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## US Trapped by Iran's Resilience; Why the Solution Is Agreement, Not Attrition

by Greg Pence | May 15, 2026

In recent months, a painful but increasingly undeniable conclusion has begun to emerge across Western think tanks, mainstream media, and U.S. intelligence assessments: contrary to Washington and Tel Aviv's initial expectations, Iran has neither collapsed, fragmented, nor moved toward surrender. On the contrary, the conflict has exposed layers of what can only be described as Iran's "structural resilience" – a resilience many in the West either underestimated or failed to include in their strategic calculations altogether. The central question is no longer whether the United States can inflict damage on Iran. The real question is whether such pressure is actually capable of producing Washington's desired political outcome. An increasing number of Western analyses now suggest the answer is no. The United States and its allies are gradually realizing that they are confronting a country capable of enduring pressure, reproducing internal control, managing crises, and exporting the costs of war beyond its borders. This reality has drawn Washington into what may be called "the trap of Iranian resilience" – a situation in which continued pressure no longer changes Tehran's behavior but instead exponentially raises the costs for America itself.

In the early stages of escalating confrontation, the dominant assumption in Washington was that a combination of military strikes, maritime pressure, infrastructure destruction, and psychological warfare could disrupt Iran's decision-making system. Yet even some recent U.S. intelligence assessments now acknowledge that Iran possesses the capacity to withstand sustained pressure over a prolonged period. When classified evaluations speak of Iran's ability to endure months of maritime pressure and blockade, it effectively means that America's most important coercive lever has failed to produce the rapid strategic results initially anticipated. This issue extends far beyond the military battlefield. One of the most significant dimensions of Iran's resilience lies in its ability to transfer the costs of conflict to the global economy. Rising insecurity along energy routes, scattered attacks in strategic waterways, and disruptions to maritime security have directly affected global energy markets. The surge in oil prices beyond psychologically critical thresholds is not merely an economic indicator; it is a geopolitical message. Iran has demonstrated that if it is forced to bear the costs of war, those costs will not remain confined within its own borders. Instead, part of the burden will be shifted onto the global economy, international energy markets, and even the domestic political environment inside the United States. This is precisely where America's strategy begins to erode. Washington has entered a conflict that becomes more costly the longer it continues – from inflationary pressure and domestic political divisions to the depletion of military stockpiles and growing criticism regarding the war's unclear objectives. What was initially framed as an operation to rapidly contain Iran has increasingly become a stage upon which the limitations of American power are being exposed.

Inside Iran, meanwhile, the war has not produced the kind of social collapse many Western circles expected. New Western analyses openly acknowledge that the wartime atmosphere has actually helped the Iranian state reassert security control over public space. The political system has relied on loyalist networks, security organization, and the cohesion of the regime's hard core to reinforce social control. In other words, rather than weakening the political structure, the conflict has given it an opportunity to redefine and rebuild its security order. This point is strategically significant for the United States because a major part of the initial calculations rested on the assumption that external pressure could widen internal fractures and transform public dissatisfaction into political crisis. Yet even some Western media outlets now concede that the wartime environment has reduced the visibility and activity of opposition groups while restoring a more securitized atmosphere in urban spaces. This means one of the central indirect objectives of maximum pressure has also failed to materialize.

At the same time, Iran's power structure has not suffered the kind of paralysis Western strategists anticipated. Recent intelligence assessments suggest that even under wartime conditions, Iran's political system has managed to establish a form of controlled distribution of power – a model in which decision-making is coordinated across institutions, preventing a complete breakdown of command structures. This is precisely what distinguishes Iran's structural resilience from many other regional actors. In numerous states, severe military pressure can trigger the collapse of the chain of command. In Iran, however, the system appears designed to preserve operational continuity even under crisis conditions.

In the military sphere, the West is also gradually recognizing that the complete destruction of Iran's deterrence capabilities is nearly impossible. The survival of significant portions of Iran's missile infrastructure and launch capabilities sends a clear message: even large-scale attacks cannot reduce Iran's capacity for retaliation to zero. This is why many newer Western analyses have replaced earlier ambitions of collapse or regime transformation with the more limited concept of "containment." That shift in language is, in reality, an indirect admission that the original strategic goals have failed.

Perhaps the most important factor complicating the equation, however, is the international dimension of the conflict. The confrontation with Iran is no longer merely a bilateral struggle. Growing Russian support and the emergence of a broader anti-Western alignment around Tehran indicate that this conflict is increasingly becoming part of a larger global power competition. Military technology transfers, intelligence cooperation, and logistical support provide Iran with the means to sustain a prolonged war of attrition. This poses a major challenge for the United States because Washington is no longer dealing solely with Iran, but with a network of actors who increasingly view the weakening of American influence as aligned with their own strategic interests.

Under such circumstances, continued attempts to break Iran's resilience look less like a realistic strategy and more like a gradual erosion of American power itself. The experience of recent years has demonstrated that Iran cannot be managed through formulas designed for fragile states. Economic pressure alone did not collapse the political system. Military threats did not produce surrender. War itself failed to destroy the cohesion of the state. On the contrary, every stage of external pressure appears to have activated new mechanisms of adaptation and reconstruction within Iran.

