

Riot Fuel

What do the nations of Chile, France, and Iran have in common? Not much. But in spite of their differences, they do have at least one similarity. Poor people in these countries are rioting over the increased costs of transportation. People are dying along with billions of dollars in property damage.

The rioting in Chile, France, Iran, and other nations exposes a blind spot in this idea that governments can increase energy costs and it won't affect social stability. This is an idea that has been proven false countless times.

In November 2019 Iran reduced subsidies for gasoline, which raised the price by 50 percent and limited how much fuel people could purchase. Riots ensued, gas stations and other buildings were torched, and dozens of people were reported to have been killed.

In October of 2019, Chile raised subway prices double the rate of inflation. Protestors set fire to 21 metro stations, burned seven trains, and attacked more than 2,000 busses. At least 20 people were killed in weeks of protesting.

A year earlier... hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets across France to protest high fuel prices and a rising cost of living. The massive demonstrations became known as "The Yellow Vest Movement". It spread to other countries and while the protests decreased in size, they continued through the end of 2019.

Of course, the cost of transportation isn't the only factor driving all this anger and violence. However, it is clear that the poor are highly sensitive to the cost of fuel and that sensitivity is a powerful trigger that can spark widespread revolt.

This is something politicians everywhere should take into account as they seek to raise the cost of energy in their supposed quest to battle climate change.

For the Clear Energy Alliance, I'm Mark Mathis. Power On.