

# Pepe Escobar: Israel Just Got Outplayed - The MoU That 'Beat' Israel Where It Hurts

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## #Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Wednesday, June 17, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Pepe Escobar, is here with us. Welcome back, Pepe.

## #Pepe

What a pleasure to be with you, Nima, especially because I am in the heart of darkness. I am in Natostan, in my official secluded refuge, with this beautiful Javanese textile behind me. And I'm very far from the G7. No, not really—it's two hours from here, but I'm... why go there, right? Especially because you have the best video of the G7, Nima. I'm sure you do.

## #Nima

Yeah, I'm going to share that with you and our audience. And you're taking that—the boss is coming. Here is what Donald Trump said about joining the G7.

## #Nima

Yeah.

## #Pepe

It's a masterpiece, isn't it? Because, first of all, he knows he's the boss. He's surrounded by a bunch of horrible losers. And the horrible losers, in unison, they are... you can hear, right? And there's nothing they can do about it. So it is a master class of, we call it in English, working the room. He knows how to work a room, and he knows how to impose his persona immediately. Just take three words. It's very, very impressive. And at the same time, you feel that his body language—he's not comfortable with himself. He may be the boss, but what's the point of being the boss among a bunch of losers? Not much. They're not deciding anything. And the extra proof is not in the video.

The G7, they called four BRICS to this summit. And they were there: MBS—sorry, MBZ for the UAE. He had a private encounter with Trump and a private encounter with the toxic Medusa von der Leyen. Egypt, India, and Brazil. And poor Lula was relegated to the second division, even in the photo. If you look, if you pay attention to the photo, it's very, very important—the official photo. If you look at the footage of how they got together, how they had their assigned places in the photo, Lula is assigned to the extreme left position. And if we are, from our point of view as viewers, looking at the photo, he's in the extreme right—extreme right of the photo. He's almost out of the photo.

And very, very important to all of you, our audience. Right in the center, you have "I am the boss," of course, side by side with the pathetic Le Petit Roi. And guess who's side by side with Trump and Macron? India and Egypt. Two BRICS. Why Modi and Sisi? And that's where the thing gets really, really heavy. Both are supporters—one of them very, very obvious, and the other one trying to disguise—of Bellum Judaica. It's not Pax Judaica, it's War Judaica, Bellum in Latin. So they are supporters of Bellum Judaica, and they are supporters of a connectivity corridor that, as we speak right now, is dead—the IMEC, which is theoretically the India-Middle East Corridor, but it's in fact the Israel-Middle East-Europe-India Corridor.

And they are side by side with two of the nations where the Zionist lobby is the strongest on earth—the United States and France. So this is how you read this photo. It tells you a lot. And it also tells you about the desperation of the G7, where they have a meeting of the G7 and they need to get four BRICS to make themselves relevant. Otherwise, they are just a bunch of losers. And the boss enters the room, looks at them: I am the boss. You are nothing. Well, you can do that, Nima, without even going to Evian to drink Evian water on the spot. By the way, you can buy it in the supermarket for less than one euro. You don't need to go there.

## **#Nima**

I think in this G7 meeting there are two important issues. One of them is the MOU between Iran and the United States, which was the main topic of your latest piece, your latest article. And we know that your article is not out yet.

## **#Pepe**

Not out yet. It's going to be out tonight in Russia and Asia. But I sent you a copy, the original draft. I have it here.

## **#Nima**

That's why. Because many of our audience later on are asking me, where is the link? Because we don't have the link yet. Not yet. If you get the link, you can send it to me, and I'm going to put it in the description of this video.

## **#Pepe**

Thank you, Nima. I'll do that. It's going to take a few hours at least. Thank you. Thank you.

## **#Nima**

And the title is "What the Iran-US MOU is all about."

## **#Pepe**

Right.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. What is your understanding? What do you make of it?

## **#Pepe**

Nima, okay, to give you the short headline. Of course, I get into some detail about some of the 14 points outlined in the MOU, which were all originally Iranian talking points and discussion points. Essentially, this is a play for time. Trump has, I would say, a three-stage strategy to sell this MOU. Number one, he's going to say that the free flow of oil in the Strait of Hormuz is back, thanks to him. So he liberated the Strait of Hormuz to the status of the Strait of Hormuz before the war that he launched. So you have to be really a consummate idiot to buy that. But anyway, he thinks that he can sell that: I basically liberated the flow of oil in the Strait of Hormuz.

