

Pepe Escobar: Iran SMASHES Bahrain-Saudi Bridge, F-35 EMERGENCY as Trump GOES MAD

Pepe Escobar discusses Trump's unthinkable escalation in the Iran war as Iran expands its missile & drone target back overnight. Pepe Escobar is a geopolitical analyst, independent journalist, and author. Pepe on Telegram: <https://t.me/rocknrollgeopolitics> Pepe on X: <https://x.com/RealPepeEscobar> Transition Protocol: <https://www.youtube.com/@UCewRbK22LRnNi6N3EcGjbow> <https://telegra.ph/How-Tehran-is-running-the-clock-07-16> 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

#Danny

Welcome back, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by Pepe Escobar to break down the latest developments that he has been covering. Here are the latest news from overnight. Iran has gone bridge for a bridge. The United States bombed, I think, six bridges overnight. Iran targeted a key node, the King Fahd Bridge that connects Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. There was also a curious incident yesterday. Iran targeted U.S. bases in the UAE, and then there was also an F-35 emergency that occurred at the same time. No confirmed reports about any Iranian attack that did this. But, of course, CENTCOM is always circumspect on this. We also have Bahrain getting hit very hard last night. BAPCO came under attack and was hit, confirmed by Iranian missiles.

Now, CENTCOM said that they hit dozens of targets all along Iran's southern coast. I know, Pepe, you've been covering exactly what these targets were, including in Chabahar, where Pete Hegseth was bragging about them. And you recently wrote an article about how Iran, in these retaliations that it is taking part in, in response to U.S. aggression, is running the clock on the United States. So, Pepe, how about you help us understand this escalation ladder, what's going on in this war? And the Trump administration appears to be moving the goalposts now to China and election interference. But nonetheless, he says this war will be finished very soon. Iran seems to have other thoughts. To you, Pepe, what's going on?

#Pepe Escobar

Well, Danny, good to be with you, of course. Good to be with all of you. I mean, it's a very complicated day for me, with zillions of things to do. And if you allow me, I'm very pissed. And allow me to curse in street-style Brazilian Portuguese about what the empire of grifters is doing. Covardes filhos da puta. Okay. At least I spell it out. You know what these motherfuckers did? I was at this place. The Chabahar Port Tower is the port tower that controls civilian cargo and traffic in the port of Chabahar in Sistan, Balochistan. If you watch the documentary that we shot last year, The Golden Corridor, you have to go to the Press TV website. It's over there, the top documentary.

There's a long stretch on Chabahar because Chabahar is the essential maritime node of, we can say, the Russian-Iranian-Indian Silk Road, the International North-South Transportation Corridor. So what these motherfuckers do, they bomb a corridor that they hated from the beginning. They bombed a connectivity corridor that will be one of the key connectivity corridors of the 21st century. And, of course, bypassing the Suez Canal, bypassing the petrodollar. And, of course, everything that transits through Chabahar goes to Asia. Chabahar in Sistan-Balochistan is very close to the Iran-Pakistani border. It's now a sister port of Gwadar in Balochistan, in the Arabian Sea, in Pakistan. It's only 80 kilometers from Chabahar to Gwadar.

And the Pakistanis are, when they liberated six overland corridors for Iran to export overland without depending on their borders blocked by the U.S. Persian Gulf ports. Chabahar is a different story because Chabahar is already in the Gulf of Oman, close to the Arabian Sea. And, of course, it's very much prized by Indian cargo ships and tankers and also Chinese — two gigantic Chinese cargo ships were unloading at Chabahar at the time. A great deal of the infrastructure of the port was provided by Iran. So this is an international connectivity corridor, absolutely civilian. And these motherfuckers bombed it, and they do it, and we have the clownish Secretary of War bragging about it with a photo, because they know they can get away with it.

#Pepe Escobar

They won't get away with it with Iran, because the response for this is going to be... And we haven't seen the response for Chabahar yet. This is going to be ultra-hardcore. For instance, we don't know the extent of the damage on the Saudi... I traveled this bridge as well, the Saudi-Bahrain bridge, which would be, okay, it's a long shot, but it would be the equivalent of the Crimea Bridge in terms of importance. And engineering-wise, it's quite something. But we don't know if it was really damaged or if it was just a warning shot. From now on, it's not going to be warning shots anymore. So just wait for the Iranian response. But once again, cowardly and totally predictable. They started to bomb civilian infrastructure in Iran all over the place, especially all across the South. And all across the South, not only...

#Pepe Escobar

Bordering the Persian Gulf and near the port of Bandar Abbas, which is the key port for Iran in the Persian Gulf, is Bandar Abbas, an enormous port. We shot over Bandar Abbas last year as well.

