

Pepe Escobar: Trump Begins WAR, Iran's Missiles SMASH Qatar & Jordan

Pepe Escobar discusses day 2 of intense US strikes and Iran's massive retaliation that spanned hypersonic missile launches landing in Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait and across the Gulf region. Time is running out, and Pepe breaks down the truth about why this escalation is occurring in the first place and just who is begging who to stop. Pepe on Telegram: <https://t.me/rocknrollgeopolitics> Pepe on X: <https://x.com/RealPepeEscobar> Transition Protocol: <https://www.youtube.com/@UCewRbK22LRnNi6N3EcGjbow> Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> #iran #iranwar #trump #israel

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by Pepe Escobar, independent journalist and geopolitical analyst, and we are going to break down the latest news. So first, okay, Pepe, so first, the United States overnight completed another round of strikes for the second straight day. They claim over 91 targets were hit this time, on top of the 80-plus the day before. Iran is saying that over 14 people have been killed and 78 have been wounded in these strikes, and they have retaliated—Iran has—with strikebacks of their own, including on a Patriot missile battery in Kuwait, an early warning radar in Qatar, fuel storage in Bahrain, and two U.S. bases in Bahrain, including the Fifth Fleet, have come under attack.

And we also have targeting of an air base in Jordan this morning, or for Iran this afternoon, which included hypersonic missiles used to fire about 10 ballistic missiles in Azraq, Jordan, to destroy a command and control center. This just touches the surface. You reported, Pepe, that some of the U. S. strikes have targeted railways. Iran is saying that major civilian infrastructure has been targeted, including a railway between Iran and Turkmenistan that connects to China, the Chabahar Harbor—the port, the key node for Russia-Iran-India transport—and the Mashhad-Tehran railway, where in Mashhad the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is, as we speak, being buried there now. So, Pepe, so much to catch up on. How about you help us understand—maybe let's just focus on the last 24 hours and what makes day two significant as we see a restart of all-out war, at least teetering toward that.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, first of all, greetings, Danny, greetings to all of you. I am at my new refuge in the garden in Natostan, which could not be a deeper contrast to all the horrors around us. So here at least we can maintain a little bit of sanity, but you enter the studio and you look at all the equipment and you see what's coming out, and it's hell, it's absolute hell. Well, we are all very worried about the perversity, the crassness, the stupidity, and how nefarious the empire of chaos, plunder, piracy, and lies is, of course. These bombings from yesterday to today—and they will continue—are not only against so-called military installations along the Persian Gulf. If you look at what was bombed along the Persian Gulf, it's a lot.

It starts near Kargh in the west, and it goes all along to the port of Chabahar in the southeast, close to the Iran-Pakistan border. But the Americans are bombing civilian infrastructure and, very, very important, the connectivity corridors that are very important inside Iran and linking Iran with BRICS members, mostly Russia and India. So this post that I made, the internal bombing was crucial and extremely perverse because this is the day where, since yesterday night, in the middle of the night, millions of pilgrims were taking the train from Tehran to go to Mashhad, because today in Mashhad is the burial, the definitive burial of Ayatollah Khamenei and members of his family in the shrine of Imam Reza, which is one of the most extraordinary shrines on the planet.

And of course, the Americans bombed the railway. What else? This is what Americans do in war. This is what the baboon of barbaria loves to brag about. So this was bombing an inside node in a connectivity corridor inside Iran. But it goes way beyond that, because they bombed a bridge that's more or less 40 kilometers from the Iran-Turkmenistan border, which is part of the railway that goes from Iran, crossing the border to Turkmenistan, and then through the Central Asian Stans to Xinjiang in western China. This is the Iran-China railway, which was bought, paid for, and built by the Chinese.

So this is the Americans bombing BRICS integration, Eurasian integration, with the Chinese angle. But they also bombed Eurasian integration with a Russian and Indian angle, which is bombing the port of Chabahar in Sistan-Balochistan, near the Iran-Pakistan border, not far from the port of Gwadar on the Pakistani side, 80 kilometers between them. And Chabahar is the key. Chabahar is way to the east of the Persian Gulf. Chabahar is in the Gulf of Oman, almost in the Arabian Sea. So this is one of the key planks of the International North-South Transportation Corridor—Russia, Iran, India. It was the theme of the documentary that we shot last year when we went to Chabahar. We talked to the authorities, we had the green light to go everywhere, we saw the Chinese cargoes coming, we saw the Indian cranes, we discussed the possibilities of Chabahar becoming almost like a replica of Shenzhen in the near future.

What do the Americans do? They bombed a key connectivity corridor linked to the Russia-Iran-India neo-silk roads. So this is what the empire does. It's a bunch of grifters and sub-Tony Soprano people. They are a bunch of mafiosi, low-life mafiosi. They're very, very dangerous. They're out of

control. And, of course, they're angry. The President of the United States is an angry animal because he's totally cornered. He has nowhere to go. When he's offered an off-ramp, which is the memorandum of understanding, which he signed—the 14 points at the Palace of Versailles—side by side with the piece of shit, the Le Petit Roi here, the king of this thing where I live.

