

Pepe Escobar: A Secret Diplomatic Deal Taking Shape in Iran

Pepe Escobar is a journalist, a political analyst, and author. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Buy Diesen merchandise: <https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined today by Pepe Escobar, a journalist and political analyst, to discuss what is going on now in the Middle East. So thank you for coming back on the program.

#Pepe Escobar

My pleasure again. With you, it's always a pleasure.

#Glenn

Thank you. And there's a lot of things happening at the moment. We're seeing some indications of a willingness to escalate, or at least go on the defensive. And at the same time, we're seeing some diplomatic developments. Usually—well, of course, the U.S. is making similar threats about possibly doing a major strike on Iran. Trump just said, "We'll see within the next 48 hours." But also, the Iranians seem to be more willing to go on the offensive, as opposed to only responding to what the Americans are doing. At the same time, though, there's some diplomatic developments going on between Iran and Oman, and it's unclear how the U.S. will respond to this. I was wondering, how are you interpreting the situation? Well, I'm deep into it, Glenn.

#Pepe Escobar

In fact, I finished writing a column a little while ago, to be out in Russia Tonight, talking about the dead cat MOU. You know that cat that was—was it dead? Was it alive? Was it in a coma? Apparently, it's another resuscitation in progress. And against all odds, in fact, I tried to have a little bit of poetic license with it. And in full Odyssey mode, I compared the almost dead MOU cat to a voyager in a raft in the middle of an ocean in revolt under the wrath of Poseidon. But he was still resisting. So this is what it is at the moment, and based on facts. Well, the most important fact is that the diplomatic channel is being revived actively, and it involves a lot of players.

As our audience knows, Pakistan is the key mediator between Iran and the U.S. But, of course, there's also help and consultations, let's put it this way, with Oman, with Qatar, with Saudi Arabia, the Turks dropping on and off. And, of course, behind all of them is China. China wants a peaceful resolution of this war. In fact, what we have now is a no-war, no-peace situation, which is the last thing that the Chinese want. The Chinese are absolutely sticklers for stability, continuity, predictability. And this involves one of their key strategic allies across Eurasia. So this diplomatic channel, which we can describe as Beijing, Islamabad, Tehran, is very, very active.

Very important because both are New Silk Road Belt and Road Initiative partners. In the case of Pakistan, of course, the most important BRI project is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. And with Iran, China has, on top of it, a strategic partnership, a 25-year deal, signed, sealed, delivered, ongoing, \$400 billion in energy and infrastructure. And, of course, they are the two key partners linking South Asia to West Asia for China. So how is this manifesting itself in practice? And that's when the complication of the whole thing becomes visible. Do you know who's arriving in Islamabad tomorrow, Glenn? Araghchi, on an official visit.

He got an open invitation earlier this week from Ishaq Dar, the Pakistani foreign minister. He said, "Look, you can come anytime you want." So Araghchi arrives tomorrow. And he's not going to talk only to Ishaq Dar. He's going to talk to the top guys, Prime Minister and Chief of the Army Field Marshal Asim Munir. This trio, Munir, Ishaq Dar, and Shehbaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, they are coordinating closely with the Iranians. For the moment, let's say 0.1% on a scale from 0 to 100 of reopening the negotiations. Of course, the dead-cat MOU, Brussels is stating it once again. But everybody knows the Iranian conditions because they have been very explicit. And for what?

Over two months already. Why do I say over two months, or two months? Because on August 16th, which is next week, it's the end of the 60-day clock inbuilt in the MOU. And obviously, as we know, nothing happened because the Americans blew up the MOU. So now this diplomatic channel is trying to bring the MOU back. Before that, they needed the Iranians to once again give, to quote John Lennon, give peace a chance. But, you know, this is a little bit too much, isn't it? Because they gave peace a chance over and over again. And every possibility of a diplomatic understanding was destroyed by the Americans. So tomorrow in Islamabad, we're going to have Araghchi discussing with the three Pakistanis.

#Glenn

Okay, what happens next?

