

Pepe Escobar: US-Iran War: The Point of No Return?

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#Nima

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.

#Guest

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. Pepe, let me bring another clip, because...

#Nima

The volume here was not good.

#Pepe

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

#Guest

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 the use of nuclear weapons. Yes, absolutely.

#Pepe

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 in 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 nonstop 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. 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 Putin 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, Putin told Sharif — this was a phone call last week, 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, Putin told Sharif once again, no discussions leading to what could be a new JCPOA. It's not the order of the new, the 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. Putin 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 Pezeshkian 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 thing was leaked. In fact, it was leaked to 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 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 he said, look, I have something very, very important to tell you. 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 gonna get to 40 this week, right? And another piece of information that we had from—just moments ago, CENTCOM—just sorry for interrupting you.

#Nima

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

#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, who 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 are 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. 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're 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, they've made up their 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 falls also in the IRGC order of 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 possibilities of... Is the ultimate agenda of the people who actually manipulate Trump to crash the global economy? That's quite possible. It's absolutely possible. And then we start 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, is 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, the 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, we thought 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, let's put it this way, they still believed that it was possible to have some sort of diplomatic understanding with the Americans. The Pakistani mediators — 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. And now we are in the middle of the war again. So they worked 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 — like, it's impossible.

#Nima

No, yesterday, while the United States decided to attack Iran, we had the 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, 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 to 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.