So this means I'm going to calm the markets. I'm going to calm the bond markets as well, not only the energy markets. There will be no spike in inflation. Things will go back to normal thanks to me. This is how he's going to sell it. Okay, number one. Number two, he can say that, okay, now we start negotiating, but negotiations are not very important. The most important thing is the oil, which was always there in the first place. And he's buying time, or at least a lull, going towards the midterms, which are going to be in November. So we are in June now. We're going to have a first period of the MOU lasting 30 days, where concessions will have to be made.

Among them, some measure of sanctions relief to Iran. None of us is buying that. But the U.S., they promised, so they have to deliver something. Number two, follow the money. Very important. \$12 billion that, according to the MOU, should be returned to Iran in this first phase. So this means in the next months, Iran needs to receive \$12 billion of its own money, which was confiscated. And the other \$12 billion during the next 60-day period of the actual discussions, right? So Trump can, of course, if the U.S. gives these \$12 billion, Trump can always sell to domestic public opinion: look, this has nothing to do with us.

This is Qatari banks, Saudi banks, Omani banks. We have nothing to do with it. And this is how he's going to sell it. So his supporters in the U.S., they say, okay, we have nothing to do with it. And number three, he's actually playing for time. So if he can make this issue more or less disappear from the news in the next few weeks, meaning one month plus two months of negotiations, let's say until September or early October, he preserves maybe a little bit of his political capital, and people won't make the direct connection between the MOU and the massive strategic defeat of the United States in the war against Iran.

Considering that the attention span of the average American is extremely limited, he may pull that off. It's not far-fetched to imagine that this could happen. And then, of course, when we get to the midterms, he's not going to be completely smashed. Maybe he can salvage something for the Republican Party. If he cannot, we all know what's going to happen next. We're going to have Democratic majorities in the Senate, and they're going to immediately impeach him and go after him, his fortune, his family, and his cronies. So he's basically investing in his political salvation, mid-term and long-term. So it starts now. And that's why he needed this MOU so badly. It is the only off-ramp in town for him.

So he took it. And until the last minute, Nima, he was not taking it. So that's why we have to backtrack to what happened this past Sunday. Very important for you and for our audience. Guess who was in Islamabad throughout the weekend? Abbas Araghchi. In person. Negotiating in person with the Pakistani mediators the final terms of the MOU. And they were optimistically saying, okay... Sunday, we send the final draft to the Americans. They say, okay, and that's it. And we can announce that we're going to sign it later next week. This week, as we speak. We are on Wednesday. The signing ceremony is going to be in Geneva on Friday. But Israel decided to attack Dahiyeh and blow up the MOU even before there was an understanding.

Araghchi was in Islamabad, in direct contact with the Pakistani mediators, who were in direct contact with the Americans. So Araghchi told the Pakistanis, call the Americans now and tell them, if Israel continues to bomb Dahiyeh, we are ready to start bombing Israel now. Now means literally now. We have our finger on the trigger, and we have the list of targets already. So the Pakistanis call the Americans, and a few minutes later, the White House says, okay, we're going to sign. They said, we promise we're going to sign. And they agreed with at least, according to the Pakistani mediators, at least three items among the 14 points that the Americans were still saying, no, no, no. In the end, they agreed. So, Nima, this is where we are, but there's no guarantee of anything.

First of all, the Americans are saying that they signed electronically — Trump and Vance. We have no evidence. Nobody showed a copy of the electronic page of their signature. This is what they're saying. And Iran has not, as far as we know, today, what, Wednesday, end of the afternoon here in Europe — nobody knows if the Iranians have signed yet. So they are still revising it. And the process in Tehran is much more complicated than a mere leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, saying, okay, we should sign. No, he delegated the signing to the Supreme National Security Council. This means that they are still debating among themselves. And Mojtaba, according to our mediators who have

access to Mojtaba — because when they went to visit Iran weeks ago, they visited Mojtaba in person with a delegation of Pakistani Shiite clerics.