#Pepe Escobar

Inside Iran, Glenn, at the top level, it's very complicated. And this is something that we could confirm with our Iranian friends and sources. There is, how can I put it diplomatically, a divergence of strategic opinions between the diplomatic vector and the more hardline military vector. For

instance, Vahidi, the commander-in-chief of the IRGC, in public, he said that President Pezeshkian should resign, which is something very, very serious. Why? Because he's completely opposed to any possibility of negotiating with the Americans. So this means essentially Pezeshkian as the president and Araghchi as Minister of Foreign Affairs. And of course, the majority of the IRGC generals, they are against any negotiations with the Americans because basically they're saying, look, we proved our point.

They are non-negotiable. Sergei Lavrov, once again: the United States is non-agreement capable and non-negotiation capable, as we have seen, all of us have seen it. But then there's the element of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Because his position is—he is the invisible leader, as everybody knows. But, of course, all these major decisions, they go to the top, and he is the ultimate decider. So the fact that he gave, let's say, a chance to the diplomatic channel to go on and to have discussions about the MOU, even though he was opposed to the MOU from the start—so the whole situation proved his point. He was correct from the start. He knew that this thing would never work with the Americans.

But the thing is, at the same time, the Iranians cannot say no to diplomacy. And that's where Araghchi comes in. And Araghchi is the global face of Iranian diplomacy. He is now respected all over the world, not only in West Asia, across Eurasia, but all over the Global South. So they will keep giving peace a chance. But the mood among the IRGC generals, including the commander-in-chief of the IRGC, Vahidi—the mood in the streets, as we saw during the funeral ceremonies related to the burial of Ayatollah Khamenei, all across Iran, from Tehran and Qom all the way to Mashhad and all the provinces—it's impossible to have an understanding with the Americans.

So the leadership, they have to pay attention to the streets, but they have to pay attention to this divergence of opinions between the political vector and the military vector. So it's a complicated, it's a very, very complicated position. But they are not closing the door to diplomacy. On the contrary, this trip by Araghchi tomorrow is basically to once again coordinate with the Pakistanis, who are talking not only to the Americans, because Asim Munir has a direct connection with the White House, one of the very few—how can we describe him? He's not a political leader.

He is the most important military authority in Pakistan. He is the top man in charge. There's no other way to put it, right? And he has Trump on speed dial. Very few people have that. So, and they're also talking to Saudi Arabia, which, you know, and all of us, and a great deal of our audience knows, they made the supreme stupidity of picking a fight at the same time with Yemen and with the Popular Mobilization Units in Iraq. And now they have to backtrack. And according to what our Pakistani mediator sources told Larry Johnson and myself, and we asked over and over again, so what is your position vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia?

They said, look, our political leadership basically told them, stand down. This means Islamabad told Riyadh, we are not going to pick your fights, and we're not going to be involved if you pick a big, big fight again with Yemen, and now with Iraq as well. So for the moment, Saudi Arabia appears to

have listened to it. But, of course, once again, to make the whole thing even more complicated, is Saudi Arabia supporting this diplomatic channel trying to resuscitate the MOU? Nobody knows for sure. The Pakistanis, they tell us, look, our impression is that they understand the stakes.

And the fact that MBS called Trump this past weekend personally and said, "Don't go on with your Gates of Hell adventure, because all of us in the GCC were..." So this would imply that they know the stakes. But with Saudi Arabia, as you know very well, Glenn, because it's such an opaque regime, we never know what really goes on. There's no access for anybody to know how MBS makes his decisions. So this is a huge question mark in this already extremely complex situation. But the main takeaway is, to answer your question directly, okay, the headline to answer your question directly: the MOU dead cat is not dead yet. They are trying a resuscitation program. We don't know if it's going to work or not.