This raises the central question: if breaking Iran is not possible, then what is the logical alternative?

An increasingly serious answer is beginning to emerge even within some Western circles: accepting the reality of Iran's resilience and moving toward a fair agreement. The United States must recognize that the issue with Iran is not one of elimination or collapse, but rather the management of an established regional power. The longer Washington delays acknowledging this reality, the greater the costs it will incur – economically, strategically, and geopolitically.

A negotiated settlement with Iran should not be viewed as a sign of American weakness. Rather, it would represent an acknowledgment of the limits of power in a world no longer governed by the unipolar assumptions of past decades. Iran has demonstrated an ability to absorb pressure, impose costs, and buy time. Under such conditions, continuing a war of attrition only deepens the crisis.

Ultimately, perhaps the most important lesson of this confrontation for the United States is that not every power can be managed through a strategy of "pressure until surrender." Some states – especially those possessing geopolitical depth, cohesive security structures, and asymmetric warfare capabilities – cannot be broken; they can only be engaged through compromise. Iran today occupies precisely such a position: a country not on the verge of collapse, but one increasingly forcing the West to recognize that the path out of crisis lies not in fantasies of defeating Iran, but in accepting reality and pursuing a balanced and sustainable agreement.

# The Tocsin of Truth in the Age of AI

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Edward Short

“Without truth there must be a dissolution of society. As it is there is so little truth,  
that we are almost afraid to trust our ears;  
but how should we be, if falsehood were multiplied ten times?”

—Samuel Johnson quoted in Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*

In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word Truth is defined as “conformity with fact; agreement with reality.” It is also defined as “disposition to speak or act truly or without deceit; truthfulness, veracity . . .” and illustrated by a quotation from Shakespeare: “Love is all truth, lust full of forged lies.” Montaigne, speaking of lies, confirms the primacy of truth by reminding his readers that:

Lying is a villain’s vice, a vice which an ancient [Plutarch] paints full shamefully when he says that it gives testimony to contempt for God together with fear of men. It is not possible to show more richly the horror of it, its vileness and its disorderliness. For what can one imagine more serf-like than to be cowardly before men and defiant towards God?

For Montaigne, the betrayal of truth wreaks particular havoc on language. Why? “Our understanding is conducted solely by means of the word; anyone who falsifies it betrays public society. It is the only tool by which we communicate our wishes and our thoughts; it is our soul’s interpreter: if we lack that, we can no longer hold together; we can no longer know each other. When words deceive us, it breaks all intercourse and loosens the bonds of our polity.” Montaigne’s celebrated skepticism might have put “saucy doubts and fears” into a generation desolated by the Church’s “bare ruined choirs,” but he knew the difference between truth and lies.

Francis Bacon, with Montaigne in mind, regarded truth as peculiarly susceptible to lies not only because of “the difficulty and labour men take in finding out of truth” but because of what he called the “corrupt love of the lie itself.” We prefer lies to truth because of our fallen nature. Our vanity also disposes us to love lies. Swift mocked the irreligion of his age by arguing that if his contemporaries were ever to restore belief in Christianity it would “destroy at one blow all the wit and half the learning of the kingdom.”

Yet Bacon also understood that “despite men’s depraved judgments and affections,” truth remains central to human well-being. Indeed, the scholarly Christian in him knew this in his very bones, because, as he says, “the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature.” Conversely, for the lawyer and statesman in Bacon, “There is no vice that doth so cover man with shame as to be found false and perfidious,” for such “winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent . . .” This is why Bacon agreed with Montaigne about the profound wickedness of lies. They disposed men to be “brave towards God and a coward towards men”—brave here meaning bold, with the implication of defiant audacity.

Moreover, Montaigne and Bacon recognized the vitality of truth because they recognized the vitality of Christ’s words to Thomas: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” while never forgetting, like Jeremiah, that to be “not valiant for the truth,” was “to proceed from evil to evil . . .”

Now with AI knocking on the door, and the prospect of so influential a technology falsifying language to an extent scarcely imaginable, these old truths assume new force. Christ’s insistence that we follow Him as “the way, the truth, and the life” has never had so urgent an import, especially at a time, when, being so long cowardly, not valiant for truth, we have indeed proceeded from evil to evil.

The murders that have been committed in America recently as the result of the abominable lie of transgenderism certainly bear this out. The equally flagitious lie of abortion—against which the *Human Life Review* has fought with such valiant fidelity to God’s laws, not God’s scofflaws—is another example. The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill—the bill to legalize assisted dying in England and Wales—is yet another example, which, at time of writing, is being debated in the House of Lords after the House of Commons, in two readings, voted in favor of it. Even if the Lords were to reject the Bill, the House of Commons could still invoke the Parliament Act to override them. Thus, England’s voting in favor of allowing doctors to help its ancients commit suicide is now a likelihood. Surely there could be no better evidence of a society going from “evil to evil” than that.