This is immensely important because it creates trust between the Pakistani negotiators and the leader. So through the Pakistani Shiite clerics, they are in direct contact with Mojtaba. So this delegation says, you guys of the Supreme National Security Council, you need to reach a solid majority. If you do that, then you sign. I give you the green light to sign. But only if, I would say, virtually all of you agree with it. And that's why... sorry. This is still being debated in Iran. This is the latest information that we have, Nima. We checked last night, the last time, with the Pakistani mediators, and we got this from a guy at the table. Very, very important.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. How do you see the way that Israel is trying to get the MOU, a copy of the MOU?

## **#Pepe**

Because we tried everything to get it. But it's very hard to believe, Nima, that they haven't seen it yet. Exactly. It's practically impossible that they haven't seen it yet. But they want to have it officially. Exactly. Maybe they don't have it officially — for instance, maybe the White House did not send them a copy officially. But considering the Zionist lobby in D.C. and elsewhere, come on, obviously, come on, everybody has a copy. There are copies in Arabic circulating everywhere. In Farsi, for obvious reasons, but in Arabic everywhere. So everybody has a copy. So obviously the Israelis saw it. So they're making a play — ah, we were ignored and all that. So there is an element of good cop, bad cop in this whole thing. It's not going to fool anybody.

## **#Nima**

But we heard from the Prime Minister of Canada. He said on CNN that he saw the document. It's something like two pages, something like that.

## **#Pepe**

Yes, it's very short, exactly. The version circulating with Arab TV channels — Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera — everybody has a copy. So it's very short. But, very important, all the 14 points that Iran was pressing for weeks, they are there. That's very, very important. If the Americans are going to abide, that's another story. And the story starts on Friday — the first 30 days, then the crucial next 60 days. I would say that the absolute majority of all of us independent analysts, we don't believe that the Americans are going to fulfill even 10% of what they are promising. Because if they do, most of these key points spell out a major strategic defeat. They simply cannot admit it. And this is not a matter of Trump. Trump is a messenger, a lowly messenger. The boss or whatever, but come on.

The people who run the show treat Trump as, okay, our messenger boy. The ruling elites in the U. S., they cannot possibly admit that. Because the big, big picture, the big plan includes subduing Iran, regime change, controlling the Strait of Hormuz, controlling energy flowing from Iran, and most of all, imposing the petrodollar on Iran and everybody else. Everybody else, they already do petrodollar, but stop having ideas of deviating from the petrodollar. For that, they need to conquer Iran. This is the master plan, and they won't deviate. The war, once again, is something that you and our audience, all of you, already know. It's a war against Iran, against the Eurasian integration, against the Russia-China strategic partnership, against the whole of Eurasia, against BRICS, against the SCO, against the Global South.

And conquering Iran is an essential plank for this war to go on, which brings us to the key question: will this war be subdued from now on? No, it's gonna change its character a little bit. It's gonna be maybe slightly slower in progression than until three months ago or during the war. But we're still going to have hybrid war. We're still going to have black ops, dirty ops, underground ops, destabilization ops, attempts at regime change. Nothing will change. So this is the empire backing off for a while, reorganizing, but they will continue later on. And this is something that the Iranian leadership knows very well. And the Russians and the Chinese also know it very, very well.

## **#Nima**

Pepe, have you watched the interview with the former Israeli officer, Rami Minash, talking about the Epstein files and the wild card that Benjamin Netanyahu still possesses? He has that card to play. I don't know. He has that card to play.

## **#Pepe**

And he's probably waiting for the absolutely crucial moment to play it. And the crucial moment may be if—and that's a major if—Trump tells Netanyahu straight, "Don't interfere with my deal." I would say this is the only possibility. And after that, Netanyahu, okay, all right, Epstein files on the front pages everywhere around the planet. Until then, we're going to have this good cop, bad cop thing.

## **#Nima**

Here is what Rami Menash told me. Here is what he said.

## **#Pepe**

Okay, okay.

## **#Speaker 03**

It's a real deal between the Americans and the Iranians, and it's going towards that. Netanyahu will try to sabotage it. One of the ways he'd sabotage it is by putting out Epstein material against U.S. government officials, including Trump. And he'd put it out there—new material that wasn't seen before in public.

## **#Speaker 04**

So it's not just Trump. I know that Howard Lutnick is mentioned. There are other officials.

## **#Speaker 03**

Not just Trump. Other officials too. Yes. And he'll try to sabotage the whole negotiation and deal that they're trying to make together.