#Glenn

Well, it's tough. It's very tough, isn't it? Yeah, no, I've always been quite pessimistic about the MOU. But at the heart of the conflict now, though, is what makes it impossible for Trump to declare victory and go home, essentially, is the Strait of Hormuz. This is a massive problem. And I've seen now two pieces of news which are somewhat in conflict. At least it appears so. The first one is that the Iranians and Oman are close to a deal. They're still disagreeing on the amount of fees which they would collectively charge from the transiting ships. And of course, the United States demands no fees at all. But again, it doesn't get a veto power in this, it appears.

So this is the one news. The other one is, well, that the Iranian state media apparently reports that the Iranian parliament is pushing a bill in which they would then just formalize control over the Strait of Hormuz. And this would prohibit passage of vessels belonging to Israel, the United States, et cetera. And the countries who have caused damage to Iran, they must pay compensation before they can use the Strait again. So again, this will be, I guess, a hardline bill in the Iranian parliament, I think. So this seems not to harmonize completely with what the Iranians and Oman are negotiating. So how do you see, I guess, the Strait of Hormuz on the diplomatic front?

#Pepe Escobar

Of course, this is the absolute key issue even before February 28th, because no one should ever forget that this war has nothing to do with the Iranian nuclear dossier. This is an oil war. This is an oil chokepoint war. This is a war that was to make sure that the Strait of Hormuz and beyond, and every form of energy exported by Iran—which should have gone through regime change in the first 48 hours of the war—will be based in petrodollars and not in petro-yuan or other currencies. So all that went downhill in the course of the war. So now we are in a completely different situation where Iran is affirming its control of this absolutely key energy chokepoint.

Like, forever, the whole thing has changed. And it's absolutely impossible, not only for Trump—Trump is a messenger for American elites—to actually admit the extent of this strategic defeat. And that's the point that is being discussed by the Iranian parliament right now. We're going to solidify our control of the Strait of Hormuz in detail, which is something that they have been talking about from the beginning, after the first days of the war started on February 28th. What we have at the moment on the table, on the negotiating table, and that's the only thing being negotiated at the moment. Everything that we see being spun by American mainstream media essentially is nonsense.

There is only one negotiation going on at the moment, and it's a technical channel. And we managed to confirm that with our Iranian friends. Iranian technicians and Omani technicians are sitting at the same table and discussing a temporary—and it's not even long-term. The long-term deal will be the one that is being discussed at the Majlis, at the parliament. For the moment, the Omanis and the Iranians are discussing a temporary arrangement, which is quite, quite simple. Everything sailing into the Strait of Hormuz is subject to IRGC Navy procedures, the Persian Gulf Authority, the new body, PGSA, payment of fees, administrative fees, whatever that is, humanitarian fees, maintenance, security, whatever.

And everybody sailing out of the Persian Gulf, there will be two stages. First, they will be cleared by the Omani authorities, but everything will be supervised by the Iranian authorities. So what we have essentially being discussed and practically approved between, once again, strictly Tehran and Muscat—nobody else is part of this negotiation. Nobody. Nobody in the Persian Gulf, outside, whatever. One hundred percent Iranian control coming in, and let's say 50% Iranian control going out. This is what's being discussed, and it could be announced in the next, let's say, next few days. Quite possible.

So there are two parallel tracks. One is the technical track, Iran-Oman, temporary. And the other one, this is the big, big deal: what the Majlis, the Iranian parliament, will institutionalize as the new policy, the new deal, the new groove, whatever you want to discuss in terms of who navigates inside and outside of the Strait of Hormuz. So when this is approved by the parliament, the Trump administration is going to be beyond freaking out, with unexpected consequences, as we all know. But very important for the moment, we have two parallel tracks, and they are not intersecting.