#Pepe Escobar

And two weeks later, he says, "No, I don't want it anymore."

#Pepe Escobar

I don't want to make a deal with them. They are scum. I'm quoting him. He said, these people are scum. So basically, this is self-projection. This is the President of the United States talking like Roy Cohn, the scumbag who taught him how to deal with everybody. This is it. This is beyond disgusting. So he blew up the Memorandum of Understanding. Until a few days ago, many of us were even playing around—okay, is the MOU cat alive, dead, or in a coma? And most of us were saying, yes, it's comatose, but it's not dead yet. Now it's dead. And it was killed by the President of the United States. And the Iranians know it, and the Iranians don't care anymore because they never believed that this was for real.

They identified the MOU as basically the United States playing for time. And that's exactly what they were doing, and they will continue to do. And now it's back to the escalation ladder. And now we are right in the middle of the escalation ladder. It was so naive of all of us to believe that the memorandum of understanding would somehow bring them to discuss it at the table. So, Danny and all of you, this is immensely distressing—of course, predictable, as predictable as it could be. In the case of what we were trying to follow, which was the role of the Pakistani mediators, that translates to Larry and me in our new channel, which Danny was on, Transition Protocol, yesterday.

So Larry and I were getting information directly from the Pakistani mediators, and we were trying our best to place this into the context of, look, they're breaking their backs to try to make this MOU work, with, of course, help—direct and indirect—from Qatar, from Oman, eventually from Turkey far away, and certainly backing from China in the background. But now this whole thing is collapsing. So today, as we speak, Danny, in fact, after I talk to you, maybe in two hours from now, it's something that Larry and I are trying very hard to get some sort of reconfirmation. We have a confirmation, but both of us said, look, this is not good enough. We need a certified confirmation.

According to one of our Pakistani sources, it is Trump that is begging the Pakistani mediators to get Iran back to the negotiation table. It's wild. It is as wild as it gets. I agree with you, Danny. This is as wild as it gets. But I told our sources in Islamabad, guys, we need at least a quote from somebody at the table. You know, he has to bet his ass that this is exactly what's happening. Of course, there are rumors about it everywhere. But we need a surefire confirmation that this is exactly what Trump is doing. And of course, he's posing as macho, macho, macho man, bombing

installations, military and civilian, all across Iran. And this will probably continue tonight after we speak. So this is where we are at the moment, which is very distressing for all of us. We are back to the escalation ladder.

#Danny

Yeah, we definitely are. And it is getting quite barbarous, as you put it, Pepe. Donald Trump shared this about Chabahar. This is, by the way, from the 12-day war, that image. And he said this is in retribution for yesterday's bombing. This is not the image from yesterday, right? No, it is not. Trump shared it on Truth Social like it was. It's in retribution for yesterday's bombing of ships by Iran. If it happens again, it'll get much worse. And then, with your report of Trump being the one begging, Pepe, regarding getting back to the table, this is what Trump had to say to the media when he was questioned about this.

#Pepe Escobar

We have many ways we can win. But we've already won militarily. They have very little left, and they want to make a deal so badly. They called a little while ago. They want to make a deal so badly. I just don't know if they're worthy of making a deal. I don't know if they're going to honor the deal. That's the problem.

#Danny

So Trump claims the exact opposite, which is ironic.

#Pepe Escobar

He's lying. And Araxi posted on X essentially saying that he's lying. And Araxi is at the negotiating table, so he knows exactly what he's talking about. And this confirms what we heard from our Pakistani guys as well. So that's why we would love to have an extra confirmation that this is exactly what's happening. He's posing as a macho man while begging, "Okay, let's restart the MOU." But the difference is that now the political leadership in Iran, not to mention the IRGC high levels, and even more important, which is something that we have for sure from somebody who is—no, he is among the deciding circle around Ayatollah Khamenei—that there are going to be big, big changes.

If the Americans don't stop bombing Iran, all bets are off. And this decision comes directly from Mostafa Khamenei. So this week is very peculiar because the whole apparatus of government in Iran was involved in the funeral rites, the ceremonies, talking to the foreign delegations, going to the streets of Tehran, you name it. This ends today, Thursday. Tomorrow is a completely different story. So tomorrow there's going to be a high-level, super meeting with everybody that counts in Tehran. I

would say, okay, the escalation ladder is back. He's bombing our installations, military and civilian now. So what is our response? Our response cannot be only to bomb Al Udeid base in Qatar, bomb Kuwait, and that's it.

