Thomas Paine, Liberty's Hated Torchbearer

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By **George F. Smith**
September 21, 2026

January 10 should be a special date in American history. On January 10, 1776, Thomas Paine's Common Sense rolled off the press in Philadelphia and ignited a drive for independence. As Murray Rothbard wrote,"Tom Paine had, at a single blow, become the voice of the American Revolution and the greatest single force in propelling it to completion and independence."

When Thomas Paine's ship pulled into Baltimore harbor on October 30, 1802, a large gathering of friends and admirers were waiting at dockside to welcome him back. Others stood by as well, some filled with loathing, merely to observe a famous figure. Since leaving the United States in 1787 to find a builder for his iron bridge, Paine had authored some of the most incendiary tracts of the 18th century, had been imprisoned and narrowly escaped Robespierre's guillotine, and was widely reported to be a drunk and an atheist.

When he journeyed to Federal City on November 5 to pay his respects to the country's third president, he found that he needed an alias and help from a presidential aide to get a room at Lovell's, the city's only hotel. As he **later wrote a friend and future biographer, Thomas Clio Rickman**,

> You can have no idea of the agitation which my arrival occasioned. From New Hampshire to Georgia (an extent of 1,500 miles), every newspaper was filled with applause or abuse.



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The source of the abuse was the Federalist press, a collection of newspaper editors and writers who were the big-government allies of Alexander Hamilton and his Federalist Party. Thomas Jefferson, the new president, had unseated Federalist John Adams and many of his congressional cohorts in what Jefferson called the **"Revolution of 1800."**

The party of war, taxes, and privileges for the rich, coupled with a strong loyalty to England — which it sought to emulate in all its corrupt glory — had been thrown out in favor of one promising to be bound by the "chains of the Constitution." The Democratic-Republicans (or simply the Republicans, as Jefferson's party was called) sought to disentangle government from people's lives, both within the country and abroad.

Paine had been staying in France since his release from prison in late 1794 and had been frustrated in his wish to return to America by the possibility of capture by British warships. The English had convicted him in absentia of seditious libel for **Rights of Man, Part the Second** and other political writings, and they were determined to intercept and hang him if he ever set sail again. When England and

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France signed the **Treaty of Amiens** on March 25, 1802, inaugurating a year's respite from war, it was once again safe for Paine to be at sea, and he left Le Havre on September 1.

Contrary to Federalist rumors that Jefferson wanted Paine back in the states to help defend his administration from Federalist attacks, Paine himself apparently saw his return as a **well-earned retirement opportunity**. He had turned 65 in 1802 and still suffered lingering bouts of pain and fever from his **ten-month incarceration under Robespierre**. As the 18th century's most influential political pamphleteer, Paine's reputation was born with the American Revolution he was largely responsible for creating, and he wanted to spend his last years among people with whom he shared a passion for liberty.

But there was never to be any lasting peace for a firebrand like Paine, whose immense popularity with commoners made life uncomfortable for politicians, priests, and pundits everywhere.

The Struggle to Find Home

Paine grew up in mid-18th century England under **"a criminal code that would hang a ten-year-old boy for stealing a penknife or permit women to be stoned to death in the pillory."** The thatched cottage in Thetford, where he was born in 1737, stood near one of the execution sites, a wind-swept hill known locally as the Wilderness. There, each spring, convicted peasants were hung with great ceremony under the direction of a pompous hypocrite from Cambridge known as the Lord Chief Justice.

Murder among the poor was uncommon; the offenses usually involved crimes against property, such as stealing a bushel of wheat or purchasing a stolen horse. The courts viewed the well-to-do quite differently. Even in cases of homicide, they were often acquitted or given nominal sentences. One of Paine's first written works was a **poem satirizing the decision of a Sussex court to hang a dog named Porter** because its owner had voted for a member of Parliament the judges didn't like.



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Enclosure laws had long since driven small farmers off their land and into the cities, where the more-adaptable ones became factory workers. Others turned to begging, thievery, or worse, all of which Paine witnessed in the first half of his life.

The son of a Quaker father and an Anglican mother, Paine attended school until he was 12, never learned Latin or any language other than English, worked at various odd jobs in his youth, was married twice, and finally during a period of utter despair met Benjamin Franklin in London, who was so impressed with Paine's intellectual fire that he recommended Paine seek deliverance in the American colonies.

Paine had recently been dismissed as a tax collector, for leaving his post for three months to petition Parliament for better pay for his fellow excise officers. The loss of his job led to the breakup of his second marriage. At 37, with little left to lose, Paine took Franklin's letter of recommendation to Philadelphia in late 1774 and found work writing for and editing a new magazine.

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His first published article, "**The Magazine in America**," appeared on January 24, 1775, and included a special tribute. Foreign vices, he wrote, engaging his poetic flair, should they survive the voyage from Europe,

> either expire on their arrival, or linger away in an incurable consumption. There is a happy something in the climate of America, which disarms them of all their power both of infection and attraction.

As **Paine biographer Jack Fruchtman, Jr.** observes, "This was the beginning of Paine's long love affair with America."