#Glenn

Well, the overarching objective for Iran, though, for long-term peace is to, well, essentially get the United States out of the region. And I was wondering, how could this be done? Does it entail—can it be done through controlling the Strait of Hormuz, or would it entail destroying physically all the bases in the region? Is it pressuring the Gulf states? Because something appears to be shifting a bit. That is, the Iranians going on the offensive, that is, attacking Jordan in this way. This was kind of interesting, and you can interpret it in many ways. One, yeah, the Iranians are going after American bases. But at the same time, you see all these officials and experts in Jordan signing this letter that

it's time to get the U.S. bases out of Jordan. So what is the pathway, essentially, for the world? There's different pathways for Iran to expel the United States from the Middle East.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, Glenn, the way the chessboard is being changed by Iran reflects their self-confidence. And this is something that we saw during the ceremonial week of the burial of Ali Khamenei, part of his family, et cetera—the processions, the people in the streets, how this was viewed in Iraq, in both sacred cities of Najaf and Karbala, and, of course, how the leadership, starting with leader Mostafa Khamenei, and, of course, the Supreme National Security Council, and then both vectors: the diplomatic vector, which is the one that everybody follows because Araghchi is in the headlines literally every hour, and the more complicated military IRGC vector.

They feel confident that they have already inflicted a strategic defeat on the Americans, and the extent of this strategic defeat is what they are trying to negotiate among themselves now. Like, how far should we push that? How far are we going to humiliate the Trump administration on a daily basis? And this has several vectors, once again. The most obvious for everyone following it is the progressive destruction of the U.S. bases all across the Persian Gulf and beyond. Beyond means essentially Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan and in Jordan. That pounding day after day, which now even Pentagon generals recognize, that these bases are practically gone.

So we have a concurrence of circumstances which is immensely negative to the Trump administration. They are running out of everything: Patriots, THAADs, whatever, everything. They're running out of bases. In fact, they had to transfer most of it to Israel, which is, from a Sun Tzu point of view, brilliant, because the Iranians managed to put the U.S. inside the Israeli box. The repercussions are going to be, wow, mind-boggling. We're not there yet. They know everything about the timelines because they run the clock. So this means that next week, mid-August, like everybody was predicting—JPMorgan, Goldman Sachs, everybody and his neighbor—it's the red line for the depletion of the American Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

So they won't get away with putting loads of oil on the market to lower prices. That's it. And Trump knows that. And Trump knows the date. And Trump knows this is next week. And, of course, they know that in terms of the diplomatic channel we were discussing in the beginning of our show being reopened, it will have to be reopened according to what was signed by both presidents, and it's in the MOU: end of all wars, start paying, start giving Iran's money back, sanctions relief, no more war against Lebanon, you name it. Discussion about the Strait of Hormuz, obviously. And the Iranians are saying, look, it has to follow our order of priorities.

And the Americans are saying, no, the first thing to discuss is the nuclear dossier. And the Iranians are saying, no, we explained to you over and over again, and it is in the MOU. The last stage is to discuss the nuclear dossier. To make it even more complicated, the Americans have no clue whatsoever about this. How much enriched uranium does Iran have? And where is it? Did they

disperse it? They don't know. Where is it? They have no idea. Because, of course, the IAEA has been inspecting for months. Are they on the verge of building a nuclear weapon? They don't know.

Look, if anybody in the Trump administration were listening to Professor Ted Postol, Professor Ted Postol said, look, depending on what they have, they could build 10 nuclear bombs in a matter of two weeks with the amount of enriched uranium that they had the last time it was certified. So the Americans basically don't know anything about anything. And on top of it, everything concerning their strategic hegemony in the Persian Gulf and West Asia is evaporating. So what cards do they have? No, no cards at all, as many of us have been saying for weeks, if not months, right? Which adds to their strategic despair, in fact. And it was leading towards an absolutely demented decision to provoke the gates of hell by bombing Iran again.

And then we needed to have, for instance, people like MBS calling Trump and saying, "Don't do this because you're going to get us all killed, all of us in West Asia." So, you know, this is the short version of the complexity in front of us. The Iranians, they look at all that and they say, "Well, this is going according to our plan, and maybe even better, because we're actually driving this American administration completely nuts because they are boxed in and there's no way out." And the only off-ramp, de facto, for them is to fulfill their commitments that they signed officially at the 14-point MOU, which we all know Trump will never do. So once again, Glenn, even the way out and the off-ramp is now off. So what's left?