Madeline Grant, the *Spectator*’s wittiest columnist, had praise for many of those peers opposed to the Bill’s passage:

Baroness Butler-Sloss, still formidable at 92, completely dismantled the fantasy of the proposed Death Panels as a safeguard with a series of barked questions: ‘Will they meet in public? Will they meet at all? Why no Coroner? There was a good bit of Latin from the Bishop of Chichester, this debate he said, was full of ‘lacrimae rerum,’ the things of which tears are made. He also reminded the House that contra the arguments of the lobbyists for the bill, sanctity of life was not some monstrous conspiratorial Christian imposition but the basic assumption that underpins all of our law. . . . Baroness Fox of Buckley warned that there would inevitably be legal demands to expand the law; ‘God help us once human rights lawyers get involved.’ Meanwhile Lord Frost offered a philosophical critique of the bill, reminding peers that it essentially enshrined utilitarianism as the guiding ethical principle for the law, and that this would lead to very dark places indeed.

Yet it is heartening that one of the most eloquent voices opposed to the Bill was not that of any pro-life peer but a former prime minister better known for her faddish environmentalism than her solicitude for the sanctity of life. “Plastic waste is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world,” Theresa May, now Baroness May of Maidenhead, told the press in 2018, after praising the U.K. government, without the least facetiousness, as “a world leader on this issue.” However, this same lady, a vicar’s daughter, stood up in front of the Lords and defended the sanctity of life with splendid cogency by calling attention to the lies not only of the framers of the bill but all those misguided souls throughout England and Wales who have convinced themselves that the macabre bill actually has something to do with the dignity of dying.

My Lords, I declare my interest as an ambassador for Thames Hospice, but the views that I express today are my own. I recognise that across this House there will be very firmly held views on both sides of this argument, some coming from personal experience, as we heard from my noble friend Lord Forsyth. [The suffering experienced by Lord Forsyth’s dying father changed his long-held opposition to assisted dying.]

However, I oppose this Bill and wish to set out my main reasons. First, I do not believe that the safeguards in the Bill will prevent people being pressurised to end their lives, sometimes for the benefit of others. I worry that, as we have seen in countries where there is such a law, people will feel that they must end their lives simply because they feel that they are a burden on others.

I worry about the impact that it will have on people with disabilities, with chronic illness and with mental health problems, because there is a risk that legalising assisted dying reinforces the dangerous notion that some lives are less worth living than others. Again, as we have seen in other countries, once a law like this is passed, the pressure grows to extend the scope of it. I also oppose the Bill because I believe that, by disapplying the default of a coroner’s report, there is a danger that this could be used as a cover-up for mistakes made in hospital or for a hospital-acquired infection which has led to an increased likelihood of death. I have a friend who calls it the “License to Kill Bill.”

This is not an assisted dying Bill but an assisted suicide Bill. As a society, we believe that suicide is wrong. The Government have a national suicide prevention strategy.

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We bemoan the number of young people who are lured into committing suicide by social media and by what they read on the internet. This week, we had World Suicide Prevention Day. Suicide is wrong, but this Bill, in effect, says that it is okay. What message does that give to our society? Suicide is not okay. Suicide is wrong. This Bill is wrong. It should not pass.

What is striking about the reference here to the Bill's safeguards is that it warns against the very same "slippery slope" inherent in David Steel's Abortion Bill of 1967, which may have passed initially with a few well-meaning safeguards but now allows for abortion on demand. The Baroness' warnings also recall what Lord Alton of Liverpool had to say when he spoke on the issue of "incrementalism" in 2006. "Much has been made of the experiences in Holland and Oregon," he reminded his fellow peers. "In Holland, it started with turning a blind eye; then voluntary euthanasia; and then involuntary euthanasia, with 1,000 deaths now occurring each year. As others have said, that has led to the killing of spina bifida children. It has happened already at Groningen Hospital where it was done in order to push the law further. That is what happens when we move in that sort of direction." [Groningen devised guidelines for the euthanasia of newborns and infants in the Netherlands that make a mockery of medical ethics.]

Of course, the Baroness is no papist, but she does nevertheless uphold the same case against euthanasia that can be found in the Roman Catholic Catechism, which states with unambiguous clarity:

Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus, an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

Here, indeed, is what Hamlet styles the "Everlasting's canon 'gainst self-slaughter," which another life peer, Lord Roberts of Belgravia, invoked to argue that, in the case of assisted dying, as in the case of war, there might be morally permissible exceptions to the sixth commandment, a piece of unpersuasive special pleading. Roberts, a friend of mine as it happens, should consider looking at the second edition of John Keown's classic study, *Euthanasia, Ethics and Public Policy: An Argument Against Legalisation* (Cambridge), first published in 2002 and revised in 2022. Richard Myers, writing in *The Ave Maria Law Review*, wrote of the book: "In the new edition, Keown does an admirable job of updating the earlier work. The second edition provides a wealth of information and critical analysis of the issues involved. The work is marked by a sophisticated analysis of the legal issues and by an acute understanding of the actual practice of assisted suicide and euthanasia in those jurisdictions that have legalized these practices. His analysis should inform the ongoing debate about these practices."