On March 8, 1775 Paine published "African Slavery in America," in which he not only condemned slavery ("Certainly one may, with as much reason and decency, plead for murder, robbery, lewdness, and barbarity, as for this practice") but offered his thoughts on how to abolish it humanely. In a much shorter piece (**"A Serious Thought"**), published on October 18, Paine again expressed his hatred of slavery along with the manner in which so-called Christians treated American Indians, and concluded that

> When I reflect on these [injustices], I hesitate not for a moment to believe that the Almighty will finally separate America from Britain. Call it independence or what you will, if it is the cause of God and humanity it will go on.

Though the seeds of American independence were imported "with the troops from Britain," as one contemporary writer observed, it was Paine's 77-page pamphlet **Common Sense**, published anonymously on January 10, 1776, that imparted passion and urgency to the movement. It argued persuasively that the choice for Americans was independence or slavery, that King George, far from deserving unconditional loyalty, was in truth "the Royal Brute of Great Britain" and the one chiefly responsible for the oppressive measures imposed on the colonists.

Paine's irreverent polemics made the pamphlet a huge success, with an estimated 120,000 copies sold in three months, reaching tradesmen and statesmen alike. Later editions featured his name on the cover to dispel rumors that John Adams had written it. He asked printers to sell it for an affordable two shillings and, in a futile gesture, directed his share of the profits to the American military cause. With the publication of Common Sense, **Rothbard tells us that**

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> Tom Paine had, at a single blow, become the voice of the American Revolution and the greatest single force in propelling it to completion and independence.

John Adams, **whose hatred for Paine grew stronger with each passing year**, later conceded that "Without the pen of the author of Common Sense, the sword of Washington would have been raised in vain." He **described** the pamphlet as "a poor, ignorant, Malicious, short-sighted, Crapulous Mass."

Sometime after July 4, 1776, Paine joined the Continental Army and served as General Nathaniel Greene's aide-de-camp. Shortly before Washington crossed the Delaware on Christmas night for an early morning attack on a Hessian garrison at Trenton, Paine penned the first of a series of essays known as "**The American Crisis**." It is said that Washington ordered the essay read to his demoralized and ill-clad troops during a sleet storm before making the crossing. The essay, immortalized in American history with its opening words — "These are the times that try men's souls" — may or may not have inspired the men, but it did **boost the spirits of patriot civilians** when they heard news of the Americans' decisive victory.

When the war ended, Paine had time to pursue his interests in natural science and designed a single-span iron bridge that he tried to get constructed. When no one in Philadelphia would build it, he left the country on April 26, 1787, at age 50, to present a model of his design to the French Academy of Sciences. The Academy liked it, but the country was too much in debt to build it, so Paine took his model to Britain's Royal Society. Again, no one was interested in constructing it.

As biographer **Craig Nelson writes**, over the following years Paine "would migrate constantly between London and Paris, enjoying the company and admiration of some of Europe's most charismatic figures," as he looked for someone to build his bridge. In England he came to know such people as Whig leader Charles James Fox, playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan, preacher Richard Price, educator William Godwin, and author Mary Wollstonecraft.

Though surrounded by such illustrious figures, Paine had mixed feelings about leaving America, as he explained in **a letter to a newly married friend, Kitty Nicholson Few**, in January 1789:

> Though I am in as elegant style of acquaintance here as any American that ever came over, my heart and myself are 3,000 miles apart; and I had rather see my horse Button in his own stable ... than see all the pomp and show of Europe.
>
> A thousand years hence (for I must indulge in a few thoughts), perhaps in less, America may be what England now is! The innocence of her character that won the

> hearts of all nations in her favor may sound like a romance, and her inimitable virtue as if it had never been. The ruins of that liberty which thousands bled for, or suffered to obtain, may just furnish materials for a village tale or extort a sigh from rustic sensibility, while the fashionable of that day, enveloped in dissipation, shall deride the principle and deny the fact.

Paine managed to get a 90-foot experimental version of his bridge erected across the Don River in England, and one of the visitors to the site was the liberal Whig and member of Parliament, Edmund Burke. Paine and Burke became friends, and while living within a short stroll of each other in London found numerous occasions to engage in lengthy political discussions.

Revolutionary Fever in France

While in London, Paine would receive letters from Jefferson in France telling him

> how firmly the American experiment [the French Revolution] was taking root in Paris .... He shared each of Jefferson's letters with Edmund Burke, expecting that the Whig deputy would also be pleased. Burke, however, was very much not pleased.

(Please continue reading at Barbarous Relic)



In this Sept. 27, 1951 file photo, Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh rides on the shoulders of cheering crowds in Tehran's Majlis Square, outside the parliament building, after reiterating his oil nationalization views to his supporters. ASSOCIATED PRESS

> The binding effect of Shia Islam, which most Iranians profess, also gives them inspiration to resist. Its two most revered figures, Ali and Hussein, were 7th-century martyrs who the Shia believe died defending justice against tyranny.

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Catholic author JRR Tolkien to be honored at Westminster Abbey

A new memorial at Westminster Abbey pays tribute to J.R.R. Tolkien, who described his famous fictional series 'The Lord of the Rings' as 'a fundamentally religious and Catholic work.'

Fri Sep 25, 2026

(LifeSiteNews) — J.R.R. Tolkien, the famed Catholic author of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, will be honored with a new memorial at Westminster Abbey.

