

# The US keeps openly admitting it deliberately caused the Iran protests

Trump administration's policy violates international law

by Caitlin Johnstone,\* Australia



Caitlin Johnstone.  
(Picture ma)

Speaking before the Senate Banking Committee on Thursday, US Treasury Secretary *Scott Bessent* explicitly stated that the US deliberately caused a financial crisis in Iran with the goal of fomenting civil unrest in the country.

Asked by Senator *Katie Britt*<sup>1</sup> what more the US can be doing to place pressure on the Ayatollah and Iran, Bessent explained that the Treasury Department has implemented a "strategy" designed to undermine the Iranian currency which crashed the economy and sparked the violent protests we've seen throughout the country.

"One thing we could do at Treasury, and what we have done, is created a dollar shortage in the country," Bessent *said*.<sup>2</sup>

"At a speech at the Economic Club in March I outlined the strategy. It came to a swift and I would say grand culmination in December when one of the largest banks in Iran went under. There was a run on the bank, the central bank had to print money, the Iranian currency went into free fall, inflation exploded, and hence we have seen the Iranian people out on the street."

This is not the first time Bessent has made these admissions. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos last month, the treasury secretary *said the following*.<sup>3</sup>

"President Trump ordered Treasury and our OFAC division, Office of Foreign Asset Control, to put maximum pressure on Iran. And it's worked, because in December, their economy collapsed. We saw a major bank go under; the



Millions of innocent people in Iran are affected by the US economic war. (Picture hr)

central bank has started to print money. There is dollar shortage. They are not able to get imports, and this is why the people took to the street. So, this is economic statecraft, no shots fired, and things are moving in a very positive way here."

Following these remarks, Jeffrey Sachs and Sybil Fares *wrote the following* for Common Dreams:<sup>4</sup>

"What Secretary Bessent describes is of course not 'economic statecraft' in a traditional sense. It is war conducted by economic means, all designed to produce an economic crisis and social unrest leading to a fall of the government. This is proudly hailed as 'economic statecraft.'"

"The human suffering caused by outright war and crushing economic sanctions is not so different as one might think. Economic collapse produces shortages of food, medicine, and fuel, while also destroying savings, pensions, wages, and public services. Deliberate economic collapse drives people into poverty, malnutrition, and premature death, just as outright war does."

Bessent laid out these plans in advance at the Economic Club of New York back in March of last year, *saying the following*.<sup>5</sup>

"Last month, the White House announced its maximum pressure campaign on Iran designed to collapse its already buckling economy. The Iranian economy is in disarray; 35% official inflation, has a currency that has depreciated 60% in the last 12 months, and an ongoing energy crisis. I know a few things about currency devaluations, and if I were an Iranian, I would get all of my money out of the Rial now."

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"This precarious state exists before our Maximum Pressure campaign, designed to collapse Iranian oil exports from the current 1.5–1.6, million barrels per day, back to the trickle they were when President Trump left office.

"Iran has developed a complex shadow network of financial facilitators and black-market oil shippers via a ghost fleet to sell oil, petrochemical and other commodities to finance its exports and generate hard currency.

"As such, we have elevated a sanctions campaign against this export infrastructure, targeting all stages of Iran's oil supply chain. We have coupled this with vigorous government engagement and private sector outreach.

"We will close off Iran's access to the international financial system by targeting regional parties that facilitate the transfer of its revenues. Treasury is prepared to engage in frank discussions with these countries. We are going to shut down Iran's oil sector and drone manufacturing capabilities.

"We have predetermined benchmarks and timelines. 'Making Iran Broke Again' will mark the beginning of our updated sanctions policy. Watch this space."

The US has been orchestrating plans to foment unrest in Iran by causing economic strife for years. In 2019 *Trump's* previous secretary of state *Mike Pompeo* *openly acknowledged*<sup>6</sup> that the goal of Washington's economic warfare against Iran was to make the population so miserable that they "change the government", cheerfully citing the "economic distress" the nation had been placed under by US sanctions.

As unrest tore through Iran last month, Trump *egged protesters on*<sup>7</sup> and encouraged them to escalate, saying "To all Iranian patriots, keep protesting, take over your institutions, if possible, and save the name of the killers and the

abusers that are abusing you," adding, "all I say to them is help is on its way."

Deliberately trying to ignite a civil war in a country by immiserating its population so severely that they start attacking their own government out of sheer desperation is one of the most evil things you can possibly imagine. But under the western empire it's just another day. They're doing it in Iran, and they've also aggressively ramped up efforts to *do it in Cuba*,<sup>8</sup> where the government *has just announced*<sup>9</sup> it will be rationing oil as the US moves to strangle the island nation into regime change.

A lot of attention is going into the *Epstein* files right now, and understandably so. But it's worth noting that nothing in them is as depraved and abusive as what our rulers are doing right out in the open.

Source: <https://www.caitlinjohnst.one/p/the-us-keeps-openly-admitting-it>, 6 February 2026

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/live/sjAzaitddhE?t=4835s>

<sup>2</sup> <https://x.com/clashreport/status/2019506823213039993>

<sup>3</sup> <https://x.com/incontextmedia/status/2013806043306832102>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/economic-statecraft>

<sup>5</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0045>

<sup>6</sup> <https://x.com/caitoz/status/2011167228633461012>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaANiFhhhlQ>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.caitlinjohnst.one/p/the-us-is-pushing-so-many-regime>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.reutersconnect.com/item/cuba-to-roll-out-rationing-plan-as-us-moves-to-block-fuel-supply/dGFnOn-JldXRlcnMuY29tLDlwMjY6bmV3c21sX1JDMI-JGSkFOUK1YVA>