

Jeffrey Sachs: U.S. War on Iran - "An Attack Is Imminent"

Prof. Jeffrey Sachs discusses how the U.S. has amassed military capabilities for a massive war on Iran and communicates its clear intention. The Europeans continue to encourage U.S. warmongering and then have the audacity to complain when they themselves are the target. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glenndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're joined today by Professor Jeffrey Sachs to discuss the threats now being made by Trump against Iran. I'm very grateful you could come on, because if you're sitting in Tehran, you're assessing threats — essentially, you assess capabilities and intentions. Now, you wouldn't see this massive accumulation of military force by the United States in the region. You'd see British, German, Spanish, and Italian transport planes seemingly heading toward the Middle East. And in terms of intention, it seems that an attack is unavoidable. The Israelis want it, Washington wants it — it's speaking of regime change. On social media, Trump writes that "a massive armada is heading to Iran. It is moving quickly with great power, enthusiasm, and purpose." He then goes on to say that time is running out. What do you make of these threats?

#Jeffrey Sachs

I think it's clear. For Israel, this has been a 30-year effort to overthrow the Iranian government. The United States basically does what Israel says, and Israel has been pulling the U.S. into war with Iran, trying to do that endlessly. It did that last summer. The goal was regime change, to have an overthrow. That didn't work. The U.S. then started using economic instruments — what our Treasury Secretary, Scott Besant, called "economic statecraft." He laid out a deliberate strategy: measures by the United States to destroy the Iranian economy. The idea, again, was regime change. That didn't work. And now we have a carrier strike group on its way to attack Iran. So an attack is imminent, I think. The goal here has never been negotiation.

Whenever there has been negotiation, Israel has jumped up and down saying, "Don't negotiate." Of course, a nuclear agreement was reached with Iran a decade ago — the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. It was actually ratified by UN Security Council Resolution 2231 on July 20, 2015. Then Trump ripped it up in his first term. So there's never been any desire by Israel to have a

negotiated settlement. And since the United States does what Israel tells it to do, there has never been a readiness on the part of the United States to have real negotiations with Iran. Trump proved that again last summer, because we can recall that when Israel, with U.S. support, bombed Iran — that was on the 12th and 13th of June 2025 — it was just two days before scheduled negotiations between the United States and Iran.

So this whole idea that this is about Iran negotiating is phony. This is a regime change operation being carried out through hybrid warfare — meaning you try cyber warfare, you try street unrest, you try crushing the economy, you try bombing, you try assassinations — all to overthrow this government. And Trump, being Trump, blasts this out, saying, “Well, if you don’t do what we say — this is like Venezuela, we did this — this fleet is ready, willing, and able to rapidly fulfill its mission with speed and violence if necessary.” You know, it’s pure thuggery. People should understand: under the UN Charter, which Trump’s deputy chief of staff called a “nicety,” it happens to be international law — not for the gangsters in the White House, but for the rest of humanity.

It says under Article 2, Section 4, that all members shall refrain, in their international relations, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. So this is where we are right now, Glenn. I think, of course, we just went through this with Venezuela — brazen, gross threats followed by an invasion, the kidnapping of the president and the first lady, and a claim by the United States that it runs Venezuela, including stealing oil off tankers and sending that to the United States, with Donald Trump declaring that the money goes to him.

So this kind of brazenness and lawlessness is part of our scene right now. But Iran is vastly more dangerous for the world, and we’re still waiting for a European country to say boo about it — to say something bad. Oh, maybe that’s not a good idea. Maybe we shouldn’t have a war. Maybe we should obey the UN Charter. The question for Europe is: does it only speak up when the United States is about to attack Europe, or does Europe have any principles at all? And we’re going to find out in the next few days.

#Glenn

Chancellor Merz, who said during the first attack on Iran that Israel is doing our dirty work, has now said that Iran's days are numbered. It may be weeks, but this regime has no legitimacy whatsoever to govern. So I think the Europeans are fully on board with this. But... wow. Trump also said that now is the time for Iran to make a deal, otherwise they'll hit them hard. What deal is he referring to? We're still talking about the nuclear deal, because this seems very dishonest at this point — they've already been very open that the goal is regime change. And with any regime change, you wouldn't be able to get a unifying opposition. So this is the destruction of Iran we're looking at, which is... that is correct.