The tree-shaped memorial will be inlaid vertically in a stone pillar and unveiled at a dedication ceremony in Spring 2027, the 90th anniversary year of *The Hobbit,* according to Westminster Abbey. The "tree" will be mostly composed of wood native to the UK and will include a piece of the black pine known as "Tolkien's tree," cut from Oxford University's Botanic Garden. The tree was a delight to Tolkien during his time at Oxford.

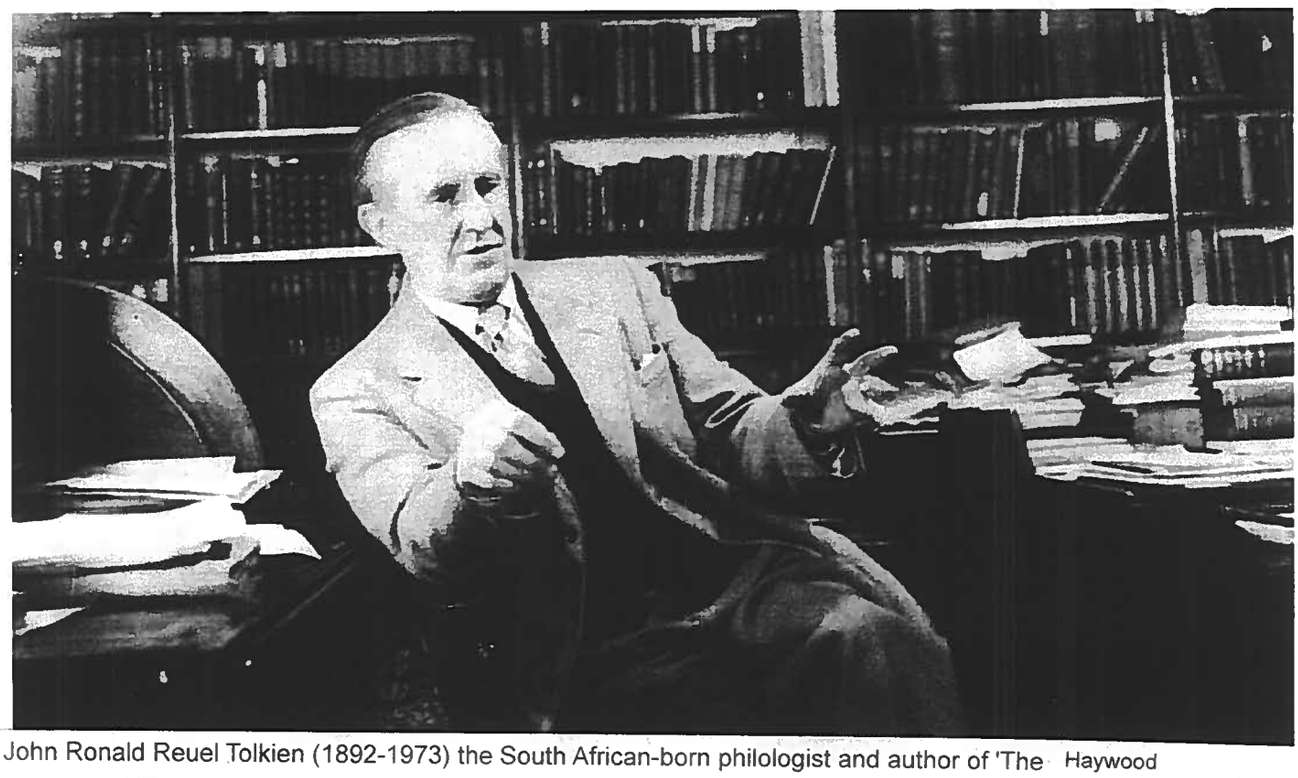
The design is inspired by Tolkien's Tree of Tales, which he called the Tree of Amalion, a metaphor he used to describe the massive body of stories that make up the mythical and fairy tale tradition.

Best known for his fantasy novels, Tolkien spent much of his life as a distinguished professor at Oxford, where he taught Old and Middle English, and Old Norse.

Tolkien was a devout Roman Catholic, and many commentators attribute the themes of his work to the influence of his Catholic faith. Tolkien himself said in a 1953 letter to the Jesuit Father Robert Murray, "The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision."

He had a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and later in life resisted the changes to the Mass after the Second Vatican Council. A memoir by grandson Simon Tolkien attests that after the *Novus Ordo* was promulgated, his grandfather "made all the responses very loudly in Latin while the rest of the congregation answered in English."

Emily Mangiaracina



John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) the South African-born philologist and author of 'The Hobbit' and 'The Lord of the Rings' Haywood Magee/Getty Images

While Gaza Dominates the UN, These Are the People Keeping It Alive

by Ramzy Baroud | Oct 2, 2026 | 0 Comments

When I first saw footage of Gaza doctor Munir al-Bursh and his family kneeling beside the white-shrouded body of his son, surrounded by mourners, I thought it was an old video. It was not.

My conclusion, however, was understandable. In December 2023, only months after the start of the Israeli genocide in Gaza, the al-Bursh family was targeted in an Israeli attack. Dr. Munir, director-general of Gaza's Ministry of Health, was wounded. So were other members of his family. His daughter, Jinan, only 13, was killed.