#Pepe Escobar

We had clearance from the authorities. They took us all over the port. It's a monster. And this is the key port for the Iranian export of energy. But Chabahar is also getting closer, because the idea by the Iranians is to turn Chabahar into a sort of Shenzhen 2.0. The model for the development of Chabahar is Shenzhen. And that was great because I sat down with the guy overseeing the whole thing, and he explained in detail the plans for Chabahar to turn it into one of the most important ports for Eurasia in the 21st century. So it's not an accident — on the contrary. The Americans are bombing because they are bombing a connectivity corridor. It's like they're bombing the Silk Road itself when they bombed the railways that were built and paid for by China, linking Iran with China.

And they're bombing Chabahar Port because they're bombing Russia, Iran, and China at the same time, because this is a key node of the International North-South Transportation Corridor — three BRICS once again. So if we had BRICS with balls, they would already be, you know, rioting about that, but we don't. And we know that nothing's going to happen at the summit in September in New Delhi. It's emasculated, as much as it pains me to recognize it, but we independent analysts deal with facts. Danny knows this very, very well. We and many of our other friends deal with facts. And the fact is, BRICS at the moment is beyond a joke. And we have one full BRICS member being bombed in terms of civilian infrastructure. And with a bombing like this, they are bombing three BRICS at the same time. This is beyond disgusting.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. And this also demonstrates, Pepe, that while the United States claims it is degrading Iran's military, it appears that the United States has actually conceded that it cannot degrade Iran's military, and it is hitting these nodes in an attempt to starve Iran and cut off Iran, which has been the plan for, you know, forever when it comes to... for 40-plus years, to cut off Iran from the rest of the world in order to destroy its system.

#Pepe Escobar

You're right, Danny, but it's simultaneous. This applies to Iran's foreign trade. And, of course, the Iranians, if there are problems with Chabahar, the Iranians will more and more start using Gwadar Port. It's very simple. They have the containers crossing the border, and instead of unloading in Chabahar, they can unload in Gwadar, because now they are practically working as sister ports. And this came from the top of the Pakistani government. It's very, very important. It's part of their evolving and trust relationship, which gets more complicated by the minute. We're going to talk about this in a few minutes.

But in terms of the internal communications inside Iran, for instance, they bombed another place that I was at last year, before we arrived in Bandar Abbas on the road, and there's a key bridge

linking the south of Iran with Bandar Abbas Port. They bombed this bridge as well. So the Iranians are very, very good in engineering, of course. I assume that they can rebuild this bridge very, very quickly, but it's going to be quite something. And, of course, it's an intimidation strategy. It has the element of them trying to isolate the south of Iran, Bandar Abbas, and the Persian Gulf from the rest of the country. There are many Iranians themselves in Iran who are saying that what we're watching with this is that this could be the preamble for a ground invasion.

#Pepe Escobar

Maybe not so. Maybe we shouldn't get there yet. And even if there would be some sort of ground invasion in the Persian Gulf, anywhere, especially in the region around Bandar Abbas, to the east or to the west, they wouldn't be able to hold it. This is heavily, heavily, heavily dronified and missileized. So anything can happen. But essentially what this latest dementia of attacks on civilian infrastructure is, is to cause maximum damage to civilian life in Iran. There's no question about that. If there is an agenda behind it coming from this bunch of lowly grifters, that's it.

#Danny

I wanted your reaction to some of the other—because Iran has responded, but I believe Iran is actually still calculating its response. Calculating. I agree with you 100%, not showing all the cards. But this happened yesterday. According to the IRGC, they said that they targeted U.S. special forces in Al-Tanf in Syria. Al-Tanf, in a surprise attack, saying that several high-ranking U.S. officers were killed and that a radar system was destroyed. CENTCOM was very quick to deny this, Pepe, in their very unconvincing manner. I'll pull that up. But your reaction to this, because BAPCO was also hit in Bahrain, which is a key energy hub for the Gulf in general. Again, Chris. So Iran really is making a calculated response here. But your thoughts about it, and maybe where incrementally and where it fits into your piece about how Iran is running the clock on the U.S.

#Pepe Escobar

Yes, they are running the clock. And of course, they are upgrading, twisting and turning, and perfecting their response spectrum on a daily basis. No question about that. They don't want to reach a limit where they can provoke—well, it's very easy to provoke uncontrolled anger from a narcissistic megalomaniac with the brain of a four-year-old. But there could be serious repercussions if this goes completely out of control. So their response is calculated to inflict damage, but up to a certain level. But of course, they have their red lines, and they've already talked about the red lines over and over again. It's civilian infrastructure, and this is already happening.

So for the moment, it's bridges, control towers in ports, highways, etc. If we get over that situation, then we can expect the Iranian response to skyrocket. Let's put it this way. But since they control the clock—which is something that, in my latest column, I made a point of making very clear over and over again—they know that time is on their side, and they know that this is driving Donald

Trump completely crazy. And that explains these attacks on civilian infrastructure. Is this going to change anything in the big picture? Of course not. Everybody knows that. Is this going to intimidate Iran? No. Is this going to bring them back to the table?