And we don't even bomb Qatar because we had a deal with Qatar that they are helping us to get our money, so we cannot bomb them. But does that hold? Is Qatar playing a double game? Is Saudi Arabia playing a double game? Can we trust both or not? Probably not, in fact. So this is going to be debated in detail tomorrow in Tehran. So we're going to have developments this weekend or next weekend, and the echoes that we are getting are that it's going to become much more hardcore in terms of the Iranian response. And, of course, very important, Danny, the Strait of Hormuz is going to remain blocked, period. If you don't agree to negotiate with the IRGC Navy and the Persian Gulf Authority, you won't cross the Strait of Hormuz one way or another, period. That's it. And nothing's going to change that.

#Danny

Yeah, well, I wanted to ask you about your evaluation of Iran's response thus far, because as you noted, it has focused mainly on Bahrain and Kuwait, with one noted strike on Jordan—Jordan!—in Azraq. But this, I think, is the more telling story, which is that the Strait of Hormuz is now essentially closed for good. There was about one vessel that was reported last night. This is a post from then showing it was a small Indian vessel. Some said it was just a wooden vessel, so very small—a small wooden vessel. But everything's closed. The Omani corridor, so-called, has been closed. And I think since this time, maybe two total have crossed.

And the rest have either stayed put or turned off their transponders in the hopes of not being seen as they lay in waiting. So, Pepe... Is Iran's initial retaliation mainly just about the IRGC? Iranian officials have said that they have mainly moved to just reclose the Strait of Hormuz. And as you said, there's likely more to come. I'm curious if you wanted to give a fuller evaluation of Iran's response and the impact that this is going to have, because going back into this day after day after day, there are a lot of risks, especially on the U.S. side, when it comes to the ticking time of, let's say, strategic oil reserves. Exactly.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, there are several possible scenarios in parallel, Danny, that could happen. There is already a discussion among very good Iranian analysts.

#Pepe Escobar

Forget about the Westerns.

#Pepe Escobar

Is Iran being too timid in their response at the moment? This is one factor. The other factor is, look, they should respond in kind to the Americans and attack American assets a little bit everywhere across the Persian Gulf, no matter where they are, and even including American maritime vessels. So this is the more hard-line version. But there is a third vector, which is basically saying, no, strategic patience should still be the number one imperative, because we have to look at what could happen a month from now, or especially from the end of July to mid-August, which is the critical date about the depletion of the strategic petroleum reserves. And then, the baboon of Barbaria is going to be completely cornered.

And on top of it, with the Strait of Hormuz not opening, remaining under total Iranian control, there's no way out for him. So we have different ways that Iranian analysts are looking at it. All of these vectors have pros and cons. But there is also one message that we're trying to confirm, information that is immensely critical. I think there was at least one post on X coming from a member of the Majles, where he was basically, in terse language, saying—he published it in Farsi, and the English translation may not be extremely accurate—he was basically saying, if we are attacked again by the Americans, we're going to start discussing our self-exclusion from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the NPT. And we all know what that means.

The thing is, everything is in place for this to happen legalistically in Iran. If Iran decides to do that, and there is a period where this has to be formalized, they can do it. And after that, all bets are off. And that would include a revision of the Iranian nuclear doctrine by Mostafa Khamenei, the new leader, still invisible for obvious security reasons, but under extreme pressure, even from vast, vast sectors of Iranian public opinion. Iran bombed again. Serious bombing of Iranian infrastructure. The economy is in dire straits. And if this bombing of strategic overland nodes with other BRICS members continues, it's going to be an extra problem for the Iranian economy. How long can they last, and what kind of dissuasion to end all dissuasions could they apply?

This would be, of course, the possibility of nuclear dissuasion. It's something that Larry and I discussed on our previous channel that was canceled by the U.S. government. It was part of a phone call by President Pesachkin to Prime Minister Shabazz Sharif, where the nuclear angle surfaced. So the nuclear angle could resurface again by a decision of the new leader, Mostafa Khamenei, and, of course, the fatwa by his dad will have to be revised. And if he does that, we cannot go wrong saying that he would have overwhelming support from all sectors of Iranian society. So that's how dangerous this whole thing is at the moment. There is a serious possibility.

It's information that will have to be reconfirmed again. But it's already on the table. And this, I wouldn't say threat, but this message to the Americans was relayed by the Pakistanis to Iran. The Americans: if you continue to attack us, you're going to pay for the consequences, and you won't like these consequences. So it's getting more and more tense and complex by the minute, the whole thing. If Trump thinks that he's going to play a game of chicken with Iran, and Iran is going to chicken out, wow. Well, that tells you the level of advisors around him, right? Or even the state of dementia in his three-year-old brain.

So the options once again are, from the point of view of Iran, they know that they are in a very fragile situation, that the attacks on their economy are huge. But they still control, and will continue to control, the Strait of Hormuz. And they know what this means for the American economy and for the global economy in a relatively short period of only a few weeks ahead. So they have to stand strong for the next few weeks. There are ways of doing it. So from tomorrow, they will be calibrating how they are going to stay strong for the next few weeks, because they know that in a few weeks, for Trump, all options are closed. There will be no easy way out for what he calls it.

