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April 9, 2026

Secretary Scott Bessent
United States Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. NW,
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Secretary Bessent,

Following recent bipartisan Committee staff meetings with the nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy, and current Senior Advisor to you since last September, I was alarmed to hear what appears to be a complete and total lack of preparation by Treasury in the lead-up to the war with Iran. During these meetings, Sriprakash Kothari, the nominee, repeatedly told my staff that not only did he not perform any work related to energy markets leading up to the war, but that he wasn't aware of anyone at Treasury who did. The war with Iran began on February 28, 2026, following months of the United States carrying out its largest military buildup in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Mr. Kothari's statements suggest that leadership at the Treasury Department was conducting no work on important economic impacts of military intervention while news of potential conflict could be heard from Washington to Tehran.

The American people are facing a rapidly-growing affordability crisis made worse by this deeply unpopular war, and it is unacceptable that Treasury may not have performed the most basic planning before it was launched. Every problem resulting from the conflict which we are seeing now was not only foreseeable but was predicted by the intelligence agencies, which reported as recently as last March that Iran was "capable of inflicting severe damage to an attacker" and of "disrupting shipping, particularly energy supplies, through the Strait of Hormuz."¹

As part of the nomination process, bipartisan Committee staff hold a series of meetings with nominees. During those meetings with Mr. Kothari, my staff asked what analysis or work related to energy markets the nominee performed preceding the commencement of hostilities, he replied that he had performed no such work "leading up to the conflict," but "subsequent" to the conflict he did. When later asked to clarify this response, he reiterated that he had not performed any

¹ Annual Threat Assessment, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, at 24, March 2025.

analysis or work related to energy markets, or any other economic facet, in the lead-up to military action in Iran. He further told staff that the work he performed subsequently occurred after learning about the February 2026 strikes in the news. Mr. Kothari was then asked whether he was aware of anyone at Treasury performing analysis or work related to energy markets in the lead-up to potential military action in Iran, he responded that he was not aware of anyone performing any such work.

When asked about his “subsequent” work, and who at Treasury tasked him with finally assessing the economic effects of the conflict, he responded that “no one” had requested this work, and he was performing it “for himself.” When asked if he was coordinating this effort with any other government agencies or departments, he responded “no.” When asked what his “subsequent” analysis entailed, he replied that he was analyzing “oil prices” and “GDP numbers” but could provide no further details. Additionally, Mr. Kothari said that his assessment of the economic outlook was that the adverse economic effects we have already seen stemming from the conflict were only “going to get worse the longer it lasts.”

Since the war with Iran began, we have witnessed the Administration fiercely deny reports that it was unprepared for Iran’s response to the attack and the economic hardship the American people are feeling today as a result.² According to your own Senior Advisor, those reports likely gave too much credit to the planning that this Administration undertook before it plunged the United States into another reckless and endless war.

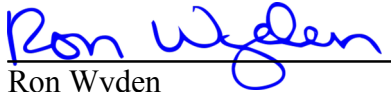
As such, I request that you answer the following questions no later than April 16, 2026.

1. Are the statements outlined above made by your Senior Advisor correct?
 - a. Describe in detail what actions the Treasury Department undertook to determine the economic consequences of a war with Iran prior to February 28, 2026.
 - b. What specific analysis or work was performed by Treasury in the lead-up to the war related to the impact it would have on global energy markets?
 - c. If no such work was performed, provide a detailed explanation as to why your department failed to undertake preparations or analysis of the economic effects a war with Iran may have caused.
2. What office(s) within the Treasury Department were involved in analyzing and planning for the economic consequences of a war with Iran?
 - a. Describe the work of the office(s) in detail.
 - b. Was there coordination with any other governmental department or agency? Which, and to what extent?
3. Is it standard practice for high-ranking employees of the Treasury Department to undertake economic analysis or other Treasury related work for themselves as opposed to at the behest of or for the Department?

² See, e.g., New York Times, *How Trump and his Advisors Miscalculated Iran’s Response to War*, March 10, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/10/us/politics/how-trump-miscalculated-iran-response.html>; and Independent, *Karoline Leavitt Insists Trump had a ‘feeling based on fact’ before Iran Strikes but still won’t detail Imminent Threat to US*, March 5, 2026, <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-iran-war-white-house-briefing-b2931933.html>.

- a. If so, what is your department's policy for handling any work product stemming from Mr. Kothari's, or similar high level staff's, independent effort?
 - b. If not, please explain why your Senior Advisor is performing post hoc analysis of a conflict whose ramifications span the globe and have a direct and pervasive effect on the Department and the nation on his own initiative and without direction from yourself or any other Principal Officer of the United States.
4. As stated above, your Senior Advisor said he was performing analysis on oil prices and GDP numbers, what is your assessment of the current state of oil prices and their impact to U.S. GDP?
 - a. Do you agree with your Senior Advisor's assessment that the longer the conflict in Iran endures the worse the outlook for oil prices and the U.S. GDP becomes? Explain.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance