

# Professor Jeffrey Sachs Reveals Truth on US Iran War



Professor Jeffrey Sachs born is an American economist and public policy analyst who is a professor at Columbia University. In my opinion, his assessment of President Trump's decision to bomb Iran is honest and even handed, as objective as is humanly possible.

Cyrus Janssen is a geopolitical analyst, investor, speaker, and social media influencer with over 1 million fans across his social media platforms.

## Transcription

**Cyrus Janssen:** Well, everyone, I want to welcome you back to the show. And we have a very special guest in today's video. This is Professor Jeffrey Sachs from Columbia University, one of the world's best geopolitical analysts.

And our timing of our interview today couldn't be more appropriate as it is official. The United States has struck Iran in a order from President Donald Trump. Professor Sachs, welcome to the show. And I'd like to get your initial reactions to the United States latest move.

**Jeffrey Sachs:** Thank you very much. Good to be with you, Cyrus. And thank you for all your excellent, excellent work. I think this is a **dreadful mistake that is going to escalate** and that is going to just add fuel to the raging global fire. It's a very, very bad move and a very dangerous move, in my view.

## What Happened to Donald Trump?

**Cyrus Janssen:** Oh, absolutely. And I want to get a little bit into this because, you know, I think there's so much history to unpack here. You wrote a fantastic article on common dreams that was really advocating for us to stop Netanyahu before he's all going to get us killed in this nuclear war. Can you kind of let us know a little bit more about this history behind this? I mean, I think this is something that Benjamin Netanyahu has been dreaming of for many decades is having a conflict with Iran. It very much seems like **he has dragged the United States and Donald Trump** and kind of forced his hand into that. Am I reading that correctly? Is that how you're seeing this situation?

**Jeffrey Sachs:** Absolutely. There is no intrinsic reason why the United States should be at war with Iran. **We are in this war because of Israel** and more specifically because of a particular vision of Israel that has been led by Benjamin Netanyahu for 30 years. He's been prime minister for most of the period since 1996. And he has had a radical view of Israel's place in the Middle East. That is that Israel should have the freedom of maneuver to do what it wants and to set its borders. More specifically, to prevent there being a Palestinian state and to oppose and to bring down any government in the Middle East that opposes his expansionist vision. And so Netanyahu has been a proponent of war for 30 years.

Now, if it were just left to Israel's own devices, that would have been sad. But Netanyahu's strategy for 30 years has been to drag the United States into Israel's wars. And because of the power of the Israel lobby or the Zionist lobby in the United States, **Netanyahu has succeeded time and again in dragging the United States into absolutely unnecessary wars that have done nothing for America's interests or for world peace**, but rather have played out a delusional set of ideas of Netanyahu and his political coalition in Israel. So we're fighting wars for 30 years because Israel, under Netanyahu, doesn't want to compromise with the Palestinian people and have two states. This is mind-boggling.

There are two peoples in what was once called British Mandatory Palestine, the region that now includes today's Israel, Gaza, the West Bank. In other words, the territory that is shared by two peoples, by the Israeli Jews and by the Palestinian Arabs. And it's Netanyahu's approach and the approach of the political movement that he inherited and the party that he leads called the Likud, that there should never be a state of Palestine. Rather, the Israeli Jews should dominate that region and perhaps more parts of Lebanon and Syria and elsewhere in the region, because some read biblical passages that suggest that greater Israel actually extends from the Nile to the Euphrates, a kind of mind-boggling idea.

But to put it simply, Netanyahu leads a political movement of territorial expansion of Israel and domination over the Palestinian people. And that by itself would be enough to create war and unrest in the Israel-Palestine domain.

But Netanyahu's idea since the mid-1990s, in combination with American neoconservatives who have held power all along, is that every other country of the Middle East that objects to that expansionist vision should be brought down by war or regime change. And Iran was always on the list, all the way back to the 1990s. And Netanyahu's been begging and cajoling and instigating what finally happened yesterday.

### **Benjamin Netanyahu's Dream of War**

We have a president who the ancient Greeks would have called a kratik, meaning no self-control. And Netanyahu goaded Trump, convinced Trump, cajoled Trump to launch a war with Iran. Netanyahu's great dream for 30 years. Very dangerous.

**Cyrus Janssen:** Yeah, you know, it's interesting. We've seen this clip on social media now that it's basically the receipts of the last 30 years of going back to 1995 when Netanyahu is pleading to Congress. They're months away from developing these weapons. And then this clip updates every five years. And it's something that he's been saying for 30 years, trying to get this.