No, there's only one thing that might bring them back to the table. And with that, Danny, once again we enter into the immensely complicated situation regarding the mediation between the US and Iran, which is basically the Pakistanis, but also includes the Omanis, the Qataris, and even Turkey. Because now we have a different card that came out of nowhere, and believe me or not, even if you don't want to believe us, Larry and I are sending messages every day, two or three, to our connections in Pakistani media, saying, look, we want a definitive answer to our question: what the hell is Saudi Arabia doing? So far, nothing. We received enormous intel reports. The latest one I didn't even have time to read.

And, of course, nobody can explain, and even the Pakistanis who deal directly with the Saudis because of their military pact still cannot explain what Saudi Arabia is doing. One of the echoes that we had is that, in terms of the Iranian-Pakistani relationship, this has not changed anything. But, of course, it had to change because this was an attack on a very important, clear ally of Iran in the axis of resistance, completely unprovoked. Okay, the Saudis were saying, of course it was provoked. They were under an embargo. They cannot land planes in Sana'a airport. That's not the real story. The real story is that they have an MOU. Very few people around the world know that Yemen and Saudi Arabia also have an MOU, which has been in place for quite a while.

2017, I can't remember exactly, but quite a while means a few years. But what did Iran do? And that's the direct Saudi Arabia-Iran connection. Iran broke the blockade of Sana'a International Airport, and they sent a Mahan Air flight first to go to Sana'a and pick up a Yemeni delegation and bring them to the funeral rites of assassinated leader Ayatollah Khamenei. And then they went back with part of the delegation. Some of them stayed in Iran. Some of them, in fact, are still there. Some of my friends, for instance, from Yemen, they're still in Iran. And with some other people who were Yemenis who were in Iran that needed to go back home and couldn't. So this de facto broke a blockade. And this blockade is completely illegal.

Totally illegal. So was this reason enough for Saudi Arabia to bomb the runway of Sana'a International Airport? The Iranian pilot, this guy is an absolute hero. In mid-flight, he went on a Hail Mary pass to divert to the west and then land at the very, very precarious runway of Hodeida Airport by the Red Sea, which I would say is a miracle. There's no other explanation. It had been repaired only a few days before. If this had been a few days earlier, he wouldn't have had any runway in Hodeida to land on. So why the hell would the Saudis do that? So for the moment, this is the major interrogation point. And of course, Larry and I, we are extremely worried about it.

And it will condition how we are going to continue interacting with this information coming from Pakistan. This is an extremely serious thing. What we've heard so far is that this won't interfere with the Iranian-Pakistani relationship. I find this very, very hard to swallow. Really. And, of course, this

introduces a new front out of the blue and introduces a front that everybody has been trying to sing this song before it happens, which is what a Yemeni friend of ours defined as the Al-Aqsa Triangle — the red triangle. Suez Canal on top, Strait of Hormuz to the east, Bab al-Mandab to the south. And you get a triangle, and this blocks everything.

So Saudi Arabia, by antagonizing Yemen directly, by bombing the runway of their main civilian airport — exactly, that's the Al-Aqsa Triangle. So if the Yemenis... This is something that is being debated in Sana'a. Should this be the right moment for us to enter the chat, or maybe later? If they enter now, or if they enter later, we all know what's going to happen to Saudi Arabia. Absolute disaster. Meaning, Bab al-Mandab, blocked. The port of Yanbu, blocked. The east-west pipeline could be hit. Saudi possibilities of exporting oil, now that they don't have the Strait of Hormuz and the only one was Yanbu in the Red Sea, blocked. So they are going against their own survival interests.

How can we possibly explain that? No wonder we haven't heard from Islamabad so far about this. It's unexplainable. And, of course, this could have been a maneuver inside Saudi Arabia. This is very, very dangerous. Don't forget that there are a lot of people — I wouldn't say part of the inner courtyard in Riyadh, but outside — who have a lot of grudges against MBS. This could be a direct attack on MBS, which, according to our Pakistani mediators, he is supporting all the efforts by the mediators, including the Qataris, the Omanis, and the Turks, to find some sort of accommodation with Iran. So none of that, Danny, is completely unexplainable and immensely dangerous.

And Ansarallah and the Yemeni armed forces, of course, Reuters describes them as the Houthis. This is a bloody news agency. Come on, I started in the newspaper business from the beginning. I am a newspaper man, old school. So we know how the rules of the game are. You have to be precise when you are a news agency. And these assholes cannot even describe Yemeni armed forces or Ansarallah, which would be the correct denomination, one or the other. So they're saying that they're just waiting for an order from Tehran to block the Bab al-Mandab. This is not how it works. And all of us who actually went to Yemen talked to members of the political council of Ansarallah. And this was our case last year.

