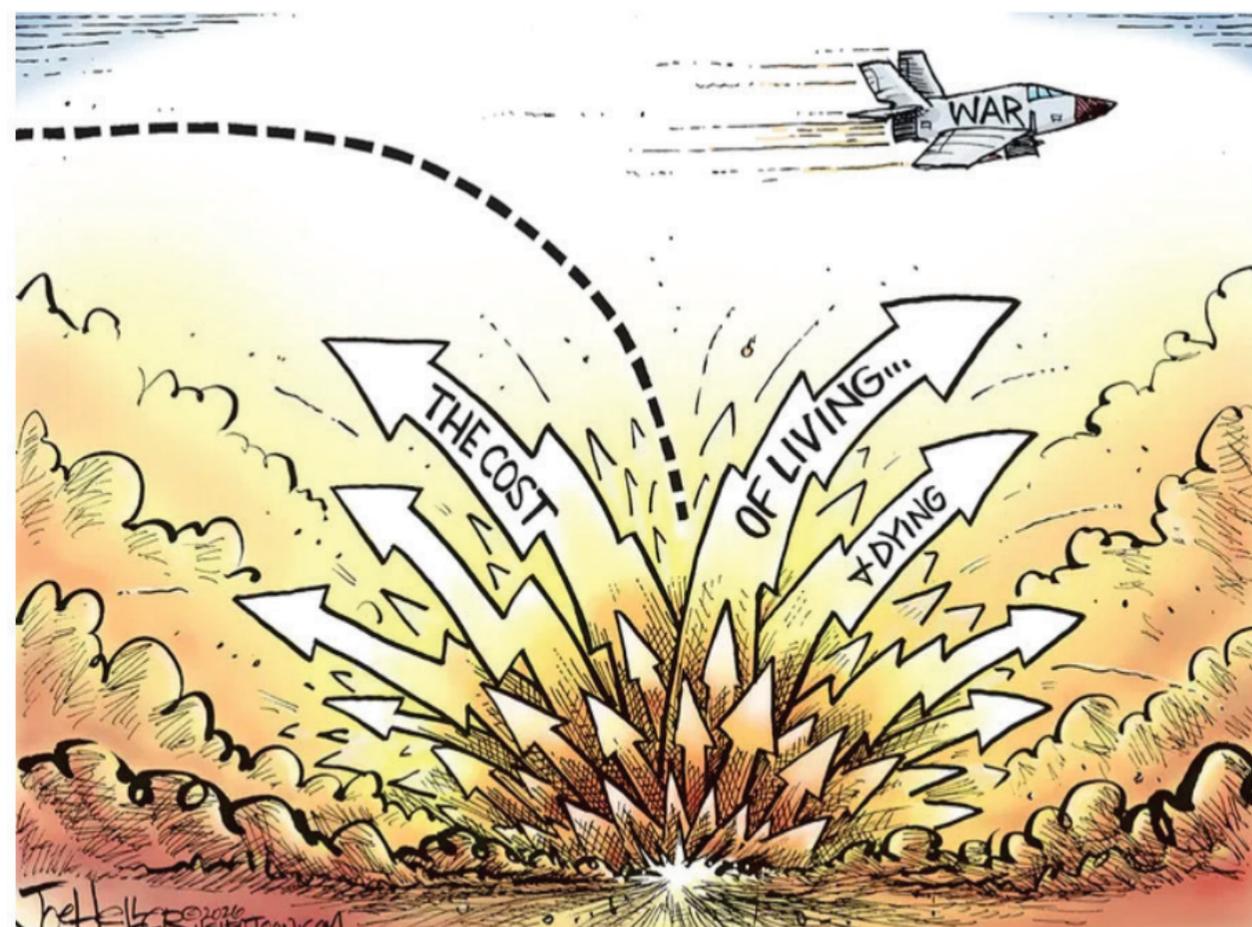


## OPINION



## At last, the credibility of U.S. deterrence is being restored

The Hamas paragliders, who were tentacles of Iran, began today's war on Oct. 7, 2023, igniting one of history's most spectacular backfires. Iran's regime and its terrorism multipliers, Hamas and Hezbollah, have unintentionally magnified Israel's security. And Iran's regime, whose mantra since its inception in 1979 has been "Death to America," is near death by the clasped hands of Israel and America.