I'm sure Netanyahu is very happy his dream of a war with Iran has finally come true. And I want to know a little bit more what your thoughts are of President Trump, because he certainly has campaigned on the platform of being the peaceful president. You know, even going back to 2013, he actually sent out a tweet saying, I think *Obama* is going to start a war with Iran because he doesn't have the ability to negotiate.

And here we are 12 years later, and it's Trump that actually starts the war with Iran. I mean, is this just Trump? Does he not have any power because of this Israeli lobby? Or did something change in his mind? I mean, what is your thoughts on Trump and his kind of snap decision to go ahead and involve the United States in another war?

**Jeffrey Sachs:** I think you put your finger on the two critical points. One is how US foreign policy is set. What is the role of the Israel lobby, for example? And the second is mindset. So let me take each of these on.

President Putin, Russian President Putin said something very interesting in 2017 in an interview that he gave with the French newspaper *Le Figaro*. And I always found it quite striking. He said that he had dealt with many American presidents by that point, by 2017. And he said, they come into power with ideas. But then men in dark suits and briefcases with blue ties come and explain to them the reality. And you never hear of those ideas again. And what Putin was saying, and he knows it well, given his own political history, the CIA, the Deep State in the United States, the intelligence community, the Pentagon, the armed services committees of Congress, the military contractors, they're the men in the dark suits and the blue ties and the briefcases. And they run foreign policy far more consistently than any individual president.

And while we see Trump on the social media and all the rest, there is a Deep State, there's no doubt about it. There is a continuity of policy that stretches over decades. And we're first seeing that played out. American foreign policy for *decades* has done Israel's bidding. *Not* automatically, not immediately, but at least *eventually*.

The United States has gone to war or supported wars on behalf of Netanyahu for 30 years. The Iraq war, the overthrow of the Syrian government, the war in Libya, Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the wars that the U.S. supported in Sudan and in Somalia, and now the new war in Iran. These have been Netanyahu's checklist all along.

But the second element is mindset. What does Trump think he's doing? I actually think he believes the statements that he uttered in the last 24 hours, which are *fatuous*, that, "well, job's all done. Now Iran will concede

at the negotiating table and we'll get back to peace." And I think PEACE!! in capital letters, exclamation point, exclamation point.

Trump thinks he's *ended* the war with a sortie of bombers, but he has *started* a much broader war. And we saw within hours and completely predictably and understandably that Iran launched missiles into Tel Aviv and the Houthis launched their attack on Israel as well.

This is the *start* of escalation. This isn't over. So there's a mindset which is extraordinarily arrogant in U.S. leadership that "we call the shots." So Trump probably believes that he's not entering a prolonged war. He probably thinks, "well, I got the job done." But this is a kind of stupidity compounding on this underlying Deep State reality.

### **Did the US Actually Hurt Iran's Nuclear Program?**

**Cyrus Janssen:** Oh, absolutely. And I think it's quite amazing with President Trump sending out a tweet saying, you know, congratulating U.S. military. Great job, guys. We've done the job. We've successfully bombed Iran. Now's the time for peace. And it's just amazing that that could go out in the same message, we're bombing somebody, but it's now time for peace. And I want to talk a little bit specifically about Iran. There's been a lot of speculation. Of course, Donald Trump has said, "OK, now their nuclear facility has been completely destroyed. There's zero chance. It's done. It's over." But there's also new reports coming out that essentially these bombs just hit the entrance of the facility. There's nuclear matter. Everything that was in this facility was already moved away months ago. So it's really a nothing burger. Almost, you know, this doesn't actually just really for show.

Do you have any insights into, you know, were these strikes actually, did they actually harm Iran at all? Did it actually stop this nuclear program from Iran?

**Jeffrey Sachs:** I have absolutely no inside knowledge or technical insight, but I have a lot of experience, which is that claims like this are ridiculous. The idea that Iran just sat around and waited for these well-announced strikes to occur is fatuous. We already heard from President Putin that there are many sites around Iran that are engaged in their nuclear operations. And that's no doubt true. It's also very typically the case that we announce victories on the basis of these *individual actions that are preludes to very long wars*. We've done that time and time again.

So I have absolutely no technical knowledge of what happened last night. But on general principles, we *should have a lot of skepticism*. The fact that highly destructive missiles that hit Tel Aviv were launched shortly after this definitive operation should tell us enough that these ideas that this clean strike has somehow done the job is absolutely, absolutely *not the case*.