#Jeffrey Sachs

There's no interest in any negotiated deal, because negotiated deals have been available for more than a dozen years. And whenever they've been reached, the United States has ripped them up. Israel has been the chief proponent of ripping up any negotiated deal. And since Trump works for Israel, there's absolutely no intention of any negotiation at all — they're out to overthrow the government. Shame on Merz. But again, it's just so typical. I hadn't seen that statement before. The thuggishness of Europe shouldn't surprise me, but it always disappoints me. The only time Europe ever seems to rally to principles is when its own narrow interest is on the line. Then suddenly it's not right for the U.S. to attack Europe — by claiming Greenland.

That would be an abuse. But overthrowing the government of Iran — that's fine. I think it's worth us spending just a few minutes on the propaganda that's now flowing freely in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and I'm sure in the European media — that the economic collapse shows the corruption and mismanagement of the Iranian economy, and why the regime isn't fit to govern, as Chancellor Merz has just declared, as you read to me. People should understand this is part of the game. And the game is absolutely vulgar, but it's perfectly understandable if one directs just a little bit of attention to it. And it happens that our Treasury Secretary in the United States, Scott Besant, laid it out very clearly and explicitly in Davos — almost in a cartoonish way.

And if I may, Glenn, just to read his words so people understand what's been happening over the past year. He's asked by the interviewer, "What do you want to say about sanctions? That's something else you've been working on, of course. What are you planning there in terms of Iran and the impact there?" And Besant says, "OK, OK, there are Treasury sanctions. If you look at a speech I gave at the Economic Club of New York last March, I said that I believed the Iranian currency was on the verge of collapse — that if I were an Iranian citizen, I'd take my money out. President Trump ordered Treasury and our OFAC division, the Office of Foreign Assets 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 central bank has started printing money. There's a dollar shortage, and they're not able to get imports. That's why people took to the streets. This is economic statecraft — no shots fired — and things are moving in a very positive way here. It's an amazing statement, so amazing that The New York Times didn't dare report it. The Washington Post didn't dare report it either, because what Besant is explaining is that the United States has used its financial power to bring down the government, to push people into the streets, to create mass unrest and violence. Things are going in a very positive way, says Mr. Besant. The vulgarity of it is so stunning that, of course, the mainstream media won't even touch it.

But what they do is run stories every day about the mismanagement, the corruption, the economic collapse, the suffering of the people—without saying that our Treasury Secretary explained that's the American game. And I've spoken to people recently who said, yes, they can't get paid for their oil because of what the United States is doing. The payments don't come. Everybody's under sanctions,

everybody's under threat, and every bank in the world refuses to handle any of the transactions. That's the U.S. weaponization of the dollar. And the design is to create chaos—to create bank failures, to create a currency collapse, to bring people out on the streets.

As Besant says, this is why the people took to the streets. He even gives the chain of causation and blesses it. "It's moving in a very positive way here." Okay, if this is the kind of world people think we're going to be safe in, I'm sorry to say they're going to find that this is the absolute worst route to annihilation and disaster. This is pure gangsterism against every principle. And why Mertz is a party to the gangsterism, or why the Europeans are a party to the gangsterism, beats the hell out of me, I have to say, because they were also parties to the negotiation of the JCPOA. They watched how the United States killed it, so they know the truth, but they don't speak the truth.

#Glenn

Well, this is the overwhelming propaganda, because you can have all the evidence in front of you. You can have Besant sitting there, as he does, saying, "This is how we're going to destabilize, or how we did destabilize, Iran. That has caused an economic problem. This will drive people to the streets." You have Mike Pompeo saying, "Well, in the streets there, among the rioters, we have Mossad agents," and on Israeli news they explained that they're pumping weapons into this to fuel the violence among the rioters. And, you know, I was in a debate about what's happened in Iran.

And because I didn't say this was, you know, a completely organic movement without any Western interference, it meant that I don't care about the suffering of Iranians and that I'm a regime apologist. So if you really care about Iranians, you'll advocate for bombing them. I mean, this is how perverse it is. But this is the same with all wars: if you cared about the Syrians, you'd call for the toppling of Assad; if you care about Ukrainians, you'd keep the war going forever. It's just... it's so vile.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Yes, but what's interesting is that if you care about the Iranians, then you might pay attention to what Besant himself said — that they're out to hurt the Iranians. That's the goal: to hurt them so much that people pour into the streets. And then, when it happens and there's violence and so forth — much of it false flags, stoked by provocateurs and by Mossad and so on — then Besant says, "It's moving in a very positive way here." By the way, he had a little smirk on his face. He couldn't resist the smirk as he finished that last sentence. It was just an added touch of vulgarity.