That same day, Gaza's beloved doctor was back at work, joining the many doctors across the Strip trying to save lives as Israel's killing machine claimed them by the thousands.

Alas, the latest footage was not old footage resurfacing. It was a new coffin, a new funeral, another child buried by the same family. This time, the attack took place during what some in the media continue to call the 'Gaza ceasefire.'

On September 19, an Israeli drone strike killed al-Bursh's eldest son, Basir, outside a tent west of Jabaliya refugee camp.

"We were together side by side," the grieving father recalled. Basir had warned him: "The Israelis are targeting both of us." Moments later, his son stepped outside the tent and was killed.

One can be forgiven for confusing Gaza's present with its recent past. The scenes emerging today are almost indistinguishable from those that preceded the so-called ceasefire of October 2025. The sequence repeats itself with terrible familiarity: Israeli strikes, shelling and sniping; Palestinians killed; the bereaved carrying their dead through Gaza's destroyed streets, searching among the ruins for somewhere to bury them.

Al-Bursh's story is part of this terrible continuum, but its significance extends beyond his personal loss. Throughout the genocide, he and other Palestinian doctors became Gaza's de facto spokespeople. They counted the dead and wounded, documented hunger and destruction, and chronicled the collapse of the medical system from within its hospitals. In the process, they became Gaza's highest moral authority, more credible than politicians or self-proclaimed leaders.

And the world listened. Gaza's doctors forged a bond with global civil society that no political institution could manufacture.

Perhaps that helps explain the staggering price Gaza's medical community has been made to pay. According to the World Health Organization, more than 1,700 healthcare workers have been killed since 2023, amid at least 920 attacks on healthcare.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, like Dr. al-Bursh, became a symbol of that medical resistance. The director of Kamal Adwan Hospital remained at his post through siege and repeated Israeli attacks before Israeli forces detained him in December 2024. He remains imprisoned without charge or trial, amid reports from his lawyer of beatings and deteriorating health.

Dr. al-Bursh, meanwhile, remains steadfast despite repeated blows that would have broken many others. His wife, too, embodies sumud, the Palestinian tradition of steadfastness

nurtured at home and passed from one generation to the next.

Even in the immediate aftermath of his son's killing, al-Bursh continued warning about Gaza's collapsing healthcare system. Indeed, hospitals have been forced to suspend scheduled surgeries and outpatient services, while severe shortages of fuel, medicines and equipment continue.

"The limited quantities of fuel reaching the enclave barely keep health facilities alive," al-Bursh warned a day after his son's murder.

His statement came as world leaders gathered thousands of miles away, in New York, for the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

And once again, Palestine echoed through speech after speech, though this time the language carried a new urgency.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez condemned "the genocide that Netanyahu continues to perpetrate in Gaza." UN Secretary-General António Guterres described Israel's mass extermination as involving "a scale of killing and destruction unlike anything I have witnessed" during his tenure. Even French President Emmanuel Macron called Gaza "a spectacle that shames us all," asking: "What is our credibility worth if we remain inactive on Gaza?"

Then came Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Dozens of delegates walked out as he approached the podium, leaving row upon row of empty seats, while protests continued outside the UN. Netanyahu responded by calling those who departed "moral cowards."

One might pause here and speak of tides turning, currents changing and a world slowly loosening the decades-long grip of Israel and its American benefactor.

But Gaza does not have the luxury of time. While the words reverberate through the halls of the United Nations, children are still killed in front of their families. Mass funerals remain part of Gaza's daily rhythm. Approximately 1.7 million people remain displaced, many under inadequate shelter, without sufficient clean water or sanitation. Hospitals remain crippled. And above this landscape of ruin, the drones still circle.

Between today and the next UN General Assembly lies an entire year—365 days in which those words can either acquire meaning or become yet another entry in the long archive of speeches on Palestine. However, there is time for rhetoric to become policy: for sanctions to be imposed, boycotts activated, meaningful aid delivered and those responsible for war crimes held accountable.

Until then, Dr. Munir al-Bursh and thousands of Gaza's men and women will continue to hold the fort amid shattered hospitals, destroyed homes and an exhausted population.

Their resilience is extraordinary. But Gaza cannot be expected to endure simply because it has proved capable of enduring.

In New York, Palestine is spoken of from the podium. In Gaza, Palestinians are still being carried to their graves.

It is time to close the distance between words and action, once and for all.

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Tyranny at Nuremberg

Paul Craig Roberts

August 31, 2026

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Update Aug. 12, 2017: Here is David Irving's account of his arrest, trial, and imprisonment in Austria. His conviction was overturned by a higher court, and he was released after some months of imprisonment. http://www.fpp.co.uk/books/Banged/up.pdf

The show trial of a somewhat arbitrarily selected group of 21 surviving Nazis at Nuremberg during 1945-46 was US Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson's show. Jackson was the chief prosecutor. As a long-time admirer of Jackson, I always assumed that he did a good job.