#Danny

Yeah, and it seems like Iran is already calibrating. According to TankerTrackers, a report says that 10 million barrels of crude oil from Iran have been shipped out almost immediately, with the prediction that, Pepe, the blockade—I mean, reinstating the blockade.

#Pepe Escobar

The reinstatement of the blockade, which is quite possible.

#Pepe Escobar

It is quite possible. That's the only thing they do, yeah.

#Danny

And it's just—but what's almost crazy about this is what you just said: there is a time situation, especially with regard to oil and these oil reserves, which could lead to a catastrophic economic crisis. So, you know, I know you have a column coming out soon, Pepe. Maybe you can help us understand the big ramifications of this and what you're hoping to put out there in terms of why this war has restarted and what exactly is in the cards here when it comes to the global ramifications of all of this. Because it seems like time is really on Iran's side. The United States doesn't seem to understand that, or they don't care. What are your thoughts?

#Pepe Escobar

No, it's not that they don't care. They don't understand it. It's much worse, Danny. It's... I would say this is blatantly obvious. Nobody in the Trump administration actually read the MOU. If they had read the MOU, they would at least know that there's a series of commitments written and signed by the President of the United States. So you have to fulfill your commitments. And then we continue with negotiations for a period of 60 days, which could be later extended. So obviously nobody read it, because they started breaking the MOU from day one, which is the Lebanon dossier.

And with this absolutely cheap provocation earlier this week of telling tankers from Kuwait—one of them was from Oman, if I'm not mistaken, one from Qatar—five tankers in the end, “Look, you turn off your transponders, you cross the Strait of Hormuz without giving a damn about the IRGC Navy, you follow Omani territorial waters, and we're going to be there to protect you.” Guess what happened? They didn't protect anything, and obviously all five tankers were hit by the IRGC Navy. That was inevitable. So what was that? Was it a cheap provocation? Well, yes, it was. It was a cheap provocation so they could blame Iran, like the President of the United States is doing.

They don't respect any treaty, etc. They broke it. No, the U.S. broke it first. They did not respect what was written in the MOU. So they used these tankers so they have the perfect excuse to restart bombing Iranian installations and Iranian civilian infrastructure, which is much more hardcore. So, you know, they are specialists in basically breaking deals that they sign. So it's still the most applicable and perfect geopolitical definition of the 21st century by our good friend, Grand Master Sergey Lavrov. The United States is non-agreement capable. Russia knows that. China knows that. Iran knew that, but still they tried.

But now they don't care anymore. Now they don't give a damn anymore because they know it's absolutely impossible. It's clear to them that there's only plan A for the U.S.-Israel: destroy Iran, period. There's no plan B. So this means there's no diplomacy. There's no memorandum of understanding. There's no discussing modalities, etc. And this after a strategic defeat, Danny. Can you imagine if they had won the war? They lost the war, and they want to inflict on the victor their prejudices and their, well, unqualifiable lack of grasp of a geopolitical, geoeconomic, and military situation. What are they going to do?

They're going to invade Iran? They can't. They're going to bomb Iran to smithereens? Doesn't matter. Iran will continue to survive, and nothing is going to change that. They're going to provoke regime change in Iran? They can't. Just look at what happened in the streets of Iran this week. There's nothing left for them. The only off-ramp is to sit down and discuss what they signed in the Memorandum of Understanding. And they blow it up. So all of us, we are at a loss for words and arguments and philosophical abstractions, whatever. But we just have to be stunned at how absolutely demented these people are. Well, they are. We know they are.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, I'm not surprised that the United States and Israel are doing this again. I was surprised a bit about the timing of it, given everything that you just noted, especially including the oil shock and the economic crisis underway. I was a bit shocked at the timing. But I wanted your assessment. Maybe you can help the audience understand the Omani corridor situation, because not—you know, some people have said this is like a battle over the Strait of Hormuz. This is the restart. What is it, eleven, twelve days ago? Now even more intense in this current moment. And so help us understand, what is this? How did it come to be? I've seen some people on social media say

Oman is betraying Iran, you know, in this. But I'm curious if you could help us understand the actual dynamics at play. And, you know, it is a very precipitating factor in Iran hitting these tankers, and then, of course, Trump using that as an excuse to go back to war.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, I have—this is privileged information, and I'm sharing it with you and our audience. I don't know if I've talked about this before in other places, but I don't think so. And this we got from the people at the table. Don't forget that at the table, the Pakistanis are the key mediators, but there are inputs from Qatar and Oman. So what we heard from the people at the table is that, for all practical purposes and in terms of what they discussed, the Emir of Oman and the high-level Iranian delegations that visited Muscat are on Iran's side. But because they are a very small sultanate, relatively fragile, they cannot possibly say that out loud and antagonize the empire of bombing.