The wielders of Iran's regime, which is founded on fear, surely experienced a sudden, terrifying epiphany when the aerial attacks, unlike previous ones, began in daylight: The attackers knew when and where the regime's senior officials would be meeting in Tehran that day. Precision munitions, directed by spectacular intelligence, enabled a decapitation strategy.

The at least 30,000 protesters who perished in Iran's streets in early January did not die in vain. The 1956 Hungarian Revolution failed to topple a tyranny, but refuted the then-common pessimism that tyrants can assure their permanence by controlling the consciousness of their publics. (George Orwell in "1984": "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face — for ever.") Iran's protesters dramatically underscored the regime's barbarism, so those who today regret the regime's demise reveal their barbarism.

Some say that U.S. involvement in Iran constitutes a "war of choice." That too casually bandied phrase rarely fits untidy reality. America's Civil War was a choice: Lincoln chose not to heed those — they were not too few — who agreed with the prominent publisher Horace Greeley. He said of the seceding Southern states, "Let the erring sisters go in peace." Lincoln chose against such national suicide.

Donald Trump's administration has chosen not to wager U.S. safety on Iran's abandoning its multi-decade

pursuit of nuclear weapons, or on Iran's acquiring them but not really meaning "Death to America."

For Israel, the death of Iran's self-proclaimed genocidal regime was a choice only in the sense that Israel chose to believe the regime when it called Israel a "one-bomb country." Tyrants lie promiscuously, but occasionally are candid. In 1939, Adolf Hitler said a world war would mean "the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe." Israel exists because Hitler meant that. Israel's survival depends on forever thinking that nothing is unthinkable.

The U.S. action for regime change in Iran is not sufficient to produce regional tranquility. It is, however, a necessity for beginning to reestablish a precondition for a more peaceable world: the credibility of U.S. deterrence.

A nadir of post-1945 U.S. power — and its precondition, confidence — was the 1975 departure of the last helicopter from the U.S. Embassy roof in Saigon. A second low point was reached when Barack Obama drew, in 2012, and then ignored a red line (concerning Syrian chemical weapons). A third was in 2021 when Joe Biden produced a chaotic exit from Afghanistan.



**GEORGE WILL**

*The Washington Post*

Today, Vladimir Putin is watching Venezuela, Iran (a source of some of Putin's drones) and soon, perhaps, Cuba, join Syria as vanished clients. The swiftness of their downfall illustrates the hollowness of Russia's claim to be a formidable global actor.

Today's world, where the velocity of information and the capability of weaponry annihilate distances and compress time, resembles an Alexander Calder mobile: a disturbance here translates into disturbance over there. In one of history's stranger caroms, Oct. 7 led to regime change at Harvard and other universities, and forced a U.S. reckoning with antisemitism's infection of both extremities of the political spectrum.

Unlike in Venezuela, mere decapitation — regime modification — is insufficient for Iran. The ayatollahs' regime loathed not just modernity, which America exemplifies, but humanity, whose dignity is in imagining betterment through reason banishing superstition.

Let there be no more incomprehension akin to Obama's first inaugural, in which he said, with Iran likely in mind, "We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist." Or George H.W. Bush's inaugural, in which he said to belligerent nations, "Good will begets good will."

Iran's potential for flourishing is in what is ancient and what is young. It can draw on more than 20 centuries of cultural identity that preceded the recent decades of theocratic primitivism. And the median age of Iranians is about 34. This guarantees the restless energy that freedom requires.