How to conclude? If Baroness May of Maidenhead can find her voice in defense of life, so can the rest of us, and not just when it comes to euthanasia and abortion but also the equally pernicious lie of transgenderism. For proliferators, despite the savagery and mayhem we continue to witness in a world sworn to lies and contemptuous of the truth, this should be a time of renewed hope, renewed pertinacity, renewed courage. We have not looked on truth askance and strangely. We have been sounding the tocsin of truth about the evils of killing innocent life in and outside the womb for over five decades. We must continue ringing that tocsin on behalf of the life of all those threatened by the "winding and crooked courses," the "goings of the serpent" so indicative of the culture of death. After all, we are a pilgrim people, the people of life and for life, and we must continue to rebuild the culture of truth, in caritas and joy, in order to reclaim the culture of love.

# Adjusting Morality To Fit The Changing Times

By DONALD DeMARCO

Times change. That is a truism. At the same time, it is a statement that is slightly misleading.

Time itself, though very real, is an abstraction. Hence, it cannot act. It has no propulsive force. Times change only because people change. And they change with or without their knowledge or consent. We live in different times because people have directed their lives in different ways.

Time is what gives people the opportunity to change. The transition from the horse and buggy to the automobile required time. But human resourcefulness and human determination accomplished it.

On the other hand, *Homo sapiens* retains his identity throughout change. He is the continuous thread that underlies all change. He is also subject to the same natural law as the basis for morality.

The times change, but the essential nature of man remains the same. We remain in tune to the literature of Shakespeare, the philosophy of Plato, and the music of Bach. We are attuned to the timeless.

On the subject of euthanasia, the change from 1976, let us say, to the present, 2026, is both extensive and dramatic. We might even refer to it as a cultural metamorphosis.

Dr. Charles E. Rice, in his book, *Beyond Abortion*, provides us with an account of a conversation between a daughter and her mother that took place in England on Mother's Day, March 28, 1976. The entire episode was recorded by a hidden police camera. Later, British television included the episode in a documentary that was made available to home viewers.

The recorded conversation between a daughter and her 87-year-old mother, together with its consequences, provides a clear and accurate picture of the status of euthanasia in England at that time.

Sixty-year-old Yolande McShane was urging her mother to end her life. The mother resisted, however, believing that suicide is a cowardly way to end one's life. "It isn't cowardly, for goodness sakes," the daughter said. "If you had a dog in this state, you would take it to the vet, wouldn't you?" "A dog hasn't got a soul," the mother replied. "I'm so afraid of being punished after." "Oh, Mummy, for this? You wouldn't be punished for this. . . ."

The daughter then handed her mother a lethal dose of 15 barbiturate tablets and urged her to take them with a "big drink of whiskey" (which is always fatal). The daughter then left the room. As soon as she did, nursing home nuns rushed in and snatched the pills away from the mother just as she was about to take them.

The British court accepted the police film as evidence. Yolande McShane was sentenced to two years in prison for aiding and abetting an attempted suicide. Her motive was allegedly the

\$70,000 she would inherit on her mother's death.

While serving time, the mother passed away from natural causes and the daughter received her inheritance.

In Canada, it is expected that in April of this year, 2026, 100,000 Canadians will have perished due to medically assisted euthanasia. And the annual rates of MAiD (Medical Assistance in Dying) continue to increase.

Over the course of 50 years, assistance in euthanasia has changed from being a criminal offense in Great Britain to an established feature of Canadian culture. Such a radical change could not have taken place without the consent of a significant number of people, especially those in high places, who have adjusted their moral outlook to fit the changing times.

Emile Durkheim, a pioneer in the field of sociology, has stated that there is a limit to the amount of aberrant behavior that a society can afford to recognize. He has labeled this the "Durkheim Constant." When such behavior or attitudes reach a certain point, people adjust and accept it.

This has happened with regard to contraception, divorce, pornography, abortion, and now, euthanasia. What is ignored, as the Durkheim Constant approaches, is a sense of the sanctity of human life which should be the proper constant for any culture.

A study by sociologist William McCready of the National Opinion Research Center suggests that the acceptance of euthanasia is increasing among Catholics who had acquiesced in contraception and abortion.

The phenomenon of "joining the crowd" seems to be at play in this instance. Actions that were once regarded as criminal are now regarded as "rights." As crimes become rights, the Durkheim Constant is reached and people make their adjustments.

The notion of "death with dignity" has greatly facilitated the acceptance of euthanasia. What is egregiously overlooked, however, is "life with dignity." That dignity is inseparable from the "sanctity of life." "Thou shalt not kill" is an imperative that is founded on the sanctity of life. Unfortunately, a preference for convenience has displaced it.