I think it fits the way they are behaving. But it's complicated because I think one of these tankers that broke the Iranian rules set by the IRGC Navy to transit the Strait of Hormuz—one of these tankers was Omani, if I'm not mistaken. So that's, okay, what is that? Double game? Betrayal? So this has to be clarified, and I'm sure the Iranians will be asking questions to Oman. Was that a private shipper decision, not coordinated with their government? Whatever. Was he bribed? You name it. So for all practical purposes, in terms of negotiations, Oman is leaning towards Iran, but they cannot afford to antagonize the U.S. directly. Or did the U.S. force this tanker to go through the Omani territorial waters?

It's very, very complicated. Ultra tricky. And that's why this whole kabuki of the mediation per se, which Larry and I are fortunate to have access to—what these guys are discussing at the table. But sometimes a lot of the information doesn't fit with what we see. So we make an effort to go beyond and say, okay, maybe this is so deep, deep, deep, deep that we're just gonna see this game being played later on, which is quite possible. The intentions of the mediators are the best possible intentions because essentially they are, because they enjoy the trust of the Iranians and because they have, theoretically, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia behind them as well, in terms of the MOU cannot fail.

We have to, by all means necessary, prevent that barbarian from restarting the war, which is what he's doing this week already. But there's lots of stuff that is lost in translation, Danny, and lost in the shuffle. And sometimes it doesn't add up. Just to give an idea to all of you, our audience, how complicated this stuff is. So, for instance, there are a lot of people, and I respect their opinions, who say, how can you, from one day to another, start believing or trusting Saudi Arabia and Qatar? That's a very, very good question. Because, OK, the only rational answer to this question is that they are looking at the way the chessboard is moving, and they know that they have to change their positioning because the wind is blowing towards Iran as a big power in West Asia.

So what are you going to do? You're going to go against it. That's the only logical, rational explanation. I'm not saying this is the only explanation. There may be others. And, you know, playing a double game could also be part of the whole thing. No question. We don't eliminate any hypothesis. Just to give all of you the measure of how tricky and tense the whole situation is, you know. And who you're going to trust, you know. Wow, it's beyond complicated. We all know, and I'm sure all of the players in West Asia know, who they cannot trust. That's more than obvious, right? Right.

#Danny

Yes, definitely. Well, then the question is for you, Pepe. You know, I wanted to ask you about the United States' particular target bank here. It's very focused on the Persian Gulf, the southern Iranian coast — Siraf, Qeshm, Bandar Abbas. And some have speculated that this could be because perhaps the United States is actually angling toward a possible ground invasion of some kind to capture some island. I mean, Kharg is always the one that comes up. Some have said maybe Qeshm Island, as some kind of, I don't know, fantastical idea of having some enforcement over the Strait of Hormuz. What do you make of that kind of potentiality? Because Trump, for all of his major flaws and all of what he represents in terms of dishonesty, it is something he constantly brings up when war restarts. So what's your thought on this?

#Pepe Escobar

Qeshm is absolutely out of the question. It's hyper-protected. You have everything, anti-everything, positioned all across Qeshm. And what are they going to do? They take over Qeshm, and how do they get to the mainland? There's no way, because the southern part of the Persian Gulf, bordering Qeshm, is ultra-highly protected by the IRGC navy as well. Kharg is very far away. What's the point? I'm very worried about Chabahar, because Chabahar would be essential in terms of the Americans reinstating their blockade. But if they reinstate their blockade, they are the ultimate losers, because then nothing will move out of the Strait of Hormuz — which is exactly what the Americans seem not to want. In fact, we don't know. But apparently, they want the Strait of Hormuz unblocked. So if they block it again, it's their fault.

And of course, this will have enormous repercussions among the Asian customers of everything that goes through the Strait of Hormuz. There will be a rebellion of the Asian customers. Some of them are, let's say, American colonies. Certainly not China — China is different. But if China sees that Iranian tankers are blocked by the Americans from going to China, or Chinese tankers are blocked by the Americans to the east of the Strait of Hormuz, to the east of the Persian Gulf in Chabahar, they're going to do something, obviously. So all the options in terms of a possible ground invasion — for what? You won't control anything. And the Iranian responses are going to be in terms of harassing these so-called American forces that manage to establish a bridgehead somewhere. It's going to be hell.

This was already game. And this was already game, Danny. And the Pentagon knows what kind of hell will be over there. So all options for them are absolutely lousy. And they still insist on bombarding the only option that would be relatively manageable. But of course, to start with, let's try to get into the minds of these gangsters. To accept the memorandum of understanding is essentially, in a glorified way, accepting your strategic defeat. Because you did not set the terms of the MOU — Iran did. The 14 points are the 14 Iranian points, not your American points. Psychologically, for them, it's out of the question. They will never accept it. And this is something that the Iranians should have foreseen from the beginning.