#Glenn

Well, it does get a bit more complicated too, because even if the deal on the Strait of Hormuz is reached and the Americans decide that they will fall in line, then still there's all these other components, as you said, everything from the nuclear issue, but even the conflicts now, which have extended beyond Iran and the U.S. So the war in Lebanon, there's also quite possible that Iran will want some more concessions to include Yemen. That is, Ansar Allah, referred to as the Houthis in the West, they are supposed to be, you know, they will look for a deal for them as well. The Iraqi militias, which are also, well, somewhat aligned with Iran. I mean, all of these are issues which have to be resolved. I mean, does this have to be broken into many smaller deals then, or how? It just seems like this huge mess which has been made. It's very difficult to put this thing back together.

#Pepe Escobar

Absolutely, Glenn. But the most important point is all of that is inbuilt in the MOU. The beginning of the MOU says it, and that's the problem, because the language is very ambiguous. End of all wars. End of all wars means all the wars of the U.S. and Israel against the whole Axis of Resistance: Iran, Hezbollah, Ansar Allah, and Hashd al-Shaabi, Popular Mobilization Units in Iraq. The whole Axis of Resistance. And the Axis of Resistance now is working well, hyper-coordinated. Hezbollah is a little

bit outside. They're just waiting. If Israel tries something more radical, Hezbollah will enter the chat, re-enter the chat, big, big time. But for the moment, after that bombing, which was U.S.-Saudi joint bombing of the PMUs in Iraq, of Hashd al-Shaabi, someone's going to have to—there will be blood.

There will be retribution. They didn't do anything because it was Arbaeen, and still a few days ago. And Yemen, Yemen, they are self-sufficient actors. They don't need anybody to tell them anything because they have their own strategic aim, and they are very good at playing it. And they basically sent the message indirectly to Saudi Arabia: if you continue like this, we're going to destroy everything in your oil industry. And they have the means to do it with their ballistic missiles. So this is apart from the bigger picture. And there was something that keeps coming back to me because it was the confirmation that I got from probably my best Yemeni friend, who is also a source in Sana'a. I asked him directly, why did you choose this particular moment two weeks ago to blockade Saudi Arabia?

You could have done this before. After all, there is a memorandum of understanding between Sana'a and Riyadh signed in 2019, and the Saudis broke it. And there is an illegal blockade, an aerial blockade by Saudi Arabia against Yemen for over 11 years, over 11 years. And his answer was outstanding. In fact, look, our intelligence, Ansar Allah intelligence, and also with Iranians, and we coordinated with Iranians to see if they were reaching the same conclusions. We established that the Americans were ready to launch a massive war, not only against Iran or restart the war against Iran, but it would be a massive offensive against the whole Axis of Resistance, ourselves and Ansar Allah included. So we preempted that. We created an extra headache for them in terms of Saudi Arabia.

Of course, we always wanted, we always thought that we should counteract the blockade, the siege by Saudi Arabia, with a siege. And at the time, when you were reading the official Ansar Allah statement, it was written in the statement: it's a siege against a siege. So if Saudi Arabia blocks Yemen, especially ports, airports, all the ports, same thing. They don't start with airports. They said, look, we're going to block all Saudi ports in the Red Sea. If I remember well, there are four. But this could go, you know, not sideways, but upwards. And then, okay, and then we're going to start bombing oil installations. If you bomb our infrastructure, we're going to bomb your infrastructure as well. And, of course, the whole Bab al-Mandab question, it was and it is a selective blockade: only Saudi tankers leaving the Red Sea.

And if you are a Saudi tanker and you are exporting oil to China, you're not blockaded by Yemen. You can go because there is a direct Beijing-Saudi agreement. So that, once again, it's one complication. It's a matryoshka of complications, as you know very, very well. And there is no easy solution for all of these problems at the same time. So basically, what the Iranians are—their new upgrading of their decentralized mosaic strategy—is that, okay, we deal with each of these complications on a case-by-case basis, and each of these problems on a case-by-case basis. So they are working on a solution for the Strait of Hormuz. They are working on a solution in terms of completely devastating all American air bases everywhere. They are not interfering with how the Yemenis are dealing with Saudi Arabia.

