

Support for Iranian people? Pompeo looking for regime change

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*“As I said to the people of Iran almost a year and a half ago: The United States is with you.”*¹
—U.S. secretary of state Mike Pompeo

Protests broke out in cities across Iran following a decision by the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOOPDC) to raise fuel prices. The price hike is an attempt by officials to recoup revenue lost as a result of U.S. economic sanctions unilaterally and illegally re-imposed on Iran’s petroleum sector.² Funds so generated would be used for additional subsidies to help some 18 million Iranian families experiencing extreme economic hardship.³

Unfortunately, some of the protests have turned violent, and the United States, seeing an opportunity to spread chaos, has thrown its full support behind those persons involved in fomenting riots and vandalizing public property. Encouraging the rioters, U.S. secretary of state Michael Pompeo in a Twitter post wrote, “As I said to the people of Iran almost a year and a half ago: The United States is with you.”⁴ In rebuttal to this clear support of anarchy, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani said, “He [Pompeo] openly supports immolation of the Iranian people’s properties through foolish shamelessness and opportunism, while calling it defending the Iranian people.”⁵ For their part, the IRGC issued a statement warning that those who “would foment insecurity, and all actions targeting the calm and tranquility in the society will be dealt with decisively.”⁶

Iranians have been suffering for over 40 years as a result of various U.S. attempts to topple the legitimate government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Economic sanctions, which typically impact people in the lower brackets the most, have been the weapon of choice for Washington in its relentless quest for revenge against Iran for the victory of its Islamic Revolution in 1979. The JCPOA brought a brief period of hope that sanctions relief, and perhaps even improved relations with the U.S., might be in sight, but the Trump regime abruptly pulled the U.S. out of the deal and reneged on all commitments.

After Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal in May of 2018 and re-imposed sanctions for his “maximum pressure” campaign, his secretary of state, Michael Pompeo, sent a patronizing message in July to the Iranian people via Twitter, in Farsi and English, claiming in capital letters, “THE UNITED STATES HEARS YOU. THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS YOU. THE UNITED STATES IS WITH YOU.”⁷ If so, then why would the tyrannical Trump regime impose a sanction regimen on Iran so stringent that Iranians are forced to choose either watching loved ones die due to severe shortages of necessary medicines, or risking the use of unregulated drugs and incurring horrific side effects as a result?⁸

Shortly after the reapplication of sanctions on Iran on November 5, 2018, Pompeo pontificated, “The leadership [in Iran] has to make a decision that they want their people to eat,” as if officials in Tehran had made the decision for the reinstatement of sanctions against their own citizens rather than the economic terrorists in Washington’s Zionist-aligned government. To add insult to injury, the former Kansas politician suggested that it was up to Iran’s government either “to

make a decision that they want to use their wealth to import medicine” or “use it in a way that doesn't benefit the Iranian people.” Voicing a not-so-subtle hint at regime change, Pompeo confided that he was “very confident the Iranian people will take a response that tries to fix that themselves.”⁹

Pompeo insisted, contradicting the grim reality, that “not only are the transactions themselves exempted- that is, the transactions in medicine, for example- but the financial transactions connected to that activity also are authorized.”¹⁰ Technically speaking, his claim may be true, however, the difficulty lies in trying to find a pharmaceutical company willing to sell lifesaving drugs to Iran and a bank willing to finance the transaction, and both agreeable to taking the risk running afoul of Washington's fiscally vindictive wrath. In practice, the net effect of the broad scope and complexity of U.S. coercive economic measures against Iran's banks combined with the nonstop hawkish rhetoric uttered by Pompeo and other regressive U.S. politicians is to deter financial institutions out of fear of incurring penalties due to “secondary sanctions,” thus reducing such humanitarian exemptions to inconsequential legal boilerplate.¹¹

By February of 2019, it should have been clear to all that Pompeo did not care one iota about the Iranian people who were already facing grinding hardships due to U.S. sanctions. During an interview on CBS News, the portly secretary of state admitted that the coercive unilateral measures were indeed intended to target ordinary Iranians and thus amounted to collective punishment, which is against international law. “Things are much worse for the Iranian people,” Pompeo gleefully conceded, “we are convinced that will lead the Iranian people to rise up and change the behavior of the regime.”¹²

A member of the reactionary, extreme right-leaning Tea Party, Pompeo demonstrated his disdain for people of color and non-Christian religions during his first run for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010 against Democrat Raj Goyle, a two-term Kansas state representative whose parents hail from Chandigarh, India.¹³ Despite that Goyle was born in Cleveland, Ohio in America, a staffer for Pompeo referred to him in a Twitter post as a “turban topper.” The xenophobic rant continued with “This guy could be a muslim, a hindu, a buddhist etc who knows” ending with “One thing's for sure . . . goyle is not a Christian!” While Pompeo had the remarks deleted, he refused to fire the responsible staff member.¹⁴

Pompeo's unabashed hatred of Iran apparently arises from his deep-rooted Islamophobia, which appears to be a pillar of his extreme version of fundamentalist Christianity. Speaking to a church group in 2014, then congressman Pompeo said, “I can tell you that this threat to America is from people who deeply believe that Islam is the way and the light and the only answer.”¹⁵ Sounding a clarion call for a renewed crusade, he warned that Muslims “will continue to press against us until we make sure that we pray and stand and fight and make sure that we know that Jesus Christ as our savior is truly the only solution for our world.”¹⁶