And they explained to us how they make decisions. They took us everywhere. In fact, they showed us everything that was bombed by Saudi Arabia before the MOU. Can you believe that, for instance, these guys bombed Saada University in the north — the Saudis? They use the U.S.-Israeli playbook as well, and they applied it to Yemen. So, you know, is this back again? It's quite possible with this bombing of the Sana'a airport runway. So this turns the whole game upside down. Absolutely. And as much as we're getting assurances from the Pakistani mediators — look, the Iran-Pakistan relationship is very solid because it's also personal.

And they say, look, Araqchi, Ghalibaf, and Pezeshkian on one side, they are on a personal communication level, interacting directly with Sharif Ishaq Dar, the Pakistani foreign minister, and with Marshal Asim Munir. So this is not only government to government, but government to

government at the highest level. I would put it on a Sergei Lavrov–Wang Yi mode. They talk to each other all the time. Apparently, this is how it happens between the Iranian leadership and the Pakistani leadership. But obviously, the Iranians now are asking questions. Look, you have a military pact with this. You have your prime minister doing a tweet where he says that an attack on Saudi Arabia is a red line for us. We know how to interpret this.

We're not going to attack Saudi Arabia. First of all, we want to know what the hell Saudi Arabia is doing, or what the hell they think they're doing. So, you know, this, I would say, this alignment in terms of let's try to find some accommodation has also been bombed, and in this case by Saudi Arabia. And guess who is pissed to death — but obviously they will never say it in public, Danny? The Chinese. Because the Chinese are supporting all these efforts. The Chinese are supporting Pakistan, you know, the back channel for the Pakistani mediation, and the diplomatic power and legitimation is from China. Because the way the Chinese see it — and this is the big picture — the Chinese see these two partners, one in South Asia, one in West Asia.

One as a member of the Belt and Road, in terms of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is the most important and the most costly Belt and Road project. And the other one, the Iranian strategic partnership with China. And Iran is a partner of the Belt and Road as well. There are a lot of Belt and Road projects and investments in Iranian territory — railways, metro stations, you name it, everything. So the Chinese want these two on the best possible terms, because this is in the Chinese interest. And on top of it, as participants in Belt and Road and, you know, the whole thing, the whole diplomatic apparatus, you name it. It's a geopolitical and geoeconomic relationship. For instance, the Chinese suggested to the Pakistanis, look, open the overland corridors to Iran.

If they are blocked and cannot export on maritime routes, they use their overland routes because they have borders and all sorts of border crossing points. This is one of the things that is helping the Iranian economy — they can export via Pakistan. And the best way for Iran to export to China is not via Central Asia. It's too far away. You know, Iran, Turkmenistan, going through Kyrgyzstan, arriving in Xinjiang — it's too complicated. It's much easier and faster to export via Pakistan. So all that impacts the Chinese directly. And obviously, they are not happy with what's going on. There's no question. Okay, Danny, this is the short story. It's much more complicated than that, but I'm trying to give you the short story. No, it's great.

#Danny

No, it's great. I mean, you're hitting all the notes, Pepe. And I wanted to now bring in also, you know, Russia. Sergei Lavrov today commented that Ansarallah — this is the Houthis — will close the Bab al-Mandeb Strait if the bombing continues. And I've seen reports, Pepe, that if this happens, and now we've had days of reports, and Russia is also expressing validation of this concern that this may happen if this continues, that oil could go up to \$200 a barrel almost instantaneously. Given the incredible — it's like not just oil, it's global trade in general. A large percentage has to flow through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

So maybe you could talk about that in light of the fact that Iran has shown, even just in these very reserved strikes, you could call them. For example, on the port of Fujairah, it was said to have been hit, and now we see actually that it's shut down. I mean, this is before and this is after the recent strikes that have occurred not a week ago, not only to supertankers but also to the port itself. No activity in the port of Fujairah around the Emirates. So, I mean, Pepe, the empire is trying to whistle past the graveyard. Trump is trying to get us to focus on Chinese election interference, but it appears that even Iran's measured response is having an effect. It's having a real effect, and it could get far worse.

#Pepe Escobar

It's going to get far worse. I'm sure you have seen that there's a list of ports in GCC countries that the IRGC is saying, "We're going to get them." And that includes Jebel Ali in Dubai. This is key. Jebel Ali is probably the most important port in all that region. So this is, once again, what all of us were fearing — total escalation ladder. A few days ago it was, okay, maybe a little bit of an escalation ladder. Now we are heading towards total escalation ladder. But, of course, once again, from the Iranian side, very measured. For instance, if they attack the causeway between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, it's not to disable it — it's as a warning. It could get much worse later. This attack on Fujairah apparently was not a huge thing, but it was enough to paralyze the port, as you showed in the map, completely.