My admiration for Jackson stems from his defense of law as a shield of the people rather than a weapon in the hands of government, and from his defense of the legal principle known as mens rea, that is, that crime requires intent. I often cite Jackson for his defense of these legal principles that are the very foundation of liberty. Indeed, I cited Jackson in my recent July 31 column. His defense of law as a check on government power plays a central role in the book that I wrote with Lawrence Stratton, *The Tyranny of Good Intentions.*

In 1940 Jackson was US Attorney General. He addressed federal prosecutors and warned them against "picking the man and then putting investigators to work, to pin some offense on him. It is in this realm—in which the prosecutor picks some person whom he dislikes or desires to embarrass, or selects some group of unpopular persons and then looks for an offense—that the greatest danger of abuse of prosecuting power lies. It is here that law enforcement becomes personal, and the real crime becomes that of being unpopular with the predominant or governing group, being attached to the wrong political views or being personally obnoxious to, or in the way of, the prosecutor himself."

Later as a Supreme Court justice Jackson overturned a lower court conviction of a person who had no idea, or any reason to believe, that he had committed a crime.

Having just finished reading David Irving's book *Nuremberg* (1996), I am devastated to learn that in his pursuit of another principle, at Nuremberg Jackson violated all of the legal principles for which I have so long admired him. To be clear, at Nuremberg Jackson was in pursuit of Nazis, but their conviction was the means to his end—the establishment of the international legal principle that the initiation of war, the commitment of military aggression, was a crime.

The main problem with the trials is that WW II was started by the British with their declaration of war against Germany, not by Germany.

Another problem was that at Nuremberg people were tried on the basis of ex post facto law—law that did not exist at the time of their actions for which they were convicted.

Moreover, the sentence—death by hanging—was decided prior to the trial and prior to the selection of defendants.

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Moreover, the defendants were chosen and then a case was made against them.

Exculpatory evidence was withheld. Charges on which defendants were convicted turned out to be untrue.

The trials were so loaded in favor of the prosecution that defense was pro forma.

The defendants were abused and some were tortured.

The defendants were encouraged to give false witness against one another, which for the most part the defendants refused to do, with Albert Speer being the willing one. His reward was a prison sentence rather than death.

The defendants' wives and children were arrested and imprisoned. To Jackson's credit, this infuriated him.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Eisenhower, and Winston Churchill thought that surviving Nazis should be shot without trial. Roosevelt laughed about liquidating 50,000 German military officers. Eisenhower told Lord Halifax that Nazi leaders should be shot while trying to escape, the common euphemism for murder. Russians spoke of castrating German men and breeding German women to annihilate the German race. US Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau wanted to reduce Germany to an agrarian society and send able-bodied Germans to Africa as slaves to work on "some big TVA project."

Robert Jackson saw in these intentions not only rank criminality among the allied leadership but also a missed opportunity to create the legal principle that would criminalize war, thus removing the disaster of war from future history. Jackson's end was admirable, but the means required bypassing Anglo-American legal principles.

Jackson got his chance, perhaps because Joseph Stalin vetoed execution without trial. First a show trial, Stalin said, to demonstrate their guilt so that we do not make martyrs out of Nazis.

Whom to select for the list of 21-22 persons to be charged? Well, whom did the allies have in custody? Not all those they desired. They had Reichsmarschall Herman Göring who headed the air force. Whatever the valid charges against Göring, they were not considered to be mitigated by the fact that under Göring the German air force was mainly used against enemy formations on the battleground and not, like the US and British air forces in saturation terror bombing of civilian cities, such as Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, or by the fact that in Hitler's final days Hitler removed Göring from all his positions, expelled him from the party, and ordered his arrest.

The Nuremberg trials are paradoxical in that the law Jackson intended to establish applied to every country, not to Germany alone. The ex post facto law under which

Germans were sentenced to death and to prison also criminalized the terror bombing of German and Japanese cities by the British and US air forces. Yet, the law was only applied to the Germans in the dock. In his book, *Apocalypse 1945: The Destruction of Dresden* (1995), Irving quotes US General George C. McDonald's dissent from the directive to bomb civilian cities such as Dresden. Gen. McDonald characterized the directive as the "extermination of populations and the razing of cities," war crimes under the Nuremberg standard.

They had foreign minister Ribbentrop. They had field marshals Keitel and Jodl and the grand-admirals Raeder and Dönitz. They had a German banker, who was saved from sentencing by the intervention of the Bank of England. They had a journalist. They had Rudolf Hess who had been in a British prison since 1941 when he went to Britain on a peace mission to end the war. They wanted an industrialist, but Krupp was too old and ill. He was devoid of the persona of a foreboding evil. You can read the list in Irving's book.

Göring knew from the beginning that the trial was a hoax and that his death sentence had already been decided. He had the means (a poison capsule) throughout his imprisonment to commit suicide, thus depriving his captors of their planned humiliation of him. Instead, he held the Germans together, and they stood their ground. Possessed of a high IQ of 138 as measured by the Americans at Nuremberg, time and again he made fools of his captors. He made such a fool of Robert Jackson during his trial that the entire court burst out in laughter. Jackson never lived down being bested in the courtroom by Göring.