In fact, many among the leadership did. For instance, everybody in the IRGC said this MOU is bullshit. But Araxi, Kalibov, Pezeshkin, you know. And, of course, very, very important, which is something that could change starting tomorrow. The best version that we have coming from people close to Mostaba's inner circle is that he deferred the decision about the ceasefire and the MOU to the Supreme National Security Council, 13 members. At least two of these are progressives, including the president's positioners. The other ones are mostly IRGC or IRGC-linked. They are much more hard-line. But even then, in the end, essentially Mostaba told them, look, if you have a solid majority, go ahead.

I bless your decision. So I think this is the best possible public version of what happened. But now he can change his mind because everybody is seeing for themselves that the Americans blew up the MOU they signed. So what's the point of even continuing to discuss an MOU? Which, you know, until the beginning of this week, we were, according to the echoes that we had, okay, there's a tentative date, Saturday, July 11th, for the U.S. delegation to go to Islamabad and restart the negotiation. But this was practically a done deal before the Americans decided to blow it up. So now we restart with the dead cat MOU, in fact, right?

#Danny

Yeah. And, you know, Pepe, there's really only been one force that's been outside of Iran. I guess when we look at the war initiators, there's only been one force that's been very consistent in their position on restarting the war, and that's been Israel. Israel's defense ministry said that they are ready for round number three. They even named it as round three of war. We know that they're participating in these strikes.

You know, when I heard two days ago—when was it, 48 hours ago—the U.S. started conducting strikes again, my first thought was, you know, Israeli and American so-called decision-makers, thirsty. And I think they were very thirsty at the prospect of even hitting the funeral itself. I don't have evidence of that, but I'm sure if they felt like they could... I think they were maybe a little too scared of Iranian air defenses. But I feel like a lot of this has to do with the funeral—how big it was, what was being said there, the ships, of course. Of course, the Trump administration's way was to make a big deal about the tankers being hit. But why were they going through that corridor in the

first place during this? It was an obvious provocation. And obviously, the United States has a lot to do with why they were going through that corridor. So, Bebe, what are your thoughts on this? The connection between the timing of these strikes and the funeral can't be lost here.

#Pepe Escobar

Of course not, because this is also a diversionary tactic, right? They... Obviously, anybody with a smartphone can see that these images are all over the planet, especially all across the Global South, in terms of a popular manifestation of...

#Danny

Oh, Pepe, I think we lost you. When you come back, you were saying everyone can see this is a popular manifestation of national—and then we lost you. Hopefully, Pepe is able to return. Pepe, you're back, I think. Yes, I'm back. I can see you.

#Pepe Escobar

My Wi-Fi went crazy, and now she's back. I'm so sorry.

#Danny

No, no, you were saying this is a manifestation of popular nationalism.

#Pepe Escobar

Exactly. Popular respect, national cohesion, popular solidarity, paying tribute to the life of a spiritual, religious, political leader that started as a revolutionary—in fact, a friend of the Global South, respected all across the Global South. And irrespective of political persuasions, social classes, people from the big cities, from the rich neighborhoods to the poorer neighborhoods, from the provinces everywhere. Not to mention in Iraq, where people from all over Iraq, not only from Najaf and Karbala, which are two relatively very, very small places, but from all over Iraq. This Shiite solidarity, Iran-Iraq, this is immensely powerful, not only in the Muslim world among the Ummah, but across the Global South.

So can you imagine the usual suspects looking at that and basically seeing that the people they support in the Arab world—which are Salafi, Jihadi, Wahhabi minorities, in fact, total jihadists or Salafists indoctrinated by online Salafists, etc.—which are a minority, were completely isolated. And you see this popular demonstration of Shiite unity in a funeral ceremony, rituals conducted with extreme dignity, with all these foreign delegations coming to Tehran to pay their respects and

tribute. So this is an immensely powerful message, not only to West Asia but to the rest of the planet. So they had to do something to divert attention from it. So what do they do? They restart the bombing. There you go.

#Pepe Escobar

It's what they do.

#Pepe Escobar

They kill women. They kill children. They provoke a genocide. They attack civilian infrastructure. They lie. They cheat. They steal, as some of their lowly functionaries admit on record.

#Pepe Escobar

And they start bombing all over again.

#Pepe Escobar

Their president, that's what their president says all the time. I'm fed up with this thing. I'm going to bomb again. No deal. These people are scum. So let's bomb them. And I like one of the posters that Arakshi wrote, which was something so elegant. He said, look, we're not going to reply to vulgarity with vulgarity. The vulgarity of the government of the United States nowadays has gone intergalactic, in fact. And one of the things that keeps the profile of Iran in terms of soft power all over the world is that they are elegant. You know, they are extremely civilized, dealing with a bunch of gangsters. And they're not going to change. They're not going to start hurling insults against anybody in the U.S. No. It's not how they do it. And when you look at how they organize the ceremonies honoring their assassinated leader, how elegant the whole thing was.