And even if this is a warning, if they do this with Jebel Ali, which is one of the top ports on the planet in terms of cargo movement — wow. You know, and of course, if we have the blocking of Bab al-Mandeb, then all bets are off. Everybody knows that. And this goes much worse than when Goldman Sachs, years ago, were gaming the blocking of the Strait of Hormuz. They were saying, look, in a matter of two weeks, you can get to 150 a barrel. In a matter of one to two months, you can get to 200, and even get to 500 after two or three months. We could get to 200 in a matter of one week if Bab al-Mandeb is blocked, because then there will be zero oil being exported from West Asia. The global economy simply cannot live with that. Everybody knows that.

#Danny

Yeah, no, it's... it's absolutely. We are witnessing a major crisis. And I want your comment now on the Trump administration. Now, this is after getting into another war or a restart of the war with Iran, talking about planning operations for Cuba, and now making the crux of what seems to be a domestic political campaign about China — about China, literally putting a Chinese face on Russiagate. And now it appears the Trump administration, and I'm curious about your thoughts on this, doesn't really care — and the U.S. empire in general, the empire of chaos as you know — doesn't care about the consequences of this war on Iran because he's promising, Trump himself, the big oaf, is promising these strikes are going to escalate. Now power plants and oil, etc., oil saved for last, but there will be even further infrastructure strikes on Iran in the coming days. What explains

why the U.S. empire seems to be so carelessly escalating and now opening up multiple fronts potentially globally in this sensitive time?

#Pepe Escobar

There would be only one plausible, solid explanation for that. And Danny, this is not a conspiracy theory. I heard the same possibility of discussion from well-placed people who prefer to remain in the shade. It's a calculated implosion of the global economy. Really, let's blow it all up as our last measure because we know it's not going to get better. And when we blow it up, of course, we can profit here and there. We can zero our unpayable foreign debt. We can restart all over again. So this would be the new meaning of the Great Reset. This is the only plausible, logical, rational explanation for that. Because everything that Trump is doing, and once again, this is something that you know, this is something that our audience knows.

Trump is just a messenger, a lowly grifter as a messenger. He doesn't decide shit. Everybody knows that. So who's deciding behind? Their agenda is immensely ambitious — immensely ambitious — and it focuses essentially on neutralizing, by all means necessary, and without getting into a nuclear war, these three so-called existential threats, which happen to be interlocked in strategic partnerships: Russia, China, and Iran. So what you just mentioned about China is not an accident. Of course, all that is interlocked. And now they are starting to become slightly more worried because Russia is losing its patience with the proxy war. So Russia is going to be on the — they're going to release the turbo in the next few weeks.

And obviously this has to do with the internal situation in Russia, with pressure, with the fact that most Russians are saying that's enough. And they know that this will get worse in terms of the attacks on targets and civilian targets inside the Russian Federation. It can only get worse. They know, they understand that this is now a terrorist drone war against the Russian Federation. So obviously the pressure on Putin to be not as cold, calculating, and legalistic as his normal state — it doesn't hold anymore. It's not enough anymore. So can you imagine Russia consolidating its strategic victory in Ukraine while Iran is consolidating its strategic victory in West Asia?

There's not much left to these people running the show in the US. Then, okay, let's invade Cuba as a diversion tactic. Let's annex Greenland. So it's getting more and more dangerous because there are very, very smart people among these controllers of the narrative. There's no question about that. The dumb ones are on the front line. The dumb ones are the Pete Hegseth crowd. But this is just for public consumption. This guy cannot do a simple math equation. But the big, big picture, which empires at the end usually is, is very, very, very ugly. And, of course, in terms of the current decline, it's directly linked to more and more nations abandoning the petrodollar.

#Danny

Yeah.

#Pepe Escobar

And, of course, the internationalization of the yuan, what the emasculated BRICS at the moment have been trying to... They are trying to perfect it, at least for the past two months — alternative settlement means of payment in local currencies, multilateral currencies, a new currency, tokens, whatever. This is being studied by the BRICS too slowly, but they are doing it. And this is the BRICS' main mission. We need to establish solid, globally sales-linked alternative payment systems.

So this whole, let's put it this way, Chinese bullet train has already left the station and is picking up speed very, very fast. And there's no return. And the people behind the show in the U.S., the real ruling classes, they see that. And they don't have anything. How are they going to counteract that? They can't. The way that the U.S. is already fragmented, and the U.S. economy is a joke because it's virtual. The U.S. economy now is Wall Street. They're not producing anything apart from pieces of shit weapons that they sell as, you know, when people try it, it's a total disaster.

#Danny

Like the F-35s that fly over the UAE and everyone's wondering if they got struck, but it's very possible that it's just not operating correctly, which happens all the time.