And Göring wasn't through with making his captors look foolish and incompetent. He, the field marshalls and grand admiral requested that they be given a military execution by firing squad, but the pettiness of the Tribunal wanted them hung like dogs. Göring told his captors that he would allow them to shoot him, but not hang him, and a few minutes before he was to be marched to the gallows before the assembled press and cameras he took the poison capsule, throwing the execution propaganda show into chaos. To this injury he added insult leaving the prison commandant, US Col. Andrus a note telling him that he had had 3 capsules. One he had left for the Americans to find, thus causing them to think his means of escaping them had been removed. One he had taken minutes prior to his show execution, and he described where to find the third. He had easily defeated the continuous and thorough inspections inflicted upon him from fear that he would commit suicide and escape their intended propaganda use of his execution.

There was a time in Anglo-American law when the improprieties of the Nuremberg trials would have resulted in the cases being thrown out of court and the defendants freed. Even under the ex post facto law and extra-judicial, extra-legal terms under which the defendants were tried, at least two of the condemned deserved to be cleared.

It is not clear why Admiral Donitz was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The chief American judge of the Tribunal, Francis Biddle, said: "It is, in my opinion, offensive

to our concept of justice to punish a man for doing exactly what one has done himself." "The Germans," Biddle said, "fought a much cleaner war at sea than we did."

Jodl, who countermanded many Nazi orders, was sentenced to death. The injustice of the sentence was made clear by a German court in 1953 which cleared Jodl of all Nuremberg charges and rehabilitated him posthumously.

The French justice at the Nuremberg Tribunal said at the time that Jodl's conviction was without merit and was a miscarriage of justice.

The entire Nuremberg proceeding stinks to high heaven. Defendants were charged with aggression for the German invasion of Norway. The fact was kept out of the trial that the British were about to invade Norway themselves and that the Germans, being more efficient, learned of it and managed to invade first.

Defendants were accused of using slave labor, paradoxical in view of the Soviets own practice. Moreover, while the trials were in process the Soviets were apparently gathering up able-bodied Germans to serve as slave labor to rebuild their war-torn economy.

Defendants were accused of mass executions despite the fact that the Russians, who were part of the prosecution and judgment of the defendants, had executed 15,000 or 20,000 Polish officers and buried them in a mass grave. Indeed, the Russians insisted on blaming the Germans on trial for the Katyn Forest Massacre.

Defendants were accused of aggression against Poland, and Ribbentrop was not permitted to mention in his defense the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that divided Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union, without which Germany could not have attacked Poland. The fact that the Soviets, who were sitting at Nuremberg in judgment on the Germans, had themselves invaded Poland was kept out of the proceedings.

It goes on from here endlessly. The Nuremberg Trials stand as the worst injustice in Western judicial history. It served to cover up the war crimes of the allies and to magnify out of all proportion those of Germany.

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The state lies in all the tongues of good and evil, and whatever it says is lies, and whatever it has, it has stolen, everything it is, is false, it bites with stolen teeth, and it bites often, it is false down to its bowels.

– Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* [1883]

The Tyranny of One Man's Opinion

(13)

by Andrew P. Napolitano | Oct 2, 2026 | 0 Comments

Thomas Cromwell was the Lord Chancellor of England for much of the reign of King Henry VIII. He engineered the convictions and executions of many whom Henry wanted out of the way, including his two predecessors in office — one of whom was St. Thomas More — and even the king's second wife, Queen Anne.

When Cromwell's son Gregory, who became sickened as he watched his father devolving from counselor to monster, learned that an executioner for the queen had been sent for from France a week before her trial, he asked his father what the purpose of her trial was if the king had preordained the queen's guilt and prepaid the executioner. Cromwell replied that the king needed a jury to give the appearance of legitimacy to her conviction and prevent the public perception of "the tyranny of one man's opinion."

In America, we have a Constitution not only to prevent the perception but also the reality of the tyranny of one man's opinion. The Constitution's Fifth Amendment makes clear that if the government wants life, liberty or property, it cannot take it by executive command, but only by due process — a fair jury trial and all its constitutional protections; and Article I makes it clear that if the government wants war, it cannot commence it by executive command, but only by congressional declaration.

We have a Constitution also to assure the separation of powers in the federal government. Congress writes the laws, appropriates the taxpayers' money and funds borrowed in their names and declares war when the United States is in danger of imminent foreign threat. The president enforces the laws, spends money as Congress directs and wages the wars Congress has authorized. The judiciary decides what the Constitution and the laws mean and, if properly challenged, determines if the president and Congress or the states have exercised their duties lawfully and constitutionally.

The central constitutional question is not whether a president sincerely believes that his policies are necessary. It is whether the Constitution permits personal liberty and limited government to depend upon the opinion of one man. That is the danger of executive government without effective legislative and judicial checks.

A fair reading of the Constitution begins with a truism: Presidential power is not whatever the president believes it to be. It is only what the Constitution and laws actually confer.

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Consider the administration's attacks on alleged drug-trafficking boats. President Donald Trump says he has directed military forces to strike narcotrafficking vessels and describes the operation as part of his campaign against fentanyl and cartels. But the constitutional question is separate from the president's characterization of the targets. A person suspected of being a drug trafficker — or even a mass murderer — does not thereby become condemned to death. Criminal guilt always requires accusation, evidence and adjudication according to law, before punishment.

These boat killings are unlawful extrajudicial executions. In the language all Americans can understand, they are murders.