It is of crucial importance that people understand their moral responsibilities in a changing world. To ride the whirlwind is to choose to do nothing, an invidious choice that allows society to continue on its downward slide.

The situation is not hopeless as long as people will struggle and fight for the sanctity of human life. We should not want to be part of a culture which claims that life is not worth living, but death offers us dignity.

There will always be change, but without an unchanging center, it becomes chaos. That center — the sanctity of human life — cannot be compromised.

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## A Dissident Damsel Who Defied the Red Dragon



Joseph Pearce

A martyr of Communist Russia, Mother Catherine of Siena, founded a convent of Third Order Dominicans before being sentenced to more than a decade of solitary confinement.

**I**t has been said, purportedly by G.K. Chesterton, that when people stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing but in anything. Even worse is that the things which people believe are not merely godless but deadly and demonic. Take, for instance, the modern anti-Christian creeds that led to the French and Russian Revolutions and to the rise of the Nazis. These monstrous ideologies gave us the guillotine, the gulag, and the gas chamber, each of which was a means to destroy those dissidents deemed to be enemies of the state. One such dissident was Anna Ivanovna Abrikosova, later known as Mother Catherine of Siena.

Mother Catherine was a Russian Catholic religious sister who founded a convent of Third Order Dominicans in her Moscow apartment and would spend more than a decade of solitary confinement as a prisoner of conscience in Joseph Stalin's concentration camps before dying in prison.

Born in Moscow in 1882 into a noble Russian family, Anna Abrikosova studied at Girton College, Cambridge, before moving to France. She was received into the Catholic Church in the St. Vincent de Paul chapel of the Church of the Madeline in Paris in 1908.

After her return to Russia and her founding of the Byzantine Catholic sisters' community of the Third Order of St. Dominic, she and the other members vowed in August 1917 to sacrifice themselves to the Holy Trinity for the salvation of the Russian people. In this dramatic pledge to lay down their lives for Christ for the conversion of their country, they were perhaps inspired by the heroic witness of the Discalced Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne who were guillotined during the Reign of Terror following the French Revolution.

Only two months after the sisters had taken their vows, the Bolshevik Revolution, in October 1917, ushered in more than 70 years of atheist persecution. In spite of the imminent danger to themselves, Abrikosova and the sisters continued their religious work, opening an illegal Catholic school for those who did not want their children brainwashed by the Marxist indoctrination of the compulsory Soviet public school system. They also translated many Catholic texts into the Russian language, in defiance of state censorship, circulating their translations in secret.

Inevitably, Mother Catherine and the other sisters of her community were arrested in November 1923. She was sentenced to ten years of solitary confinement and would be imprisoned at Yaroslavl from 1924 to 1932. Shortly before sentencing, Mother Catherine told the sisters of her community that

*every one of you, having given your love to God and following in His way, has in your heart more than once asked Christ to grant you the opportunity to share in His sufferings. And so it is; the moment has now arrived. Your desire to suffer for His sake is now being fulfilled.*

After spending eight years in solitary confinement, Mother Catherine was diagnosed with breast cancer and was transferred to Butyrka Prison infirmary for an operation. Her left breast and some of the muscles on her back and side were removed, leaving her left arm paralyzed. In August 1932, following the operation, she petitioned to be returned to her cell in Yaroslavl but was told that she was now free and that her sentence was over. She walked directly from Butyrka Prison to the Church of St. Louis des Français, resuming her labors for Christ in the Soviet vale of tears.

"This woman is a genuine preacher of the Faith and very courageous," wrote the underground Catholic bishop Pie Eugène Neveu, in a letter to Rome. "One feels insignificant beside someone of this moral stature. She still cannot see well, and she can only use her right hand, since the left is paralyzed."

"As for my sister," wrote her brother Dmitrii Abrikosov,

*nothing was heard about her for nine years and even my eldest brother, who worked for the Soviets and became a prominent scientist, could do nothing for her. Then suddenly she reappeared in Moscow. Relatives who saw her wrote to my aunt in Paris that she gave the impression of a Saint.*

Irrespective of the risk of arrest and reimprisonment, Mother Catherine reestablished connections with the surviving sisters of her order, intent on taking up once again the task of evangelizing the culture of death in which she found herself. She was duly arrested, along with 24 other Catholics, and was accused of forming a “terrorist organization” which was plotting to assassinate Joseph Stalin, overthrow the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and restore the House of Romanov as a constitutional monarchy in collaboration with “international fascism” and “Papal theocracy.” It was further alleged that their “terrorist” activities were being directed by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Oriental Churches on the orders of Pope Pius XI himself.

After being declared guilty as charged, Mother Catherine was returned to the prison at Yaroslavl. She died in prison from spinal cancer in 1936. Her body was cremated unceremoniously, and the ashes were thrown into a mass grave in the Donskoy Cemetery of central Moscow.

The surviving sisters would finally be released in the mid-1950s. One of them, Nora Rubashova, would subsequently be interviewed by the great Soviet dissident and Nobel Prize winner Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, as part of his research for *The Gulag Archipelago*, his bestselling exposé of the Soviet prison system.