Because theoretically, and this is something that, once again, we have to ask the Pakistani mediators all the time: look, guys, you have a mutual defense pact with Saudi Arabia. But if Saudi Arabia starts an absolutely crazy adventure against a third country, are you going to get into it? And the Pakistanis said, "No way. And we told the Saudis that: don't drag us into one of your foolish wars." So this is a completely separate thing. And, of course, Iraq and Saudi Arabia is a completely different problem because the Iraqis are going to structure their response to the U.S.-Saudi attack on their own. So we have, at the same time, a coordination between all these vectors of the Axis of Resistance. And at the same time, they preserve their ability to find their own solutions to their own specific problems. And that's why the whole thing is so complicated. It's very far from monolithic, you know.

#Glenn

My last question is about another layer of complexity. Another layer, of course. Well, that is, during all of this, you know, Israel's been awfully quiet. And, you know, it has a lot to lose from this U.S. defeat in Iran and these peace deals, or diplomatic solutions, which are now beginning to take shape. On the other hand, if the U.S. is successful somehow in knocking out Iran, this will be the head of the snake for the Israelis, which they've been lobbying for decades now, to defeat the Iranians. This is their one chance, and it's an all-or-nothing game pretty much for them. And again, they have been somewhat quiet in all of this, but I assume that probably won't be the case if a bad deal begins to materialize. So I guess my question would be twofold: How is the role of Israel impacted from this? And also, what can Israel do now? Because, as I said, they have a lot to lose here.

#Pepe Escobar

Well, the only thing they know how to do, Glenn, as you, our audience, and probably 98% of the planet know, is to kill people.

#Glenn

This is what they will continue to do.

#Pepe Escobar

They will try to kill people. Kill people means killing members of the Iranian leadership and trying by all means to sabotage the possibility of the MOU being back on track. They will do everything to sabotage it. The problem is their interest now is against U.S. interests. So then we'll be able to see clearly—everybody will be able to see very clearly—if the Trump administration is thinking in terms of U.S. national interests, or if they're once again being controlled by Israeli wider interests and a wider Eretz Israel program. So this would be quite, I would say, enlightening for the whole planet to

see live in front of all of us. But for the moment, they have to be awfully quiet because, first of all, they cannot interfere in the possibility that the Americans themselves are selling.

They are selling throughout this week via Western mainstream media: a deal is now imminent. So obviously, the Israelis are waiting to see what kind of deal, even though there is no deal. We all know. And the Iranians said, no, there's no deal because we're not discussing with the Americans. We are discussing with the Omanis about the Strait of Hormuz. But if we have even a temporary mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz, and then a few days later we have the Iranian parliament finally approving what's going to be the final status of the Strait of Hormuz, then the American administration, of course, will go batshit crazy, and the Israelis might join in.

But for what? Another war. Restarting the war. Another attack. The return of the gates of hell. With what? They don't have it. They don't have what it takes. And now Israel is even more vulnerable than they were before. And the Iranians are looking at this status of Israel now, as the American bases are all being transferred to Israeli territory, and American bases boxed in inside Israel. For Iran, this is a dream scenario. And they have the weapons to devastate all of that in a matter of days with the next-generation ballistic missiles that they haven't even used yet.

So it's in terms of all those—everything that was spun in the first few days after the decapitation strike on February 28th, and all the targets that they had—the way the whole thing was turned completely upside down by facts on the ground, facts on the battlefield, and diplomatic facts as well. It's no wonder that they have to—of course, they are incapable of self-reflection, those people in power in Israel. But, of course, a few IQs here and there are probably thinking, okay, how this whole thing went wrong the way it did, and is there anything we can do to go back to the situation before February 28th? That's impossible. Because the emergence of Iran as a top regional power in West Asia, and one of the top powers in Eurasia, and one of the top powers in the Global South now, is irreversible.