The same principle applies to Iran. The Framers deliberately divided the war powers. Article I gives Congress the power to declare war, authorize military force, regulate the armed forces and control appropriations. Article II makes the president commander in

chief. The distinction matters. The president commands forces; Congress determines where and under what circumstances the president does so.

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Trump has openly declared an American blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and said that the United States controls which ships pass through it. He has also imposed sanctions which deny food, medicine and currency stability to millions of innocent Iranians. He even threatened to murder all Iranians — beyond the thousands he has already killed — if a peace agreement is not soon reached.

Those statements highlight what the Constitution was designed to prevent one individual from addressing alone: Whether the United States should wage military and economic hostilities against the population of another nation.

Congress has repeatedly resisted treating the Iran conflict as a matter solely for presidential discretion. Just two weeks ago, support for Trump's war failed to muster majorities in both houses of Congress.

Nor can the president's personal assessment of Iran's nuclear intentions settle the matter. In 2018, his State Department's compliance report said Iran was fulfilling its nuclear-related non-proliferation commitments and U.S. intelligence had assessed with high confidence that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003.

In 2020, his State Department again said that Iran was not then engaged in key activities associated with designing and developing a nuclear weapon. In 2025, his Director of National Intelligence testified that the entire U.S. intelligence community continued to assess that Iran was not building nuclear weapons.

Those facts alone establish something constitutionally important: The president's personal belief — whether informed or uninformed — is not evidence or law or a substitute for congressional authorization.

The same textual principle reaches domestic spending and taxation. Article I provides that only Congress can impose taxes, and money may be drawn from the Treasury only pursuant to appropriations made by law. Even though the Supreme Court has invalidated Trump's tariffs, he continues to impose them. Even though Congress has not authorized funds for Trump's vanity projects, he continues to spend tax dollars on them.

The Constitution does not grant any branch of government carte blanche. It has separated powers precisely because legislators, presidents and judges can all succumb to the corruption of power — and can all be wrong.

That is the deeper meaning of the tyranny of one man's opinion. The danger is not merely that one president might be wrong. It is that a constitutional system becomes meaningless if one man's conclusions about war, crime, taxation, spending, foreign threats or national security become the sole basis for government actions — particularly actions that kill innocents.

The Founders separated the sword from the purse and divided governmental power because they understood a truism: Personal liberty and limited government cannot long survive when entrusted to one man's opinion.

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Defiant Iran Responds to Trump

September 24, 2026

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian told Donald Trump Iran will never stop resisting U.S. terror.

A day after Donald Trump threatened to "annihilate" Iran, the Islamic Republic's president told Trump from the same U.N. General Assembly podium that he "must know that the resistance of the Iranian people will only increase in the face of sanctions, increased pressure, increased bullying. We will never bow our head or bend at the knee." Unable to bear the description of America's crimes, the U.S. representative stormed out of the hall in protest.

The following are excerpts from Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's U.N. address on Tuesday:

The United States President described us as terrorists. We have been the victims of terrorism.

I come from an Iran in which our esteemed Supreme Leader was assassinated without any legal framework or reason.

I come from an Iran where, in truth, they bombed a school.
You see these children?

These children perished under bombs, with weapons used by the United States and Israel.

They were innocent, had committed no crimes.

Lamerd, one of the small cities in a province in Iran, a sports hall where children were busy playing.

The United States, by using weapons with multiple warheads, targeted that sports hall.

They martyred, assassinated, our scientists, our men, women, and children. Innocent children who, in truth, had committed no crimes, no sins.

Those who are terrorists and train and protect terrorists describe us as such.

We have only defended ourselves.

We are not terrorists.

Our innocent people have been the targets of cowardly attacks and aggressions imposed upon our country, and we defended ourselves with utmost strength.

America and Israel attacked us, equipped with the latest technology and weapons systems, and our people stood steadfast.

Yes, they did hit us, but we did not bend the knee.

We did not bow our head.

We responded, but we did not hit civilian populations.

(16) They came into surrounding territories and targeted our universities, our healthcare centers, our schools, our hospitals, our infrastructures — all of it against international law.

Whomever they wish to discredit, they label them as terrorists.

Two hundred years — for the past two centuries — Iran has not attacked any country or any territory, but we've always defended ourselves steadfastly.

But now we're being accused of being source of instability in the region?

We're labeled terrorists?

And this has made it so that the path that we have chosen for ourselves requires power to defend ourselves.

We do not seek power in order to attack or commit aggression.
We seek energy for progress, not to threaten societies with weapons. ...

Resistance cannot be destroyed by bombs and siege.
This is human nature.
If a human being is driven from his or her land, they will resist.
If their homes are subjected to bombings and aggression and attacks, they will resist.

What other choice do they have?

Succomb to bullying?

To be driven from their homes, from their lands, and remain silent in the face of these threats and dangers?

And when they defend themselves, they're labeled as terrorists?
The language makes it, unfortunately, clear the type of world that we're living in today.

Our regional issues must be resolved in the region, at the hands of the countries in the region, without becoming a toy in the hands of outside aggressors. ...

And now, a few words for those who are responsible for having planned and carried out aggressions against our country and our people have experienced firsthand the result of their deadly aggression.

And they have tested the strength and the steadfastness of Iran, and they have learned that Iran cannot be made to surrender.