**Let’s conclude** our homage to this courageous dissident damsel who defied the red dragon of Soviet communism with a poem inspired by her martyrdom written by Fr. Sergei Solovyov (1885-1942), a Russian poet, concentration camp survivor, and Byzantine Catholic priest, who had served as the underground chaplain to Mother Catherine and her convent of Third Order Dominican Sisters prior to their arrest:

*It was no accidental vision  
When like a specter in the night  
Of Lefortovo’s hellish prison  
I watched you rise before my sight.  
In prison’s dirty degradation,  
Your dignity remained entire  
And burned for our illumination,  
Transfigured with unearthly fire.  
Like to Siena’s Maid Seraphic,  
You gazed with unbroken eyes  
Upon our prison’s savage traffic;  
As on red blooms of paradise.  
A swan with poise and grace empowered,  
As pure as mountain snow and frost;*

*Inside my soul your image flowered  
And never shall I count it lost.  
In habit, without ostentation,  
You sensed your looming sacrifice;  
Years in chains, dark isolation,  
And your reward as bride of Christ.  
Confined now by your enemies  
With thugs and thieves; it’s for the Creed  
Of Christ, crucified by Pharisees,  
Who gives His Flesh as food indeed.  
The hill of love and crucifixion  
Was yours and, in that little spell,  
There fell a drop of benediction  
Inside my spirit’s dried up well!*

Author’s Note: Fr. Solovyov’s poem was rendered into English verse by Brendan D. King and is based on a literal translation by Joseph Lake. It first appeared in the *St. Austin Review* and is republished here with permission.

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# When Killing Becomes Commonplace

by Andrew P. Napolitano | May 14, 2026 | 0 Comments

*“It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.”*  
— Voltaire (1694-1778)

Last week, when the Pentagon resumed its attacks on small boats in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific Ocean, the media barely noticed. The U.S. military has now destroyed 56 vessels and killed 190 persons. The killings began in September 2025 and have continued to this month.

The attacks caused a stir a few months ago when one of the strikes disabled the boat at which the attack was aimed but failed to kill all the passengers. When a follow-up strike was ordered, it succeeded where the initial strike had failed. The admiral who ordered the murder of the survivors told members of Congress in secret that he believed he was following orders. The secretary of defense denied that he ordered the survivors to be killed.

Killing survivors is expressly prohibited by federal law as well as by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. And, of course, ordering the killing of innocents is always unlawful.

So, the Pentagon made two changes. It produced more lethal strikes so as not to be burdened with the problem of survivors, and it either stopped killing survivors or stopped revealing that it killed them.

Everyone who professionally monitors the government expects that it will not be truthful when the truth is unpleasant or reveals criminal behavior. This expectation is realistic, considering history and Supreme Court rulings that permit the government to lie.

The Navy rescued two survivors whom it failed to kill. Under the law, rescuing is to be done by the Coast Guard. But that law was written when the Coast Guard was in the Department of Defense. Today, it is in the Department of Homeland Security, which is largely mistrusted by the DoD.

So, rather than share information about its attempted murders with a department of the government over which it has no control, rather than having a team ready and nearby to rescue survivors, the Pentagon assigned the Navy to arrive long afterward and rescue two fishermen.

But the Navy didn't know what to do with them, so its legal team asked Department of Justice lawyers for guidance. They asked the DoD what evidence of crimes it had on these fishermen, whereupon the DoD was unable to provide an answer that would rise to the level of probable cause — the legal standard for charging and detaining anyone.

Probable cause is a level of evidence such that a neutral person would conclude that it is more likely than not that the detained persons committed a stated crime. At that point, the DoJ told the DoD to return these would-be victims to their home countries.

In 56 attacks, and one follow-up attack, only three persons survived. Two of them have hired American lawyers and have served notice of their intention to sue the federal government for its attempted murder of them.

The government initially claimed that these killings were of known drug dealers and this was part of a law enforcement operation. Yet, under federal law, the military is prohibited from engaging in law enforcement.

When confronted with that, the White House claimed that the folks in the boats were enemy combatants, and thus susceptible to targeting by the military. But that would require some empirical evidence of their use of force or violence against U.S. personnel, of which the government revealed none.

Then, the White House likened the effect of the sale of drugs as a war on the American people and offered that the job of the military is to defend the country in wartime from what it called narco-terrorists. Yet, controlled dangerous substances are initially ingested voluntarily either by those looking to become addicted and separated from reality, or by those who believe that they — not the government — own their own bodies.

It is clear that none of the government's changing justifications for these killings amounts to a legally cogent argument. The Constitution requires due process — notice, fair trial, right to appeal — and it permits only judges to impose sentences; and it requires judges to impose only sentences that have been prescribed by law.

Stated differently, the president cannot order the killing of a person because he thinks or fears — or even knows — of their criminal behavior. It is apparently of no moment to him that drug dealing is not a capital offence.