## **#Pepe**

Absolutely correct. And of course, this is also tied to the possibility of Netanyahu losing the next elections in Israel, and if that happens, he goes to jail. Period. That's the end. So that will be the last card to play, and that's dangerous. That's dangerous. And a lot of people in the Epstein axis—the Beltway, New York, New Jersey axis—wow, they are absolutely freaking out because they know it's out there. They know Netanyahu has it, the whole thing. And it's going to be horribly damaging for anybody in a position of power in the U.S. caught in the net, and that's a lot of people. So this is as nasty as it gets. It's like a Mexican soap opera going downhill. All sorts of horrible stuff happen. And we are only at the beginning. Literally.

## **#Nima**

I think the problem is the timeline right now, Pepe. What I've noticed just in the last two or three days is that J.D. Vance is coming onto the scene. He's done various interviews. He says that he's serious, in my opinion, for 2028. And the timeline is they have two more years of the Trump presidency. So the last year basically is the election year, and everybody's preparing and doing this and that. They have one year. So this is going to be impossible for the United States to get back to the war and get out of the war. I think that's the problem for Israel as well.

## **#Pepe**

Absolutely. And Vance is already positioning himself. And this, of course, is not Vance, it's his sponsors. And we know very well who his sponsors are. Even more dangerous than the current sponsors. So this is going to be the techno-fundamentalist president if he's elected. Much more dangerous than the current orangutan of barbaria. Much more dangerous. And it's not an accident that he's starting to position himself now, because they are looking at angles. They see there's not a

single feasible angle for Trump to, first of all, escape from the massive strategic defeat that he inflicted on himself and on the United States. Slim possibility he's going to survive the midterms.

Then he becomes a lame duck. And obviously they will go after impeaching him and raising hell against his cronies, his family, his fortune, you name it. So Vance will be the angel of mercy in all that. And he's already positioning himself for that. So the campaign for the next elections has already started, Nima, for all practical purposes. Yeah. And we can imagine the degree of desperation of Trump because he was desperate for the off-ramp, for this MOU that he can sell, as we were talking in the beginning, in three stages, basically as a victory. And, okay, I reopened the free flow of oil in West Asia. That's not enough. Because the effect of this strategic defeat will linger.

And will linger for a long time. And the Iranians at the table are going to be ruthless. First of all, because Iran has nothing to lose. When Iran and the U.S. are at the table, the Iranians are saying, these are the 14 points, and you have to respect all of them. We want our money. We want sanctions relief. We want a final resolution in the U.N. Security Council that you won't be able to break because we have the backup of Russia and China, and you know it. And, of course, we want you out of West Asia with all your bases. Can you imagine, Nima, a president of the United States agreeing with any of the above? Out of the question. We all know it's realistically out of the question.

So what are they going to do? Restart the war? They can't. They don't have the weapons. They don't have a plan. They don't have a strategy. They don't even have tactics. They don't have the missiles. They don't have Tomahawks. They don't have anything. And they know that the first victim—not really a victim, but the first target—is going to be Israel. Iran has its finger on the trigger to raze Israel to the ground the minute they decide to do it. And this is also something that the Americans know. So there's no way out for them. The best they can do at the moment is, okay, we have a deal, which is not a deal. But this is the only thing that they can sell.

## **#Nima**

This is a cover for Donald Trump to somehow get out of the region.

## **#Pepe**

It is. It's an off-ramp. For instance, there's an element in the Pakistani mediation which is very, very clever. And this I attribute to Field Marshal Asim Munir. This guy is extremely competent at what he does. And because he has full access to Trump, we can project with a measure of certainty that he sold this to Trump as, look, this is the best off-ramp possible you can have at the moment, and we are facilitating it for you. I'm sure Asim Munir pulled that off. No question. With the help of, according to our interlocutors, guys who are on the table and our sources who are close to guys who are on the table, this is what they have been discussing over and over again and working like hell to make it happen.

Can you imagine? Larry and I were told two weeks ago or so, the whole top level of the Pakistani government is involved, Nima, to pull that off. That's why they were making so much noise about the MOU over and over again. Of course, because they have excellent channels with the GCC petromonarchies, excellent channels with Tehran, excellent channels with the White House. So that's it. And the unspoken jewel in the crown: full backing of China. So you could not go wrong. It went wrong because, okay, they are very competent diplomats. But even if they were not very competent, they would have pulled it off because China was behind, supervising everything.