Iran has never, ever been an aggressor, has never started a war, and has always shown her commitment to the negotiating table.

They imposed the war on us, but we proved — we have proven — that we're not afraid of fighting, of war, a war that is defensive in nature.

And we will stand in defense of our beloved Iran, our homeland, until our last breath. ...

Atomic and nuclear bombs are in the hands of the Israeli regime, but the inspectors are requested to come to Iran.

Israel has murdered savagely over 70,000 innocents in Gaza, but Iran, while behind the table of negotiation, was bombed.

Israel has the bombs, has weapons of mass destruction, not a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty during her shameful life has not allowed a single inspection.

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But they are rewarded by all the means necessary for them to be able to bomb any capital in the region at will.

I will repeat: the nuclear weapon is in Israel, but the inspectors are in Iran.

Israel kills, but Iran is subject to sanctions.

This is a true tragedy, which would make anyone hearing it laugh, at best.

They kill, we are sanctioned, we are punished.

Those who are ill, innocent people, the poor, the least privileged in our society, are the targets of these sanctions. THESE SANCTIONS.

This is what the United States seeks to do with all countries: to sacrifice the population of a country in order to achieve her illegitimate goals.

If we seek true peace and stability, we must apply a single standard for all.

Iran does not seek special treatment.

We seek equal rights.

We assume the responsibility, accept the responsibility that comes with it.

But Iran, during her prideful history, has learned the following lesson: a world without power is dangerous, but a world that only understands the language of war and bullyism will not be safe.

When we seek to have agendas ... that only adhere to the benefits of a few privileged, we will have a world in disarray. ...

We must not allow the 21st century to go back to an era of only the powerful and the bullying powers and the hegemons. We must not build a world in which military power replaces legitimacy, terrorism replaces politics and negotiations, and war replaces dialogue and diplomacy.

Iran extends her hand towards the world. We invite the world. We call the world, not out of weakness, but out of a deep belief in our own power and steadfastness, to cooperate and collaborate.

Because of a deep belief that no one in this region will have security alone. Either we will build it together, or we will have to live under insecurity together. ...

Going back to the words of the President of the United States yesterday shows those who are experts in international law and dialogue and diplomacy and basic human standards that everything [he said] about our country goes against the very essence and charter and spirit of the United Nations.

He must know that the resistance of the Iranian people will only increase in the face of sanctions, increased pressure, increased bullying.

We will never bow our head or bend at the knee.

Iran must be understood by Mr. Trump and those who seek to bully us that we are ready for dialogue and diplomacy and negotiations without accepting the language of force.

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Will the Iran War Cause a GOP Bloodbath in November?

by Ron Paul | Sep 29, 2026 | 0 Comments

Most indicators suggest that the Republicans in the House and Senate are going to face a brutal backlash from the American people in November. Polling with generic ballots suggest a big win for the Democrats and likely the loss of Republican control of both houses of Congress.

There is little reason to cheer a Democratic party victory, however Republicans in charge have for the most part earned what is coming to them. They have refused to uphold their Constitutional obligation to take leading responsibility for war powers.

Earlier this year, President Trump launched what is the most unpopular war in US history when on February 28th he ordered a full US assault on Iran. Iran had not attacked or even threatened the United States and our own intelligence community continued – and continues – to claim that Iran is not building nuclear weapons.

The February attack followed last June's US bombing of Iran after which the president claimed that the country's nuclear program was "completely obliterated."

Congress over too many years has been used to allowing the President to have his own way on matters of war and peace. Members bask in the false patriotism promoted by the media and special interests as the people "rally around the flag." Eventually, when the war has gone on for years without "victory" – as in Iraq and Afghanistan – many claim they were never really for the war in the first place.

This time is different. There was no propaganda blitz. There were no attempts to convince the American people that the "smoking gun" could be a "mushroom cloud" as we were told in the run up to the 2003 Iraq war. The majority of Americans were against the war on Iran before it started and only became more opposed over time.

As the war drags on, we have seen the national debt pass $40 trillion, diesel fuel prices at the highest ever, and inflation hitting the middle class and poor even harder. The "cakewalk" again failed to materialize.

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Incumbent Republicans seeking re-election are in such a panic over voter anger about the war that they have taken to calling for a quick end to it while on the campaign trail. When they get back inside the Beltway, however, they vote to keep the war going for fear of President Trump's anger.

This is not leadership.

Late last week the Iranian delegation in New York for the UN General Assembly meeting offered an off-ramp. Essentially it was the same Memorandum of Understanding that President Trump signed last June and promptly disregarded, but on a shorter timeline. By Sunday, the President announced that he would reject the deal – a deal like one he already signed.

There is no strategy for winning this disastrous war, it is clear. From over-confidence on decapitation strikes to certainty of a quick military victory, the Administration is now promising that they will win by crippling Iran's economy. The problem is that Iran has been operating under "crippling" sanctions for decades and has a high economic pain tolerance.

Unfortunately, both parties in DC are war parties, so again it is hard to cheer the likely Republican losses. But sometimes electoral losses can serve as wake-up calls. Eventually we may see the re-emergence of antiwar Republicans in the spirit of the late Sen. Robert Taft and a restoration of the Constitution.