**Cyrus Janssen:** Yeah, I think there's a lot of, social media has been very interesting to look at the last 24 hours. Obviously, the MAGA crowd, you know, a lot of them are saying this is a great victory that U.S. military is the number one in the world. We're amazing. But I think Trump is also, at the

same time, losing a lot of his base. Many Americans very frustrated that this, again, is another new war for the United States.

### **What is Iran's Position in the Middle East?**

Professor, I wanted to ask you a question about Iran and, its position in the Middle East. And, we've always heard that Iran is the aggressor, and, for example, Israel had to launch this attack against Iran because it was in danger, right? I think it's very well understood. This was an unprovoked attack from Israel to start this off about a week ago. But can you, what's missing from this picture? I mean, what do more Americans and Westerners need to understand about Iran's role in the region and what they were doing and everything that's going on there?

**Jeffrey Sachs:** Of course, this is a long and rich story because Iran is a civilization of 5,000 years. It's one of the great civilizations in the world. It was the first great empire of the ancient world at large scale. Interestingly, in the Hebrew Bible, it is the Persian leader Cyrus who is called the Messiah of the Jewish people because actually going back to the 6th century BC, it is the Persian Shah Cyrus who rescues the Jewish people or the Jewish leaders from their captivity by the Babylonians and enable them to return to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem.

So the history of the Jewish people and the Iranian people itself goes back two and a half millennia. This is actually quite interesting because, again, in so many cases, there's no intrinsic reason for the kind of hatred and vitriol and supposed civilizational clash. There is a complete lack of understanding backed by and provoked by propaganda, by deliberate misreading of history, and so forth.

But I start with this point because Iran is the heir of a very proud and very ancient civilization. And Iran, there's a lot to say about it, but one thing that they do know is the United States and Britain did a lot to undermine Iran's place in the world in the second half of the 20th century.

In 1953, which is a right starting point for the current situation, Britain and the U.S. took great offense to a radical idea of the Iranian prime minister at the time named Mossadegh who said, "the oil under our sand is ours." And the British and the Americans said, "no, no, no, no, that's ours and you're never going to get it." And they overthrew Mossadegh and put in a police state. And that police state lasted until 1978.

Then the Shah of Iran, who was physically ailing but had profoundly alienated his society through police state measures for decades, was overthrown in the Iranian Revolution. And when the United States took in the ailing Shah for his cancer treatment, students overran the U.S. embassy and held Americans hostage. And that became one of the great causes of America that we've been humiliated and Iran is our mortal enemy.

And in fact, there was no attempt, maybe it's too much to ask, but there was no attempt whatsoever in those days to understand what is this about? Why do the Iranians express their hatred to the United States? There was no history.

Americans are not good at history. They don't want to take any responsibility. They don't want to understand any background.

But suffice it to say that starting with the hostage taking and the fear of this new regime that took power in 1979, the United States almost immediately went into combat against it. We armed and funded Saddam Hussein in Iraq next door to launch and continue a very, very violent war against Iran that killed a lot of people, hundreds of thousands of people.

So actually the war with Iran already goes back to the 1980s when the United States supported the next door neighbor to attack the new regime. Well, the Israelis came to view this government as a mortal threat because the Iranian regime and Islamist regime said that they supported the Palestinian cause. I, so do I, by the way, for a two state solution.

So this is not a radical point. The idea that Palestinians should have political self-determination is an idea that more than 180 of the 193 UN member states actively express. But for Israel and especially for this movement that Netanyahu leads this Likud political party and this greater Israel movement, any supporter of the Palestinian cause is a mortal enemy.

So Iran became mortal enemy number one of Likud and of Netanyahu's Israel. And then because of the power of the Israel lobby in the United States, which also has a lot of interesting roots, but is a very, very powerful part of the US Deep State, Iran not only was an enemy because of the hostage taking and the fact that they were standing up for things that the Americans didn't want, but also because Iran was the enemy number one of Israel.

In 1996, Netanyahu and his American political buddies released a political document called Clean Break. And Clean Break said, you don't fight groups like Hamas and Hezbollah by fighting these militant groups head on. You fight them by bringing down the governments that support them. So what Netanyahu envisioned was remaking the governments of the Middle East in Israel's image, if I could put it that way. In other words, we, Israel, together with the United States will overthrow any governments that are supporting the Palestinian cause, and especially these Palestinian militant groups. Iran was number one on the list. So these new events are the culmination of 30 years of Netanyahu's campaign to bring the United States into war with Iran.