#Pepe Escobar

Right, exactly. So is there a plan B? No, because they never thought about a plan B. And that's what happens when empires become self-satisfied, which is the case. The American elites always thought that this free lunch would last forever. I remember the turn of the millennium — ah, the 21st century is going to be the new American century.

#Danny

Go ahead. No, the fall of the Soviet Union — there is no alternative. It was all about American hegemony. I mean, Francis Fukuyama would say, oh no, it's about liberalism and the U.S. just being at the head of it. But really, it was about U.S. hegemony and the model that you are describing.

#Pepe Escobar

You're right. It's so easy. Now that we are the only hegemonic power, it's going to be so easy to represent. Piece of cake. We're already sitting there. So now you have a strategic alliance of peer competitors in Eurasia — China and Russia. You have China as the number one geoeconomic power in the world. You have Russia as the most important nuclear and hypersonic power in the world. You have all the progression in terms of accumulating political capital all across the Global South by Russia and China.

And you have Iran, because of this strategic defeat that they just inflicted, against all odds, against America, emerging as, let's say, the most important middle power of them all. So it's amazing because the trajectory of going down is steady. It's really rolling, but rolling down all the time. And on top of it, they have at the presidency of the United States this unqualifiable thing, in fact, completely manipulated in every aspect, and now even more deranged because he knows that he lost control of everything. He won't have control. He already doesn't have control of the oil market, the bond market, anything. Losing the midterm elections.

#Pepe Escobar

Everything. Everything.

#Danny

And Pepe, I was going to say, last night when Trump gave that speech, he was basically reading off of CIA note cards. This is a CIA project now, right? And it seems like he's trying to take advantage of everything that you just mentioned. Everything. The CIA is now, oh, this is a great time to test out another election interference scam and reap all the benefits of that. It truly is so opportunistic. But Trump, when he was up there, he looked exactly what you just stated he is, which is a completely controlled figure. He was just up there.

#Pepe Escobar

Oh, yeah. The CIA told me this, and...

#Danny

Like how horrible it is. Oh, but they're telling me this, and it affected me negatively, supposedly. And so it's all good, but really he's just doing their dance.

#Pepe Escobar

And it's even worse, Danny, because once again, because of the narcissistic megalomania and Milky Way-sized ego, he doesn't read, number one. He doesn't listen to anybody, number two. Number three, he doesn't engage in intellectual discussions or conceptual discussions, or anything that goes against his prejudices that are already established is immediately rejected, not to mention zero attention span. It's all there. It's very easy. You know, the clinical evaluation and the psychological evaluation are actually very, very simple. You can have all the symptoms, you know, on one full page. That's it. And of course, that's the pop culture element of it all. He always has to be posing as a macho, macho man. It's the only thing that is in his mind, you know. It's tragic. But once again, I think I said that in other podcasts. It's not tragic in a Shakespearean, Greek tragedy way. It's tragic in the sense of a really, really trashy soap opera, you know.

#Danny

Yeah, and isn't it such a coincidence, Pepe, that after numerous reports this week, first a couple of days ago, Chinese exports abroad have reached a record high — \$412 billion in the last month alone — on demand for green tech and A.I.? And as this happened, of course, yesterday a Pew poll found that the majority of the world now views China favorably, more favorably than the United States, shockingly enough. And as this happens, then Trump starts talking about China stealing the U.S. elections. And I think this is very connected to the Iran situation because China's economic success and China's growing favorability mirror this. What's happening with Iran, just under completely different circumstances — Iran is fighting a war but has gained quite a lot of favorability around the world just for the simple fact that everyone hates Israel.

A lot of people hate the Trump administration around the world. They see Iran fighting back successfully and they say, wow, that's pretty interesting. And then, of course, the fact that despite all the attempts that we covered earlier and that you laid out so well, so completely, around the targeting of interconnectivity, that's something that's incredibly difficult to stop, given that Iran and China — China's economic success in the long term, medium term — is going to have a lot of fruits for, and bear a lot of fruits for, Iran. So ultimately, yeah, it makes a lot of sense that the Trump administration, the U.S. empire of chaos in general, would start to again thrash about on many fronts, given that it's all connected, as you said.

#Pepe Escobar

I'm sure you have noticed that the campaign of demonization of Xinjiang is also back, right? So all of it is completely interrelated. The big, big picture, which is something that many of us have been writing about, writing books about, talking about nonstop, is the process of Eurasian integration, which used to be slow and steady. Now it's fast and surely expelling the U.S. from Eurasia. Period. They will have a minor presence in some nodes of Eurasia — Japan, South Korea, depends. I'll be going to South Korea soon. I'm dying to see what's going on in South Korea at the moment. Singapore, but that's about it.

#Pepe Escobar

That's about it.