People should understand who Besant is, by the way. He's our Treasury Secretary. You might think that means he knows something about the macroeconomy, or that he knows about fiscal policy, or that he's a tax policy expert. No, it has nothing to do with that. He's a hedge fund operator whose claim to fame is working with George Soros to destroy the British pound more than a decade ago. That's what brought him this in—when the pound was attacked, excuse me, in 1992, I guess it was.

And those are his credentials. Here's a man who can destroy currencies. So this is so vile and flagrant that, again, it's not even worth reporting.

#Glenn

Well, when the Treasury Secretary is an economic hitman, you should be worried—especially with Trump behind the wheel. Let me just ask about the possibility of this war actually spreading, because it seems that both what the U.S. side is aiming for, as well as what the Iranians are indicating, is that this will be very different from the former war—that this is essentially all or nothing. So how likely do you think it is that this can be contained to the region? Because Iran's already been saying that anyone who participates, they will retaliate against. And then you have Saudi Arabia saying, "Well, our airspace won't be used." So they take it seriously, but... but do you think this will be contained? Because this is going to be very different, I think, from the previous war.

#Jeffrey Sachs

I think we've learned—again, I'm not a military expert—but from what I gather, we have learned a few things. One is that Iran can penetrate Israeli air defenses, and I think they clearly demonstrated that they have hypersonic missiles that can do that. They did not aim them at highly sensitive targets the first time. In a war that is existential, they will aim them at highly sensitive targets. So this is one thing that I think will be very, very different—they are prepared for that. A second thing we learned is that the strikes on the nuclear facilities obviously did not end, or perhaps even hinder, Iran's path to nuclear weapons if they want that path. The amount of enrichment they would have to carry out to take their current enriched uranium to the levels for an atomic bomb—or several of them, in fact—is not much. And so, if this became an existential struggle, Iran could, I think, absolutely, without question, make a dash for nuclear weapons.

They have said—and said credibly—"We don't want that. We want the IAEA here to monitor. We will keep stringent limits on any kind of enrichment or processing." But that's what the United States ripped up already a decade ago, when Trump came in during his first term. So the next point is that Iran itself—and especially the Revolutionary Guard—could decide, "This is the fate of our nation," and make a dash for nuclear weapons. If the situation became dire for Iran, I assume other countries would support it. Iran is a big country. Of course, Israel tried through assassinations, through Mossad attacks, and through bombing—a decapitation strike. It did not work. I don't believe it would work. And so this could be quite the prelude to a greatly expanded war. This is not Venezuela in America's backyard. This would be a war in the most explosive region of the world, with plenty of nuclear-armed countries all around and with significant stakes in what would be happening.

I think it would be completely reckless and potentially globally ruinous, and it should be prevented now—before we have to speculate about how it's going to end. And again, I'm just dismayed to hear the German view of this—not shocked, but dismayed. If we don't have countries in the world that

are ready anymore to say, "You cannot launch wars like this, in these explosive regions, completely against every principle we have of the UN system," then the chance for utter wreckage is very, very high. I believe the UN Security Council should be forced to meet immediately, stay in session, and take its responsibility—which is unique in the world—to stop this and to say clearly to the United States, to the President of the United States: no, you cannot even threaten that way, much less make an attack. The threat itself is a gross violation of the UN Charter.

#Glenn

I fear it can't be prevented anymore, though. If all these capabilities are built up, and the only way to avoid it—according to Trump—is a deal that essentially doesn't exist, it's hard to see what else they can do.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Yeah, Trump sometimes backs down if he really faces a wall of opposition. In fact, he often backs down. He hasn't faced that wall right now, but I wouldn't stop trying to create that wall of opposition—up to the moment, and even after, but up to the moment when Trump recklessly pulls the trigger. It hasn't happened yet. And God help us. There must be someone in Europe who still has a brain left—if only you were in charge, Glenn—but there must be someone in power who has some minimal sense of responsibility for humanity. There are many countries around the world that don't want this to happen. And interestingly, I firmly believe that the Saudis don't want a war, that Qatar doesn't want a war, that the Emirates don't want a war, that Turkey doesn't want a war. Do they really want to be in another Israeli-created regional war that could escalate into full disaster? I don't think anybody wants that, other than Israel and its vassal state, the United States.

#Glenn

On that grim note, thank you very much for sharing your thoughts on this. I really hope there will be pressure and doubt from the Europeans, and ideally from some of the regional allies. So, thank you very much.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Great to be with you, Glenn. Thanks.