### **Why Iran Has NEVER Wanted Nuclear Weapons**

Now, one crucial point that people need to understand and is so contrary to the propaganda that we hear day in and day out, is that the Iranians for decades have been saying, "we want normal relations with the United States. We do not want nuclear weapons. We want the US to end its sanctions. We are open for an agreement in which we are inspected and monitored. We want a civilian nuclear power program as any country can have. We do not want nuclear weapons."

Indeed, the religious supreme leader issued decades ago a religious ruling, a fatwa, that said Iran will not have nuclear weapons. We don't want them. Iran said that to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iranians, academics and

senior officials have been coming to me for decades saying we want to negotiate with your government. We want to normalize relations.

And of course, and I want everyone to remember this most basic fact, in 2016, President Obama actually negotiated with the Iranians an agreement to stop the nuclear weapons program. Actually, let me put that more properly. To prevent a nuclear weapons program because the Iranians weren't engaged in one. But to make sure that there was verification, monitoring, limits to the uranium enrichment and all the rest.

And that was what's called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or the JCPOA. In other words, an agreement was reached a decade ago. And what happened? Donald Trump got elected. The Israel lobby went to work and Trump walked out of the JCPOA. So he abandoned the agreement that would have obviated all of this.

And since then, I've been speaking to Iranians month in, month out, visiting Tehran, speaking to senior officials that I meet in various meetings around the world. They're always asking me, "do you have an inroad to the White House? Why don't they listen to us? We want to negotiate." This was true during the entire Biden period. It was true, of course, at the start of the Trump administration.

How many times did they ask, "do you know anyone in the White House? We want to negotiate." The Israel lobby works overtime to prevent the American people from understanding any of this. And it's all *one giant lie that the only way is through war and regime change*.

But *that's* Netanyahu's approach and we're suckers. And Trump is the most recent one to be suckered by it. And it's, if it were just Trump, that would be one thing, but he's bringing in us and he's bringing in the whole world into this latest round of disaster.

## **America's 7 Wars in the Middle East**

**Cyrus Janssen:** I appreciate you giving us the history there, Professor Sachs and incredible that we, now look back and we see that we had a deal in place, obviously, 10 years ago, Trump got rid of it. The Iranians have been there. I mean, even we'll go back to March of this year and Tulsi Gabbard had gone on and testified saying that they do not want to nuke, and all of our expert analysis and, Donald Trump being advised they don't want to nuke, they don't, they're not building a nuke. He just denies that. It just shows the incredible amount of control that Netanyahu and the Israeli lobby have over our government, which is just criminal.

**Jeffrey Sachs:** And, for the first months of the administration, people told me in or near the White House, don't worry, don't worry, we're negotiating. They may actually, in this weird way, as I said, this delusional way, believe it. Because even Trump's post, "okay, we did this bombing, now it's all over. Now all they have to do is concede at the negotiating table."

It may be their delusion. In fact, it's so peculiar, but so predictable.

Also, again, this clean break strategy of Netanyahu, going back 30 years, after 9-11, we know, brought about a list of seven wars to pursue. And Americans should understand what just happened yesterday is the seventh one on the list. Those seven countries included Iraq, they included Syria, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, and Iran. And six out of those seven, we've been engaged in quite actively in most cases. The seventh just started yesterday. (June 22, 2025.)

### **Is Regime Change the Goal for Iran?**

**Cyrus Janssen:** It's very troubling times ahead. And I do want to ask you a question about the Supreme Leader in Iran. Do you feel that there's an element of wanting a regime change? Is this going to be the next goal for the United States, is to go in and actually take out the Supreme Leader and install a coup government?

And a follow-up question to that, a part two would be, I've seen a lot of people trying to say the argument that the Iranian people want this. They want the regime to be toppled. They want the leader to be replaced. Some people have even gone as far as that they support the U.S. government, which is ludicrous that no one wants to get bombed on and certainly see civilians being killed. But give me know your thoughts on, is this a potential regime change that we're looking at? Is the U.S. going to try to install a coup government next?

**Jeffrey Sachs:** Well, Netanyahu is absolutely explicit about it, that the Iranian regime needs to be brought down. Trump has made some especially ugly posts on Truth Social in recent days. "We know where the Supreme Leader is. We could kill him at any moment. We're not going to do so, but we'll see."