In a 2018 letter to Senators Bob Corker and Robert Menendez concerning the nomination of Pompeo for secretary of state, former Representative from Minnesota Keith Ellison and Representative from Indiana André Carson wrote, “Mr. Pompeo's long record of anti-Muslim statements and close alliances with anti-Muslim organizations and activists will render him ineffective as a statesman to Muslim leaders and populations around the world.” Rounding out

Pompeo's Islamophobic qualifications, Ellison and Carson noted that the nominee "is a 'steadfast ally' of Brigitte Gabriel, who runs ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim hate group in the United States."¹⁷

Concerning his aversion to the Islamic Republic, Pompeo posted an Iranophobic remark on Twitter in November 2016 stating, "I look forward to rolling back this disastrous deal [JCPOA] with the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism."¹⁸ Earlier, as a member of Congress, the future U.S. secretary of state wrote an op-ed for Fox News that could be termed an anti-Iran manifesto. Asking whether or not the JCPOA benefitted the United States, Pompeo answered, "Unfortunately for our country's future, the answer to that inquiry is a resounding no." His remedy is overthrowing the legitimate government of Iran. "Congress must act to change Iranian behavior," the then representative wrote, "and, ultimately, the Iranian regime." Additionally, Pompeo displayed his contempt for Iran and Iranians, condescendingly commenting on "Iranians' bizarre tantrums and illogical arguments" while accusing Iran of "continuously threatening to walk away from the [nuclear] deal,"¹⁹ which his boss, Trump, actually did.

Evidently, Pompeo and other U.S. officials not only are neither feeling the pain of Iranians nor are capable of empathizing with them, but also appear to be relishing the cruel conditions they have created by re-imposing ever harsher economic sanctions on Iran. To them this economic terrorism is a neo-crusade, and their long sought after Holy Grail is regime change in Tehran.

Endnotes

¹ "Pompeo Repeats Message To Iranians: 'The United States Is With You'," *Radio Farda*, November 17, 2019, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://en.radiofarda.com/a/30275681.html>.

² Allen Cone, "Gas price hikes, rationing fuel protests throughout Iran," *UPI*, November 16, 2019, accessed November 17, 2019, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2019/11/16/Gas-price-hikes-rationing-fuel-protests-throughout-Iran/5341573933657/.

³ "Rationing expected to reduce gasoline consumption," *Tehran Times*, November 16, 2019, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/442045/Rationing-expected-to-reduce-gasoline-consumption>

⁴ "US supports anarchists, not Iranian people: Spokesman," *Press TV*, November 17, 2019, accessed November 18, 2019, <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2019/11/17/611451/Mousavi-Pompeo-fuel-Iran-US-protest>.

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⁶ "Rioting, insecurity will be dealt with decisively: Iran's IRGC," *Press TV*, November 18, 2019, accessed November 18, 2019, <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2019/11/18/611499/IRGC-fuel-protests-insecurity-prices-statement-MKO>.

⁷ Michael Pompeo, Twitter Post, July 22, 2018, accessed November 17, 2019, https://twitter.com/SecPompeo/status/1021209446826094592?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1195800549322625025&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.radiofarda.com%2F%2F30275681.html.

⁸ Yasmin Radjy, "This Norooz, Wishing Iranians (Access to) a Healthy New Year," *NIAC*, March 20, 2014, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://www.niacouncil.org/this-norooz-wishing-iranians-access-to-a-healthy-new-year/>.

⁹ Brendan Cole, "Mike Pompeo Says Iran Must Listen To U.S. 'If They Want Their People To Eat'," *Newsweek*, November 9, 2018, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/mike-pompeo-says-iran-must-listen-us-if-they-want-their-people-eat-1208465>.

¹⁰ Brendan Cole, *ibid*.

¹¹ "Maximum Pressure' US Economic Sanctions Harm Iranians' Right to Health," *Human Rights Watch*, October 29, 2019, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/10/29/maximum-pressure/us-economic-sanctions-harm-iranians-right-health>.

¹² "Maximum Pressure' US Economic Sanctions Harm Iranians' Right to Health," *ibid*.

¹³ Akash Ghai, "Celebration time at Democrat Goyle's residence," *Chandigarh Tribune*, November 9, 2006, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20061109/cth1.htm>.

¹⁴ "Secretary of State Nominee Mike Pompeo's Disturbing Civil Rights Record," *Muslim Advocates*, April 5, 2018, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://www.muslimadvocates.org/files/Mike-Pompeo-Fact-Sheet-4.5.18.pdf>.

¹⁵ "Mike Pompeo: 'threat to America' caused by 'people who deeply believe that Islam is the way'," Vimeo, accessed November 17, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/192276878/33c5857cb8>.

¹⁶ "U.S. Senate: Oppose and Block the Confirmation of Islamophobe Mike Pompeo to Secretary of State," *Council on American Islamic Relations*, accessed November 17, 2019,

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¹⁹ Mike Pompeo, "One year later, Obama's Iran nuclear deal puts us at increased risk," *Fox News*, July 14, 2016, accessed November 17, 2019, [https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/rep-mike-pompeo-one-year-later-obamas-iran-
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