## **#Nima**

They said yesterday that the second round is going to be the second. The Chinese foreign minister said that the second round of negotiations is going to be harder. And he said that it's going to be harder. You know, he said the MOU is happening right now, but the talks after the MOU are going to be so hard.

## **#Pepe**

Of course. And they know it, Nima. They helped to bring the MOU to fruition. But the Chinese are already thinking about what is going to be discussed in the real negotiations, which start afterwards — the 60-day period. Of course. Of course. They know it. And... for instance, the decision process in Washington, we all know how messy it is. In fact, there's no decision process. Everything depends on what goes on in Trump's mind. And he doesn't listen to... he listens maybe to two or three people — the wrong people, because they're incompetents. But that's it. He doesn't listen to anybody else. He doesn't listen to a voice of reason. So... if the Pakistanis manage to convince them that this is it, you know, you won't get anything better than this, it's already in itself, wow, enormous.

And that's the only logical explanation. There's another one, Nima, but this is very, very complex. I received it from one of my old-school Washington sources, but I haven't had time to—it's a very long email with lots of details. But basically, if I could—and I'm breaking this on your show, in fact—this is breaking news to you, but I haven't had time to process it. But basically, what I can tell you and our audience is that it concerns an estimate of 60 days starting on June 15. This means this past Monday. It's a risk assessment about consumption of oil and the strategic reserves of the United States. And Trump got these numbers.

And when he looked at these numbers, he was absolutely petrified because they're basically saying that by mid-August — this means two months from now — they're going to get to an emergency level. They cannot use their strategic reserves anymore. And the global supply deficit of oil would instantly be multiplied by millions of barrels, meaning a global crisis in mid-August, in the height of summer. So I would have to go through this in detail, and then I'll probably write something about it. And in our next meeting, we'll discuss this in detail. But this is an immensely important piece of information, and very few people have access to this thing. I haven't seen this thing being discussed by Bloomberg or the FT, for instance.

Not yet. So this is it. He got the numbers and he said, in two months, everybody is totally fucked. The global economy is fucked. So this means you have to restart the flow of oil like yesterday. And that would be the main reason for the MOU. I like this scenario much, much better than the scenario that the Iranians in the end convinced them because they said we're going to bomb Israel. Trump doesn't give a damn about Israel in the end. It's not an American problem. But this is different. This is a global crisis, including in the U.S., and the financial situation and the economic situation of the U. S. imploding and exploding at the same time two months from now. This would be a very good reason to, okay, open Hormuz now.

## **#Nima**

I think that's why he was... At the G7 meeting, he was just talking about the economy and how the price of oil is just reducing. There you go, it's 74, something like this, and it's going to go down. It's all about the economy, nothing of the material. You're right.

## **#Pepe**

So he had these numbers on his mind. So, you know, my source is spot on. And this guy is one of the old-school masters of geoeconomics. And every time he sends me something, it's correct.

## **#Nima**

Pepe, when it comes to Lebanon, we know that Israel is still there, trying to stay there, while people are moving back to their homes.

## **#Pepe**

And they're saying every day, we're not leaving. We're going to stay in South Lebanon. And the plan is to control South Lebanon and the areas that they stole from Syria indefinitely.

## **#Nima**

Since the announcement of the MOU, they have repeated that more than 10 times. Netanyahu said, we're not going to leave Lebanon. We're not going to withdraw from Lebanon. Today we had Smotrich, Israel Katz, the defense minister of Israel. Each and every one of them is emphasizing, they're repeating the same thing: we're not going to leave, we're not going to withdraw from Lebanon. That means that they're under some sort of pressure from somewhere. I don't know. And who's doing this? Is it because of Lebanon? Is it because of the situation? Because yesterday, Iran just announced that since the ceasefire was announced, Israel attacked Lebanon more than 84 times. And it's going to get to the point that Iran is not going to back down anymore. They're going to attack Israel. But it's not going to be every time they're talking; it's going to be just a moment, they're going to attack. And that's going to be the end, in my opinion, of the MOU.

## **#Pepe**

You're absolutely right. Just like we had the situation this Sunday, we could have the same situation in the next two days before Geneva. And the MOU will be dead on arrival, literally. Because this is exactly what the Israelis want. And it's not only Netanyahu—everybody, everybody, the opposition, everybody. Dahye is going to be Gaza 2.0 for them. The only way they can stop is if they are bombed to death, literally. And Iran is ready to do it. So the Iranian calculation is, okay, do we help to bury the MOU now? Do we give it a chance?