The Voltaire quotation at the top of this piece about murders and trumpets has haunted me since I first read it as a college student. The reference to the trumpets was Voltaire's way of calling attention to government wars and executions, many of which in his day were often accompanied by trumpets.

But trumpets or not, all this raises the question: How can an act that is intrinsically evil — the intentional killing of the legally innocent — become moral or lawful just because it is committed by government officials? The short answer is: IT CANNOT. Moreover, intrinsically evil acts can never produce moral outcomes, because the toleration of pure evil will propagate it.

In America, all persons are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and to a moral certainty. This principle has been a bedrock of Anglo-American jurisprudence for 600-plus years. The president and all in government take an oath of fidelity to the Constitution, whose values embody this principle.

A government is illicit when it violates the very laws it enforces. When the government breaks its own laws, it invites others to do so. When it kills innocents, it invites others to do so. It is always immoral and criminal for anyone intentionally to extinguish innocent human life.

And now, Trump's ordered killings are so commonplace, there is little coverage and less outrage. But we will see both when the killings come home.

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# The Assault on a French Nun and the Forgotten Story of Palestinian Christians

by Ramzy Baroud | May 15, 2026 | 0 Comments

The video is horrifying, though it is the kind of horror now synonymous with the behavior of Israel, its military, its armed settlers, and society that has been conditioned to see the 'other' as subhuman.

Yet, this was not the typical viral video that emerges almost daily from occupied Palestine. The victim, this time, was not a Palestinian. She was an elderly French nun.

On May 1, footage surfaced from Jerusalem showing a 36-year-old Israeli man running behind a French nun – a researcher at the French School of Biblical and Archaeological Research – and shoving her violently to the ground.

In a chilling display of cruelty, the assailant did not simply hit and run. He walked away a few paces, then returned to the fallen woman to kick her repeatedly and mercilessly as she lay helpless.

What was most astonishing was the sense of normalcy that followed. The assailant remained on the scene, conversing with another man who appeared entirely unperturbed by what should have been a devastating event in any other context.

The video briefly imposed itself on the mainstream media scene, garnering perfunctory condemnations. Many explained the event as part of the larger landscape of Israeli violence, highlighting the ongoing genocide in Gaza as the most obvious example of this unchecked aggression.

But even the context of general violence does not fully explain why a French nun was targeted. She is not dark-skinned, she is European, she is Christian, and she holds no historical or territorial claims that would typically trigger the 'security' paranoia of the Zionist state.

Still, the incident was anything but 'isolated,' despite the rush by Israeli officials to label it a 'shameful' exception. To the contrary, the nun was attacked specifically because she is Christian.

This raises the question: why?

To answer this, we must acknowledge how Palestinian Christians have been systematically written out of the history of their own land.

Palestinian Christians are not merely present in the land; they are among the most historically rooted communities in Palestine. They are anything but 'foreigners' or 'bystanders' caught in a supposed religious conflict between Jews and Muslims.

In fact, the Christian Arab presence in Palestine predates the Islamic era by centuries. They are the descendants of historic tribes who shaped the region's identity long before the advent of modern political labels.

The marginalization of Palestinian Christians is a relatively new phenomenon, deeply linked to Western colonialism. For centuries, European powers used the pretense of 'protecting' Christian communities to justify their own imperial interventions.

Consequently, this framed the native Christian not as a sovereign Arab with agency, but as a ward of the West – a narrative that effectively stripped them of their indigenous status and

alienated them from their own national fabric in the eyes of the world.

Zionism added a lethal layer to this erasure. It has often projected itself as a 'protector' of Christians to avoid raising the ire of its Western backers.

In reality, Palestinian Christians have been subjected to the same policies of ethnic cleansing, racism, and military occupation as their Muslim brothers and sisters. How else can we explain the catastrophic dwindling of the Christian population?

Before the 1948 Nakba, Palestinian Christians made up roughly 12% of the population. Today, that number has plummeted to a mere 1%. During the Nakba alone, tens of thousands were expelled from their homes in West Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa, their properties looted and their communities dismantled.

A quick look at the map of Jerusalem and Bethlehem today tells the story of an ongoing erasure. Jerusalem is being systematically emptied of its native population, both Christian and Muslim. Christian properties and houses of worship are restricted, and the 'Little Town' of Bethlehem has been swallowed by a ring of illegal settlements and an 8-meter-high Apartheid Wall that has transformed the birthplace of Christ into an open-air prison.

Yet, despite this, we rarely hear about the struggle for survival of Palestinian Christians. Instead, the world occasionally glimpses 'incidents' – like the common habit of Jewish extremists spitting on foreign pilgrims and clergy in Jerusalem. This behavior has become so normalized that Israeli ministers, such as Itamar Ben-Gvir, have previously defended the act as an "ancient custom" that should not be criminalized.

The reason the Palestinian Christian story is rarely told is that it fails to factor neatly into the convenient narratives used by Western governments. They are keen on presenting the 'conflict' as a Jewish state fighting for its identity against a monolithic 'Islamic' threat. Israel is heavily invested in this same 'Clash of Civilizations' trope, positioning itself as the vanguard of "Western civilization" against Arab extremism.