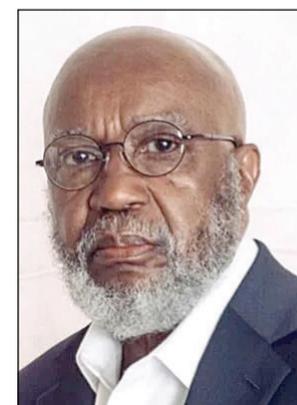
Nationalism, so often derided, was never captured by Iran's regime. Instead, nationalism simmered against the state, which warred unceasingly against the nation. As America prepares to help, from a distance, Iran's political rebirth, we should heed an American poet's advice of bold thoroughness. Robert Frost: "The best way out is always through."

## Fear Framed as Fairness: An American Pattern

Campaigning for the primaries is in full-circus frenzy mode. The candidate emerging from this free-for-all will advance to the November general election. Integrity, respect, and rhetoric that unifies are never spoken—the specter of fear is employed.

We are a society of reasonably intelligent people. We are a nation that boasts of our grounding in faith principles. We are a country where integrity, decency, and respect for the common man are ingrained in the creed of freedom and justice for all. This promise is not situational. It's not practiced at the will of convenience. It's why the stars and stripes flutter in the winds.

But the calculated campaign rhetoric inverts fairness and fear. When the loss of status is threatened, fear is the ace card up the sleeve. Politicians are skillfully adroit house dealers.



**NORMAN FRANKLIN**

*Local Columnist*

Politics are the ideological identity of the nation. Political leaders are elected to carry out the will of the people. Calculated rhetoric manipulates the electorate with emotions rather than with policy platforms that offer concrete solutions. Immigrants, policies and programs promoting equity become the targets of ridicule, and exploitation. It's a repeated pattern employed to resist social reforms and political reckoning.

Two candidates are vying for the Senate seat of the retiring Mitch McConnell.

Sen. McConnell (R) represents roughly 4.5 million residents of Kentucky. The demographics: nearly 87% white, with small percentages of African Americans, Hispanic, and Asian constituents.

Candidates in the primaries employ the means necessary to get to the November general election. Fear and exaggerated promises are the rails the candidates ride through the primaries landscape. The rhetoric is dismissive.

One candidate unapologetically stated, DEI stands for "dumb, evil, indoctrination." If this candidate wins, can the African American, Hispanic, and Asian constituents expect equitable representation? The other candidate will champion deportation of immigrants. They are taking our jobs. They are criminals and thugs. They threaten the security and safety of our communities. Both voter appeals promote exclusion.

It's a bipartisan American pattern. The fear, fairness, and threat narratives motivate voters.

Here's the distinction. Republican fear rhetoric historically emphasized—crime, coded racial disorder, immigration, cultural decline, government favoritism toward minorities, and status displacement. Whereas Democratic fear rhetoric more often emphasized: economic collapse, loss of social safety nets, war, healthcare insecurity, and climate catastrophe.

Richard Nixon framed urban unrest, crime, and social disorder to justify his administration's platform of "law and order." The recommendations of the Kerner Commission were not implemented.

Nixon exploited "law and order." Ronald Reagan, the quintessential Republican, weaponized welfare and harnessed the fear of government overreach. Reducing welfare and shrinking government was restoring fairness to "hardworking taxpayers."

George H. W. Bush racialized crime—Willie Horton exemplified violent crime, criminal leniency, and racialized danger. Bill Clinton endorsed the 1994 Crime Bill. Barack Obama's financial collapse and loss of healthcare exploited the fear of losing safety nets during the Great Recession.

Fear motivates reaction on any level. Both parties exploited fears—it's the pattern of American political control.

Nixon, Reagan, and Bush messaging often framed protection of traditional order as fairness. Democratic messaging more often framed protection of vulnerable groups as fairness.

Fairness is relative. It always favored those in power. The marginalized, the vulnerable become a useful convenience. The electorate follows their emotions.