But if we give it a chance, Israel will continue to bomb Lebanon. And we don't respond. We can't. And we made a public promise to our people and to the people in Lebanon that we will defend them. So it's a very difficult position. And Israel is forcing Iran to make a decision. But there's always, I would say, a plan C. Iran can, like they did on Sunday, tell the Americans, look, these people are bombing our MOU. If you don't do anything about it, no problem. From our point of view, the MOU continues, but we will deal with Israel directly. This will be plan C. What do you think? What do you think?

## **#Nima**

Do you think it's feasible? I think for Iran it's obvious they're not going to stop supporting Hezbollah or Lebanon. That's a red line, the brightest of all red lines for Iran. They're going to back Hezbollah and Lebanon as long as it takes. It doesn't matter for Iran. It's so important, Pepe. I don't know, maybe many people don't understand the relationship between Iran and Lebanon. It's so deep. It's deeper than, you know, somehow Lebanon is more important than one of the provinces of Iran, I would say. This is how important Lebanon is for Iran. And that's why they're not going to back down on their position when it comes to Lebanon. And they're already planning to reconstruct the southern part of Lebanon and how they can bring the people. Today I talked with Laith Marouf in Beirut.

He said that something like 20% of the population's houses, all these buildings, were destroyed in the southern part of Lebanon. And we've seen the footage coming out of the region. But the point is, before the reconstruction happens, you have to do something, you have to bring some sort of sanity. And that's not going to happen with the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Sooner or later, I don't know if you heard Macron talking about how Hezbollah has to lay down its arms. Israel has to do the same thing. I don't know if anybody would care about what Macron is talking about. But basically, yeah, basically they have to force Israel out of Lebanon. There is no way of having Israel in Lebanon and having any sort of, or making, a deal with the United States.

## **#Pepe**

Of course. And that's why this is part of the MOU. But the Americans still have not understood, Nima. What you're just explaining doesn't enter their four-year-old minds.

## **#Nima**

And Iran has to force it into the mind of the Trump administration. That's the way they're trying to do this, in my opinion. They're trying to do it politically. They're trying to do it militarily. They have tried to show Israel the red line in Lebanon. But let's see what would happen. I think this is the... It doesn't matter if it's the Strait of Hormuz, the frozen assets, Iranian sanctions. First, Lebanon. The first point is Lebanon. Each and every plan, 10-point plan, 14-point plan, every plan they've put out so far, the first point is Lebanon.

And let's see what would be the reaction. But the other point, Pepe, you mentioned the meeting between Donald Trump and two of the members of BRICS, but you had a meeting with MBZ of the UAE and Sheikh Tamim, the Emir of Qatar. At least Sheikh Tamim said the main objective of his country is to put an end, to make a deal in the region. They're so desperate. They know how devastating the war has been for them. How does Pakistan see the situation with the GCC countries? What is their understanding of the GCC countries and their sort of new, the new reality of the region?

## **#Pepe**

This is, once again, because they were cultivating these very close relations, especially with Qatar and Saudi Arabia. And Qatar and Saudi Arabia were also talking undercover at the level of heads of government to the Trump administration: "Don't restart the war. We cannot afford it. We're going to be destroyed if you start the war. And it's going to be on you. It's your responsibility." And the Pakistanis, when they were coordinating with interlocutors—Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, especially these four, the most important ones, UAE far away—they were coordinating with the Iranians and coordinating a modus vivendi between Iran and the GCC and other regional players like Egypt. So there was trust in what the Pakistanis were trying to coordinate.

And, of course, the Pakistanis were telling the Americans the Iranian point of view and also reiterating the concerns of the GCC patron monarchies. So it was not a lack of communication. On the contrary, the Trump administration was being bombarded by information every day—from the mediators, from Iran via the mediators, and from the GCC by the mediators and also by leaders of the GCC themselves. So if they still don't understand that, wow, their IQs, in fact, are less than zero. They are not even room temperature, you know. But that's the problem, Nima. They still don't get it. And they still don't understand that Lebanon is an intrinsic part of this whole, the West Asia whole. Not whole as a whole, but whole picture.

## **#Nima**

Pepe, they talk about the second front for the Trump administration. For the Trump administration, it's the war in Ukraine.