#Glenn

Yeah, this is, I think, the painful part for the US. Because I think for Trump, his main thought was, well, we'll have a go at this, and if it doesn't work, we can always go back to the old status quo. And we will bomb the Iranians, they will be weakened a bit, we will have shown the consequences of defying the United States.

#Glenn

And everything essentially went the other way, as Iran refuses to go back to the old status quo. And indeed, this makes it impossible for the U.S. to do anything. I mean, I still remember last year when the United States decided that, yes, things were going well in Yemen. You know, just say, okay, well, you know, declare victory and go home. It's just the fact that this isn't a possibility. I mean... Well, I guess, how do you see the— sorry, I'll do one more last question. The U.S. domestic

situation, that becomes another layer to this, because even if Trump and his administration realize this is as good as it gets, the longer we delay this, the harder the Iranian demands will be and the worse off we will be.

And of course, I think the Iranians are looking at the depleted weapons stockpiles of the United States and realizing that their negotiation hand is strengthening every day. By the way, I saw Trump going on social media saying he would hunt down all these people who are leaking the fake news. But if it's fake news, he's actually just going to hunt them down and put them in jail if they're arguing that they have a shortage of missiles. So that's very interesting. I'm not sure how that conforms with freedom of speech in the United States. But anyways, yeah, I was just thinking, if the U.S. is in a worse and worse position, yes, it wants to make a deal.

But that will be pragmatism. That will be the rational thing to do. However, they do have domestic politics in the United States. And Trump, he keeps saying that we're winning, we're winning. The Iranians are begging us for a deal. Oh, we gave them a test with MOU. They failed it. So now we really want to turn the screws on them. So, you know, with all this BS, the narrative deviating so far from reality, it's going to be hard. And also they have their midterms coming up. So how do you see this affecting the ability of the Americans to, well, I guess, come to terms with the new realities on the ground?

#Pepe Escobar

They will never come to terms with the new realities on the ground. Don't forget that this is an empire that thought that they would have a free lunch throughout the 21st century. And now they are reduced to this position of being humiliated by a mid-sized power under sanctions for 47 years, and with a defense budget—how much is it? One five-hundredth smaller than the United States, or something along these lines. Talk about a strategic defeat and a strategic humiliation. This is unheard of in modern history. And, of course, I took the pleasure of uploading to my Telegram channel a very good piece in The New Yorker about Roy Cohn, the Jewish mafioso that taught all the tricks in the book to a young Donald Trump. It's an excerpt of a new book about Roy Cohn.

And it's all there. And it's all there. And it's excellent to give everyone, anyone, what is the psychological profile of Donald Trump. All the lessons that he absorbed from Roy Cohn. Never concede defeat. Never concede that you made a mistake. If you make a mistake, blame others. Always pose as alpha man, macho macho man, the guy in charge. Never answer when somebody tries to contradict you. And play the media. Turn everything into a World Wrestling Federation spectacle. Twist the narrative. Control the narrative full-time. Speak very, very loud. Speak louder than anybody else full-time, using a very reduced vocabulary so anybody with a zero-grade education can understand. It's no wonder that Trump's vocabulary is, what, 60, 70 words? Not more than that, essentially.

So it's all there. So he learned everything from Roy Cohn. And as president of the United States, he is implementing that on a global scale. But the problem is that everybody on a global scale, in positions of power, diplomacy, military, geopolitics, economics, already knows how he thinks, how he reacts, and what disturbs him completely. And the Iranians are using that with extreme sophistication. They are literally driving the president of the United States crazy. And all that because of a fateful decision that he made in the first place. So that's why this is not a Greek tragedy, a traditional Greek tragedy. It is really a very trashy American pop remake of a Greek tragedy. But this is what we are living, Glenn, unfortunately.

#Glenn

I keep thinking, the optimism they had at the beginning of this century. This was going to be the new American century. This was going to belong to America. They would cement perpetual dominance, essentially, and how quickly that went off the rails. Pepe, as always, thank you so much for your time and your analysis. An enormous pleasure, Glenn. Let's keep rocking.

#Pepe Escobar

What else can we do?