#Pepe Escobar

Everywhere else, and across ASEAN, in Central Asia where Russia and China are, these are the two real powers in West Asia, depending on how it's going to be reignited. And of course, India, because the Americans, they want India to remain subservient. That's the only plan for India. It will never be

a top ally of the U.S., and it will never be treated on equal terms. If it's subservient... and it sends a few good brains to Silicon Valley, that's about it. And of course, they have to oppose China as members of the Quad. That's it. This is the American plan for India.

So this interconnection of the bulky parts of Eurasia, including very important powers — BRICS members, SCO members — the integration with Central Asia as well. And the U.S. presence a little bit everywhere is dwindling once again, slowly but surely, and now much faster. Because these nodes of the Global South, they look at the war in Iran, they understand perfectly what this war is about — in energy terms, in terms of preserving the petrodollar, in terms that it's a war against the Global South as a whole, it's a war against the BRICS. Everybody sees that. It's very, very clear. Of course, they have to hedge. For instance, Kazakhstan, which is a very interesting case — they are hedging.

They know that they cannot antagonize the Americans. You know, there's a lot of American investment and interest in Kazakhstan. So they have to navigate this. But in geopolitical and geoeconomic terms, Kazakhstan, they know that their future is with Russia and China. Oh yeah, it's obvious. Absolutely obvious. So when the Americans look at that and say, OK, what means of pressure do we have? There are not many. You can, of course, do the only thing that you know how to do — divide and rule. So once again, Taiwan, South China Sea, Xinjiang, another so-called revolutionary Hong Kong — anything is possible. They will do it all over again.

It's the only thing they do. Okay, Philippines, which is easy. The Philippines is 40 families, and they alternate among themselves. Okay, which president are we going to elect next week? That's it. The Philippines is a joke as a political system, so it's easy to control. But you cannot do this in Indonesia, in Vietnam, in Thailand. You know, much more complex systems. So there's not much left for them. Okay, let's invade Cuba. Of course, in Latin America. I don't even start talking about it because it gets me in tears looking at the way Latin America is being practically everything. He knows. So the last stop will be Brazil, and anything can happen with these Brazilian elections. Anything can happen.

#Danny

They're talking about it already. I mean, the United States is already talking about it.

#Pepe Escobar

The American interference—talking about election interference—the American interference in these Brazilian elections is going to be something, you know, off the charts. Because they know this will be the cherry on their cake, the Western Hemisphere cake, you know.

#Danny

Right. Yeah, because it would be the last government that is part of that so-called pink tide. But really, it's part of the last of the sovereign leaders, and all of them have either been election-cheated out, outside of Cuba and Nicaragua, but on the South American continent.

#Pepe Escobar

Outside of Cuba and Nicaragua.

#Danny

Right, right. But they've all been taken out by election interference. By election interference, actually.

#Pepe Escobar

Exactly, exactly. But does that alter the balance of power on a global scale? No. Latin America is too, let's say, off the map. Latin America is not Eurasia. The big, big game is across Eurasia. Even before Mackinder, everybody knew that. World history always knew that the center of the action, politically, is Eurasia.

#Danny

Yeah, and everything that the U.S. has done to Latin America, we've gone through these seasons before. It'll swing back and forth because what ends up happening is the U.S.-sponsored leaders, governments, death squads—they tend to not govern well, and they tend to cause absolute mayhem on the economic and political realities of people. So usually it swings back and forth. I don't know if we can trust that in a couple of years' time the landscape, even in Latin America, will look the same. But I want to ask one last question to you about the Saudi factor here, because China—people forget that China—the reason why China would be so pissed right now is China wants to keep relations good with Saudi Arabia and Iran, and it was the one who brokered that normalization process.

Now... now Saudi Arabia is moving quickly, and I wouldn't be surprised if in the next several weeks, Pepe, Saudi Arabia enters the fray in this restart of the Iran war, because all the winds are blowing in that direction. And there's—if attacking Yemen, where Saudi has had its butt kicked a few times by the Yemenis and by Ansar Allah, what stops Saudi Arabia from doing what it did earlier in the war during the first 40 days, which is foolishly be a party to U.S. attacks? What stops it? I don't know. I don't see it. So your thoughts on this, because this was a huge deal for China, not only to solidify BRICS, but also to solidify its own relationship with and to ease tensions between two countries that are obviously going to be major players in that region for a long time, at least for the immediate future, with Saudi Arabia at least.

#Pepe Escobar

Yes, and this has been a process. It started when the Russians... It was fascinating how hidden and kept from public examination this process was. The Russians approached the Saudis and the Iranians separately. This is how it started. Then they started to meet with Iranians, Saudis, and Russians. And then the Russians said, okay, this is the first part. They threw the ball to the other side, to the Chinese. And they basically told the Chinese, look, you finish it and you can reap the rewards. It's okay. For us, we have had good relations with both for a long time. But it's up to you to put them together. And then you cultivate your own relations with the three of us. So this was sealed in Beijing with the full weight of the Chinese government brokering a diplomatic deal between Riyadh and Tehran.