## **#Speaker 04**

Yes.

## **#Nima**

He mentioned that it seems he agreed, or somehow, with what Macron said. I don't know. We have no footage or videos from Donald Trump. But what Macron said is that Donald Trump is getting aligned with the Europeans and putting more pressure on Russia. Bullshit. In the case of sanctions.

## **#Pepe**

There's no evidence about that. And if that's the case, the Russians will be the first to know. And the Russians have very good information close to the White House. They'll be the first to know. Of course, there are no illusions. But the most important element—and this is what I saw in Moscow and St. Petersburg less than two weeks ago—the rearrangement of the SMO is inevitable. And there's a strong possibility that hell is going to break loose because everybody has lost their patience with the terrorist drone war by Ukraine, NATO, and MI6. And, of course, there is public opinion already questioning the Kremlin directly about that, because this has direct interference in the everyday life of people living inside the Russian Federation.

So, obviously, this discussion about targeted strikes at some of the chihuahuas—now it's when it's going to happen. It's not if. Now it's a matter of when. And obviously, it has to be very calculated, like everything that Putin does, right? But this is the main focus for Russia at the moment. They know that they have to explain graphically, via business cards of Mr. Kinzhal, Mr. Zircon, etc., that you cannot launch a war against us and think you're going to get away with it. So we are at the next stage. And then we have an unqualifiable imbecile like the head of the German Air Force saying, "We are ready to get into war against Russia today." Good luck. You're going to be a fried bratwurst in a matter of milliseconds.

Milliseconds. Milliseconds. Pathetic. So they think that they can get away with it, not only with the provocations but with the rhetoric, you know, over and over again. And, you know, these people never learn from history. In fact, they never learn from history. And, of course, this rearming of Germany—the Russians are looking at it and doing the math. They already did the math. And they said, we're going to have to deal with this all over again. But that's it. It's inevitable. And at the same time, in the background, they were supporting the Chinese on Iran. And after all, Russia and Iran, they have a strategic partnership as well. The Chinese are more active.

For them, it's a matter of national security—the survival of Iran, the deal that they have, energy, infrastructure, Iran as a key node of the New Silk Roads, and all that. For Russia, Iran is also a partner. Very, very important. The International North-South Transportation Corridor, you name it. But we see movement in Russia now. You know, Russia—it's fascinating because there are months where absolutely nothing happens, and then suddenly, wow. And when they go for the kill, you better not be in front of them. And Europe still has not learned the lesson, especially the Brits. So this would imply the Brits must be taught a lesson sooner rather than later. And that's already being discussed openly in Russia.

## **#Nima**

I can confirm that the partnership between Iran and Russia, between Iran and China, is just at a new level. I have never seen—you're right, yes—this is something new for the whole region. And I think the GCC countries are somehow perceiving that.

## **#Pepe**

They see what's going on, and they have to adjust. They have to act accordingly. And Pakistan—it helps. The role of Pakistan is also to explain to the GCC, look, guys, that world that you lived in, it's gone. You have to adjust to a new paradigm. And that's it. We are part of it, and we can help you. First, you need to help yourselves, then we can help you. You need a new protective umbrella. We can do it. We have everything. We are a nuclear power, by the way. We have everything you need, and we have the backing of China. So any minute you decide to have a new protective umbrella, a security umbrella around West Asia, we are ready to do business.

And because we have good relationships with Iran, Iran is not going to be against it. On the contrary, it's going to be managed. You know, the distribution of security will be the indivisibility of security, which is a Russian concept—the concept that the Russians tried to explain to the previous American administration, and those idiots obviously did not understand. And it's also the Chinese concept. The Chinese understand what is the indivisibility of security. They discussed that when Putin visited Xi. It's part of the text—not in these terms, but it's part of the text of the joint declaration Russia-China during the visit of Putin to Xi. It has security for everyone in Eurasia.

## **#Nima**

What we know from Pakistani sources is that they're thinking of having a new security architecture for the region, because of the partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and the reality of the Strait of Hormuz, which was mentioned yesterday. At least, Axis reported and confirmed that the Strait of Hormuz is going to stay under an MOU. It's going to stay under Iranian control.

## **#Pepe**

Absolutely.

## **#Nima**

This is the new face of West Asia. And how do they see it if they really want a new security architecture for the region?

## **#Pepe**

They? You mean who?

