don't know that. They haven't learned their lesson. So they are having their asses kicked.

Even with Hezbollah still under reconstruction, like we saw ourselves last year, when I was talking to Hezbollah politicians — very well-educated people — they said, look, it's a long... The second and the third level of leadership, we are still, you know, there's still a few things that they need to learn, but they are learning very, very fast and they are well prepared. So when we are back, we're going to be back in full force. This was one year ago, Nima. Now we are watching that they are back in full force and with this new leadership commanding the resistance. It's something impossible for the Israelis to understand. It starts with the way they treat Arabs as a whole, as inferior. Start with that. It's that mix of arrogance and ignorance, typical of self-described hegemonic powers.

#Speaker 03

So they will never learn their lesson.

#Pepe

There you go.

#Nima

The Israeli solution for Lebanon is that they're not going to be able to defeat Hezbollah in the southern part of Lebanon. Then what else can they do? They wanted to attack Beirut, to level the whole of southern Beirut.

#Pepe

For what? Is this going to change anything? No, it's not.

#Nima

This is the moment that Iran entered the game. They said, you cannot attack; we're going to do the same to the northern part of Israel.

#Pepe

Absolutely, because Iran saw perfectly clearly that the plan is to turn Dahyeh into a new Gaza. No, that's it. This is beyond a red line. And this is very, very important.

#Nima

They really wanted to do this.

#Pepe

And this is a Shiite population, Nima. So, you know, it's like you are trying to do this with Iran. It's the same thing. It's exactly the same thing, Zach.

#Nima

And then yesterday we saw two videos from the Israeli president and the Israeli prime minister talking with the people in Lebanon and with the government, with the president of Lebanon. And the president of Israel said that he had watched your video on CNN, because Joseph Aoun had an interview with Christiane Amanpour. He was basically talking about how Iran is using Hezbollah, or using Lebanon, as a bargaining chip in the ongoing negotiations.

#Pepe

Only stupid Americans can believe that. What do we expect? CNN. What do we expect?

#Nima

But the main focus of the Israelis is something else. The prime minister is telling the Lebanese people that Iran is, you know, that we are friends of the Lebanese people. We are friends of the Lebanese government. The only problem is Hezbollah. We are at war with Hezbollah. This is the message from Benjamin Netanyahu.

#Pepe

Two or three people in Beirut believe that, Nima.

#Nima

Yes.

#Pepe

People who go to those flashy Hariri-style malls in Beirut near the Corniche and dream of being in Paris or in Rome, they may believe that. But that's a minority of the population. The absolute majority of the population in Beirut, they know that this is beyond bullshit. And the working class, this is fantastic. For instance, last year when I was there, I was always talking to the working class in Beirut whenever I could. And it's unanimous: Hezbollah is defending us. Sometimes they cannot say this openly because their employer is a westernized idiot, brainwashed by Americans and Israelis. But this is the real nitty-gritty. And Beirut is an absolutely outstanding city. The real nitty-gritty of the working class of Beirut, that's the real story.

#Nima

Yeah. I think the whole concept of the war in West Asia is so complicated. As time goes by, just imagine, it was all about the Iranian nuclear program, but nothing about the nuclear program has been discussed so far.

#Pepe

Exactly. And the Iranian nuclear program is a detail. And the order of discussions established by Iran proves that. Okay, the last stage of discussing our problems in war, in diplomacy, etc., is the nuclear dossier. There are many more important problems to discuss before that. It's a perfect example of how this is a detail. And it was never a big deal. The Americans made it a big deal. Iran, like anybody else, has the right to have a civilian nuclear program, like any nation on earth. The Americans made this a big deal: "No, they are building a nuclear weapon." Everybody knew since the original Khomeini fatwa to the second Khamenei fatwa: "No, we are not building a nuclear weapon because it's un-Islamic."

We are investing in our civilian nuclear program, which is something that non-biased inspectors — real inspectors, and not bloody Mossad spies going to Iran — it was their conclusion all the time. The Americans made it an issue. So when the Americans fabricate an issue, that becomes the problem. Because if you control the narratives, if you control the system of dissemination of information, if you control the narratives and if you control the language — because everything is in English — you set the agenda. And that's the great challenge to all of us across the Global South. We have to unmask these agendas in their own language and using their own system of disseminating news.

And, of course, ridicule them, which is much more interesting. We can unmask them, but the real pleasure is to ridicule them and show to the Global South as a whole how absolutely stupid and mediocre they are. And dangerous, always, of course. But, you know, strip them naked in the middle of the public square. They are naked in the middle of the public square, and the public square is the whole planet. By the way, this is being achieved right before the start of the World Cup, Nima. Most

of the Global South is seeing the US under the emperor of barbaria for what it is — a racist shithole. I'm not talking about the US as a whole. The United States has absolutely outstanding people, configurations, parts of the culture.

I lived in the US. I loved the US since I was a kid. I understand the country very well. I know the US better than the country where I was born. But I'm talking about positions of power and systems of power, and the particular configuration of this administration, which is one of the most despicable things in the history of modern politics. These are the people who are running the United States, and they are trying to turn the United States into a racist shithole. Best demonstration these past few days: the way they are treating politicians, essentially Global South visitors coming to see the most important sports event on the planet — Senegal, Uzbekistan, the Somali referee. Shameful. Beyond shameful.

Beyond shameful. Come on. So that's it. What's happening now is a perfect mirror of the emperor of barbaria and the people around him. This is not the United States. The real United States is not like that. You know, the wonderful people that you meet when you go to the Midwest, to the Deep South, to the Florida Keys, to California, to New Mexico, to Arizona — they are not like that. But they are hostages of these people, these grifters, gangsters, perverted people, profiteers. Extremely dangerous, all of them. Starting with the new Epstein, Kushner. This is the ghastliest of them all. That's it. They are destroying the image of the United States, and they are destroying the soft power of the United States.

#Nima

Yeah. They're doing this, yeah.

#Pepe

Thank you. Muito obrigado, Pepe. Obrigado, querido. Desculpe o tom apocalíptico e negro. Mas é assim mesmo.

#Nima

That's how it is. You're not making this up.

#Pepe

Darkness is the beautiful Dylan verse: darkness dawns at the break of noon. This is one of the most beautiful Dylan verses. This is where we are now. Darkness is breaking at noon every day, one day after another. And we look around and it's dark. And there are a lot of people trying to find a glimmer of light here and there. But for the moment, it's very, very hard.

#Nima

Exactly. Thank you, Pepe. Obrigado.

#Pepe

Enorme abraço. Thanks to all of you, our audience. You guys are all there. Keep fighting. It's getting much more hardcore every day, but that's it. When we're going on the highway to hell, at least let's dance.

#Nima

The struggle continues.

#Pepe

The struggle continues. Cheers. Obrigado. Bye-bye.