And this was recognized by the foreign delegations, that some of them sent delegations at the highest level. The Russians sent the number two in the government. They sent Medvedev. That's a pretty, pretty big statement. The Chinese sent a parliamentary, ultra-high-level delegation. So that's it. I would say that this is the ultra-sharp contrast between civilization and barbarism. And going on a more pop culture note, we have the President of the United States who thinks that he can steal a decision in the World Cup, which is the number one sports event on the planet, by forcing the president of FIFA to cancel a red card, which is something that never happened in the history of football. So this tells everybody everything they need to know. That's it. This is the pop culture example of this — a bunch of fucking gangsters.

#Danny

Yeah, and just the way the Iranian football team was treated, having to travel in and out of the country. They couldn't even stay in the country.

#Pepe Escobar

And everybody in the Global South said, Danny, they saw everything that the Americans and FIFA together did to try to get rid of Iran. They did not lose a single match. You know, so they exited with their honor up there, with the respect of the whole footballing world and the respect of the whole Global South, because they saw what was happening.

#Danny

And this is a country at war. This is a country that, just until recently, had been under sanctions. Of course, those sanctions are back on, but they were only lifted for a matter of days. So here is exactly what Abbas actually said: as you said, addressing the civilized and courageous nation of Iran with derogatory language does not diminish its greatness. Iranians are known for their civility, culture, and strong moral values. We don't answer vulgarity with vulgarity, but with action — fearlessly, with great valor. And

#Pepe Escobar

That's a good thing, right? This is definitely not Mar-a-Lago.

#Danny

Yeah, and I think, Pepe, some might misunderstand Iran in the sense that people get really worried, as we all should be, when a major war is restarting. But I think there's actually a lot of calculations being made that are strategic, in the sense that while Iran, of course, views these strikes as significant, and any attack on it is significant, we even have today, Tasnim just reported, as we've been speaking, that the Mashhad railway line has been restored in a matter of hours.

#Pepe Escobar

They did that in a matter of hours, Danny.

#Danny

Indicating that either these strikes were ineffective or not as strong as assumed when CENTCOM pushes its chest out and Trump pushes his chest out. But also that Iran is very much prepared and perhaps calculating exactly how severe this new escalation is. Because, as you said, it's an escalation ladder. It is not a dive. It is not a dive into the pool, so to speak. So your thoughts on this? I don't think a lot of people understand this, in particular because maybe in the U.S. and the West, a lot of

times when there are attacks on smaller countries or perceived weaker countries, the thought process is, well, if they're not stopped ASAP, there's going to be a major catastrophe. I don't think Iran is operating along those lines. Your thoughts on this?

#Pepe Escobar

They are not. Coming back to what we were discussing a few minutes ago, there are different schools of thought and a discussion going on at the moment about how we should proceed from now on. Do we keep strategic patience, get a little more hardcore, or go total hardcore? So for the moment, it seems there is no consensus. This is being actively debated on Iranian platforms everywhere. And of course, the attention of everyone at the moment is on the funeral ceremony. So this is the last day. Starting tomorrow, the attention of the country once again will be totally focused on the return of the escalation ladder and how Iran should react.

They don't take their decisions impulsively. This is very, very important, number one. Number two, from now on, after Daddy Khamenei, let's put it this way, to be affectionate, is buried, now the whole responsibility is in the hands of his son, Mostafa. So how will Mostafa imprint his total authority after, okay, we closed the previous era, we start a new one. Mostafa is the leader. He enjoys consensual respect from the political vector and the military vector. The nation is under an existential threat, is being bombed again. The economy is in a very, very, very complicated state. So what will be his major decisions?

And that includes, of course, how, from now on, we are going to tweak our response to the empire totally out of control. So this will be the big question starting tomorrow. And depending on what they will be discussing, we're going to see examples of how they're going to handle the possibility of a return of the negotiations mediated by the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis are telling us that they are doing everything they can to try to bridge the unbridgeable gap. Everybody—and I mean everybody—Turkey, Egypt, Saudi, Qatar, Oman. The Emirates don't count because the Emirates are still at war with Iran, and it's later. But the Pakistanis say, look, we're trying to get the Emirates on board, but it's a long process.