## **#Nima**

I'm talking about Pakistan together with Saudi Arabia, maybe Iran and Russia.

## **#Pepe**

Everybody will have to adapt, first of all, to the new legal status of the Strait of Hormuz. And of course, these are administrative, environmental, security fees—not the toll booth as it was before—charged by Iran, just like Oman is going to charge their fees as well. This is the new reality, and everybody is already adapting. And even before that, other countries were already adapting because they were paying the toll booths. A lot of nations paid the toll booths or sent envoys to discuss with Iran, like the South Koreans, and the others are paying. That's it. It's a new reality.

And there's nothing the Americans can do about that. They don't control the Strait of Hormuz. Period. The Strait of Hormuz is controlled by Iran and Oman. Period. So that's it. They can do what they want. It's their territorial waters. And this is something that the UAE, for instance, will have to live with. You don't want to use it? Okay, it's your problem. Use your pipelines if you can. Export via the Red Sea if you can. But that's it. It's your problem. If you want to use the Strait of Hormuz, you're going to have to pay fees like everybody else. There you go.

## **#Nima**

It's not going to be an easy task.

## **#Pepe**

Yeah, no. What facilitates these very complex, superimposed issues, Nima, is that you have Pakistan playing the role of a glutinator, let's put it this way, and with good relations with everybody. So they are able to explain from one side to another, look, these are the new rules of the game. We are part of it. All of you are part of it. So we have to find some reasoning to, you know, get ourselves together and understand each other. The key point is that the US is not going to be part of the

game anymore, essentially. And that's, well, for them, it's going to be impossible for them to admit it. And these bases, by the way, will never be rebuilt.

**#Nima**

No.

**#Pepe**

No.

**#Nima**

Pepe, do you see the United States coming back to Cuba? Cuba is hurting right now, I think.

**#Pepe**

Yes. I am very worried, Nima, because they're going to need a diversion from the massive strategic defeat. And the top candidates are in Latin America. And the number one candidate is Cuba. So we should all worry. A lot. A lot. And, of course, this is part of the national security strategy. Our backyard. So that's it. It's one of the two focuses of the national security strategy: the Western Hemisphere and East Asia. Containment of China. For the moment, there's nothing they can do about China. So, there you go. But don't forget Greenland. Greenland could be another diversion.

**#Nima**

Yeah.

**#Pepe**

But it could be much easier than Cuba.

**#Nima**

Much easier than Cuba.

**#Pepe**

Greenland. Greenland is very easy. They can do anything with Greenland the moment they decide to. Cuba is much more complicated. And Cuba is a peculiar obsession of the Cuban diaspora, of the people behind Marco Rubio, you name it, of the American Congress as a whole. And it's a wound from an American perspective that has been there for too long. So I do worry, and I do worry to what extent Russia and China will be able to defend Cuba. The Cubans will know how to defend

themselves as best as they can, no question about that. But they're going to need external help, and external help from superpowers, no question. Don't expect anything from the Latin American neighbors. Nothing. Less than zero. But Russia and China are going to have to do something. We still don't know. But this is made-in-the-shade geopolitics, right, Nima? We don't know. The Chinese and the Russians certainly may have a few surprises.

**#Nima**

It's so unfortunate to see.

**#Pepe**

It is. It's extremely distressing, but that's it. We're dealing with a dwindling, frightened, and very dangerous empire. So we should not underestimate them. They're getting more dangerous by the day, especially when they are defeated.

**#Nima**

Thank you, Pepe.

**#Pepe**

Thank you. Thank you. I wanted to be more optimistic.

**#Nima**

You can't.

**#Pepe**

I'm telling you, it's impossible to be optimistic. Exactly.

**#Nima**

It's too hard. When you get here, it's ugly.

**#Pepe**

Yeah, but we have to keep the spirit of the Cape Verde goalkeeper who managed to stop Spain in the World Cup. This guy now, he is a global phenomenon. He is the meaning of resistance. You know, that's it. So, you know, Vozinha. We are all Vozinha now.

**#Nima**

Yeah, exactly. Tá bom, Pepe. Muito obrigado. Thank you so much for being with us today. Great pleasure. Thank you so much.

**#Pepe**

Always an enormous pleasure. And see you next week with more Hells to cover.

**#Nima**

Cheers.

**#Pepe**

Bye-bye.