By the way, this crudeness that you cannot imagine a president of the United States engaging in kind of mob talk, even though the mob talks in a more sophisticated way than this. So it's really, it's very disheartening, but there's no doubt what Netanyahu wants.

But this whole regime change business, this is core to America's foreign policy approach. We've engaged in probably 100 regime change operations that is mainly CIA-led or Deep State-led or Pentagon-led since the beginning of the post-World War II era.

There's an excellent book called *Covert Regime Change* by Professor Lindsay O'Rourke written in 2017, which documented very carefully, very systematically, **64 covert regime change operations between 1947 and 1989**. She was a student of the great political scientist John Mearsheimer.

And this regime change idea is built deeply into American foreign policy. It is also the case, as Professor O'Rourke documents, that it doesn't go well. Many of the operations fail. Those that succeed also fail because instead of creating a new stable government, you end up with a cascade of coups, or you end up with civil war, or you end up with a government structure much worse than the one that you thought you were bringing down and so forth. So there is a deep naivete and a pattern to all of this.



I should say, by the way, that Israel's foreign policy approach is twofold. **One is to assassinate foreign leaders, and the other is to drag the U.S. into Israel's wars.** So Israel also very much plays by the idea that we just need to take out the supreme leader or kill the head of military or take out the head of Hezbollah and all will be fine. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth.

The wars and conflicts that we have are based on politics, not on individuals. The issue with Israel and Hamas is not about the leader of Hamas or the leader of Hezbollah or the leader of Iran. It's about the fact that 8 million Palestinians are under Israel's oppressive thumb and are seeking their political self-determination, which could come with a two-state solution once again.

So the whole idea of regime change as the elixir which is going to fix the situation is *delusional*.

### **What Should America Do in the Middle East?**

**Cyrus Janssen:** Professor Sachs, I have one final question for you this evening, and thank you so much again for all your time today. Where do we go from here? And what is your predictions for how this is going to unfold? I mean, I think you mentioned earlier, this is the start of a new war. Do you see this blowing up into a much larger regional conflict? Is this America's next forever war? What should American citizens, what should we be demanding from our government and preparing ourselves for in the future?

**Jeffrey Sachs:** Well, rather than predicting, which I'm not very good at, I would say, what should we do? So I'll take that part of the question. What we should be doing is actually trying to end the perpetual wars that have raged in the Middle East under Netanyahu's watch and to go to the crux of the matter.

And that is, believe it or not, a two-state solution in Palestine and Israel would also stop the wars in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and across the Red Sea in the Horn of Africa and North Africa, because so much of this is interconnected. And so much of it comes back to the idea that there are militancies because the Palestinian cause finds support across the Muslim region, the Arab countries, and the Islamic states more broadly. More than 180 countries in the world with 95% of the world population say, come on, two states according to international law, a state of Israel, which by the way would be 78% of the British Palestine, and a state of Palestine alongside living in peace is absolutely *available*, is *practical*, is the *way to have peace*.

And in that context, one could have peace, one could stop this underlying reason for Israel's incessant wars of choice, and the United States could actually do what Donald Trump *thinks* he has done, and that is to have Iran at the negotiating table, which Iran has been the one pleading for for decades, to make sure that there is no nuclear arms developed. Are we going to do this? Well, it would be actually straightforward to do, to make peace in the Middle East. Are we going to do it? No, most likely not.

I don't want to close the door on it because it's so basically right, but are we likely to do it? Well, 30 years of experience tells us that no, we're likely to remain on a path of violence, destruction, and escalation that's extraordinarily dangerous.

Let me add one more point, by the way. The world is filled with nuclear weapons. There are nine countries that have nuclear weapons. Several of them are strong allies of Iran. At least a couple of them, North Korea and Pakistan, you could imagine a situation in which they would make their nukes available to Iran. The idea that you bomb three sites in Iran and you therefore end the issue of nuclear escalation is so stupid in its own right because escalation of conflict means that we step ever closer to nuclear war one way or another. We have to get our heads on straight about basic global realities, and that is if we want to avoid nuclear war, it doesn't come by bombing three purported nuclear sites. It comes actually by making peace and then moving towards nuclear disarmament, which is the US obligation together with the other signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We need a completely different approach. It's within reach. It's not even complicated, but it's unlikely to be the one that this administration follows.