Everybody wants to, okay, let's have some sort of at least civilized discussion. Is it possible with this president of the United States? Everybody knows it's not. And they are still trying. So that's it. Now, in a certain sense, the ball is in Leader Mostafa Khamenei's court now. He is going to decide: are we going to continue with a variation of strategic patience? Is our patience exhausted? Are we going to inflict serious damage on the United States? Or we don't do anything, we just wait. Because we know there are a few deadlines that are totally adverse to the Trump administration coming. So that's where we are, Danny, at the moment. Big, big crossroads. Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah. And I'll just pull this up so people can get a sense of just how big it is right now. Wow. I mean, it's an incredible scene, and it makes me wonder, with all the video circulating of Trump heads and Trump posters being stoned in Iran, I just wonder if, you know, are these strikes going to change their minds about the current situation with the war and their take on it, which is, you know, revenge and getting justice for the crimes that are committed—not least the assassination and the murder of the Supreme Leader and his family—but also, how about the thousands of others who were killed, the hundreds of children who were killed, including 168 in just a strike in Manab. So...

#Danny

This is another factor I've been asking people to comment on—the people factor. This is a big part of U.S. wars: to be able to push the internal situation inside a country into either instability or a favorable political situation toward U.S. ends and Israeli ends. This doesn't seem to be the recipe for success in that arena. Pepe, your thoughts about that?

#Pepe Escobar

No, definitely not, Danny. There is a national consensus that you can frame it as revenge, but this is too reductionist an explanation. In terms of, no, they're going to have to pay for what they did.

#Danny

Right.

#Pepe Escobar

They attacked us directly, unprovoked. They killed our leader. They killed a great deal of our political leadership. They bombed us. They continue to bomb us. They said that they would stop and they would sit at the table and discuss it. And they bombed the discussion over and over again. So how can we possibly—and the element of trust. And this is something that now you can see in some of the things coming from the Majlis, coming from the Ministry of Foreign Relations. There was never any element of trust with them. We knew we couldn't trust them from the beginning. And now we have proof after proof after proof that they are untrustworthy.

But what does that mean? We're going to have a system of no war, no peace, lasting indefinitely. Iran cannot live with that. Iran cannot properly function with that. They need to start rebuilding. There won't be any closure, of course. And some sort of revenge for the assassination of leader Soleimani, this is something that could last for years, the process, until they get there. And they are very, very—don't forget—Shiites are extremely patient. They don't do things in a rash way. Forget it. But in terms of normalizing life in Iran, they need it for the system and for the population.

And normalizing with the neighbors, which is a process that has already started. For instance, the normalization with the rest of West Asia is possible. The only vector that is totally impossible is, of course, the death cult, Israel. But nobody normalizes with Israel. By definition, this is impossible. But Iran re-emerging as a big power in West Asia and a big power in the Global South, they need to start, of course, healing, rebuilding, rebuilding the relationships with the neighbors, the new security architecture of West Asia, which will basically involve Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, essentially.

So for all that to start moving in, I wouldn't say high velocity, but at least some velocity, at least they have to make sure that they won't be bombed by the United States every week. It's as simple as that, you know. And there's no guarantee. With this president, there's no guarantee. Because he does not respect laws or common sense. I would not even say diplomacy, but common sense. And even acting in his own interest, he knows that he has a potential catastrophe around the corner for his country, his economy, and the global economy. And he still behaves like a bloody, stupid brat with the brain of a retarded whatever. It's ridiculous.

#Danny

It is. Pepe, this was a great show today. I want to make sure everybody knows that your Telegram, your X account, and Transition Protocol's YouTube channel are all in the video description below. After we're done here, I want to thank all the Super Chats—Peace Lover Forever. I know, Skeet Sayer, you gave a bunch. I want to thank you for that. That's very generous of you. Thanks to the new member, Andre. And thank you to... I won't spell that out. That looks like a bunch of names.

#Pepe Escobar

I love the Vietnamese program. People can also topple them. Well, that's brilliant.

#Danny

Yeah, and this is a lesson the U.S. Empire of Chaos, as you call it, Pepe, never seems to learn. Without further ado, so everyone can find your work in the video description below—those three places. You can also find all the places for this channel there as well. I'll be back with our mutual friend, as well as your colleague, Pepe, Larry Johnson, and Ray McGovern will join us tomorrow. Yeah, Ray will join us tomorrow as well, 2 p.m. Eastern Time, July 10th, for another update on what's happening. Because we know the Empire of Barbaria, Pepe, is likely going to continue moving tonight and onwards. Oh, God. Let's go. Pepe, any final words before we hit end stream here?

#Pepe Escobar

No, thank you. Thanks, Danny. It was great. Danny was on Transition Protocol yesterday. Please check it out. Danny's interview was yesterday. And today, Larry and I, maybe we're going to have a

bombshell. And then we'll pass it over to Danny, of course, depending on the reconfirmation of the bombshell. And don't forget, as we used to say zillions of years ago in Latin America, I'll give you the Portuguese-Brazilian version: A luta continua. The struggle continues. All right, Pepe.

#Danny

We'll have to do this again soon enough. Everyone, hit the like button before you go. Check out all of Pepe's work and the places to support this channel in the video description. We are out of here. See you tomorrow, July 10th, 2 p.m. Eastern Time. Bye-bye.