So obviously this started to evolve because it then started to involve Pakistan as well. I'm talking about how the Chinese were looking at the whole thing. It's absolutely fascinating. So they have two different partnerships, one with Pakistan, one with Iran. They are neighbors, and one of them is a neighbor of China. And they're both part of the Belt and Road at different levels. So they have to build the best possible relations. So when the war started, the Chinese looked, oh, shit, one of our key—okay, let's say along with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia for oil, Iran for gas—one of our key partners in West Asia is being attacked by the empire. And we have our friend here on the side. He could lay a hand and lend a hand to Iran.

So that was the beginning of this, what evolved into the Pakistan-Iran closer relationship, with the Chinese in the background providing all the diplomatic support, you name it. And that led to the MOU as well. Because the Chinese, from the beginning, this is a very Chinese foreign policy position: we want peace in West Asia, it doesn't matter how; we want free flow of trade, doesn't matter how, even in the middle of a war. So this is their main rationale. So obviously they said, okay, we can use Pakistan to try to find a deal. So when you have breaking the MOU, it means breaking the relationship with China and the relationship between China, Pakistan, and Iran at the same time, which brings us to the Saudi factor. From the beginning, everybody assumed that the Saudis were on board in terms of a normalization.

The first meeting in Islamabad, I'm sure all of you remember—Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. This was the first stepping stone that led to the Islamabad meeting and then led to the meeting in Switzerland. And after, of course, when we had the MOU, Trump blew it. But everybody knew that he would blow it anyway. But the problem is this relationship—China, Pakistan, Iran—that was solidifying, and in the background we had Qatar, Oman, Turkey, Egypt, but also Saudi Arabia from the beginning. So now Saudi Arabia makes a move that directly blows up this conglomerate, and against an adversary that they know is going to respond. You don't mess with the Yemenis. This will be probably one of the first lessons in history: never mess with the Yemenis.

#Danny

Hey, China and Russia don't, and they get a lot of benefits from it, but the empire does, and they get a lot of—

#Pepe Escobar

The empire did. You saw what happened to the empire when they messed with the Yemenis. Yeah. So now Saudi Arabia, against their own interests and against this alignment of, okay, let's try to find an accommodation, they do this absolutely foolish move. So, you know, no wonder the whole thing is upside down. And it gets much more dangerous because of the military pact. So a few weeks ago, Asim Munir himself, Field Marshal, head of the army, the most powerful person in Pakistan, went to Riyadh to talk to MBS face to face to upgrade their military pact.

And that includes an attack on Saudi Arabia, an attack on Pakistan. So obviously the Iranians are looking at all that and saying, what the hell? We're going to help our friends in Yemen, obviously. We are not planning to attack Saudi Arabia. But how involved are the Saudis in terms of not attacking a member of the Axis of Resistance and maybe eventually starting to play a double game and attacking us? So they need reassurances from the Pakistanis. In the back, the Chinese are looking at all that absolutely horrified, because from the beginning, they were putting this thing together.

So, you know, it's an immensely dangerous crossroads that we are at now. Immensely dangerous. And, of course, the Yemenis never considered Bab al-Mandab as a card to be played immediately. For them it was, okay, if we get to a nuclear point, then we play our nuclear card, which is Bab al-Mandab. So probably they won't play it now. But there's got to be some response. And obviously there's got to be some intervention by the Pakistanis to tell the Saudis, cool down. One of the things that we heard, and I'm waiting for confirmation today, is that the Pakistanis actually told the Saudis, cool down.

#Pepe Escobar

Because then you're going to blow us all up.

#Danny

It seems like they somewhat have. It seems like they have as well.

#Pepe Escobar

They somewhat have for the moment. Yeah, it seems like they somewhat have for the moment. Right, right. Which should be the only rational way to proceed, right? But I think this is just an

example for all of you of how the whole thing hangs by a thread. One single wrong move, the whole thing collapses. And this thing that the Saudis did has the potential to collapse the whole thing. Hopefully it won't.

#Danny

Well, Pepe, it was a great discussion. I know you have a lot going on today, so I want to get you out of here with plenty of time. I want to make sure everybody knows that your article is in the video description below, as well as your Telegram and— I almost said Instagram— your Telegram and X accounts, the best places to find your ongoing work. This article is great. Everyone should read it after the show and also hit the like button so more people hear it. Pepe, no streams this weekend. I will be off, but I will be doing records on the news, so check those out this weekend. Hit the like button before you go. All the places to support the show and all of Pepe's sources where you can find him are there as well. All right, everybody, we are out of here. See you soon. Bye-bye.

#Pepe Escobar

Thanks very much, Danny Haiphong.

#Danny

Thanks, everybody.