But some Palestinians – Muslim and Christian alike – are, to a lesser degree, also guilty of falling into this trap. The former often frame the Palestinian resistance as an exclusively Muslim struggle; meanwhile, some Christians participate in the very discourse that led to their marginalization in the first place.

The Gaza genocide, however, has proven this logic not only erroneous but unsustainable. Throughout the slaughter, Israel has destroyed over 800 mosques, but it has not spared the Christian sanctuaries.

On October 19, 2023, an Israeli airstrike targeted a building within the compound of the Church of Saint Porphyrius – one of the oldest churches in the world.

In that massacre, 18 Palestinian Christians were killed, their blood mixing with the dust of a sanctuary that had stood for 1,600 years. It was a devastating reminder that the Israeli missile does not distinguish between a mosque and a church, nor between the blood of a Muslim and a Christian.

The story of the French nun is worth every bit of the attention it received, as is the targeting of pilgrims. But as the headlines move on, we must remember that Palestinian Christians endure a suffering that is collective and rooted in the very soil of Palestine. They are now an endangered community, and Israel is the culprit. Without them, Palestine is not the same.

The Palestinian homeland is only whole when it is the cradle of religious coexistence, and Palestinian Christians sit at the very heart of that history, dating back two millennia. Their survival is not a 'minority issue' – it is the survival of Palestine itself.

# A \$1.5 Trillion Military Budget Is a Gift to the Grifters

RON PAUL • MAY 11, 2026 •

Last week “Secretary of War” Pete Hegseth insulted Americans by claiming that a 50 percent increase in the US military budget – from an incomprehensible one trillion dollars to an impossible one and a half trillion – was a “fiscally responsible investment.”

“Thanks to President Trump’s \$1.5 trillion defense budget, this War Department has moved from bureaucracy to business,” he said last Thursday.

In a way he was right, though. The huge increase is much more about “business” than what is needed to protect the United States from potential invasion.

But it isn’t the kind of “business” that most supporters of free markets would applaud. On the contrary, this is the business of transferring massive amounts of wealth from the struggling middle and working classes to the well-connected Beltway elite based on lies and scare tactics.

The US mainstream media is crucial in manufacturing the fairy tale that if we don’t mortgage our children’s and grandchildren’s future to finance this obscene military budget, we will be attacked or invaded by some evil foreign power.

It’s not difficult to do a little research and see why the mainstream – and even some “independent” – media outlets push these scare tactics: they are owned or funded by giant corporations with close ties to military contractors.

This unhealthy relationship is known as “corporatism” – the intermingling of pseudo-private companies with the government. It is the precursor to actual fascism, where the government takes a stake in such companies.

We’re getting there faster than most Americans understand.

The whole scam is not about protecting the citizens of the United States. It’s about protecting the US empire overseas, which actually harms the citizens of the United States.

Yes, they rob us to fund their empire and lie to us that it keeps us safe. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our constant military interventions on virtually every continent of the globe only build resentment among the rest of the world’s population. Anyone who thinks people overseas welcome US bombs has been watching too much Fox News or reading too much Washington Post.

And what do we get for the most expensive military on earth – larger than the combined militaries of the next dozen or so countries? Not much. Iran’s military budget is less than one percent of ours, yet Iran destroyed or disabled every US military base in the Middle East.

It turns out that Iran has destroyed dozens of multi-million dollar US spy drones – and several near-billion dollar spy radar stations – with their own drones costing mere thousands of dollars each.

The US surprise attack was supposed to make Iran cower and beg for mercy, but it did the opposite: it showed that despite the trillions extorted from Americans for the most expensive military on earth, the US military can no longer win the wars that US presidents illegally force them into fighting.

The US military continues to fight World War II – with massively expensive aircraft carriers that do not dare get close to combat – while warfighting has evolved into something entirely different.

The only good thing about the Iran war is that it demonstrates how much the special interests have lied to us about the need to continue our suicidal military spending increases.

It was never about protecting the United States. It is about protecting the ever-growing bank accounts of the special interests at the expense of the rest of us. It needs to stop. Now.

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# John Mearsheimer asks: Is Trump Following in LBJ's Footsteps

by John Mearsheimer | May 13, 2026 |

*Reprinted from John's Substack:*

On 12 May 2026, I was on “Judging Freedom” talking with the Judge about the growing realization in the American body politic that not only is the Iran war lost, but the defeat will have disastrous consequences for the US and countries all over the world. Of course, the Judge and virtually all of his regular guests have been saying that for a long time, but many refused to believe that the war was a lost cause. That is no longer the case, as the essay in *The Atlantic* by the prominent neoconservative Robert Kagan illustrates.

It seems to me, as I noted to the Judge, that the war appears to be having serious negative effects on President Trump. He often looks worn down and sometimes even disoriented. And his comments — especially his Truth Social posts — sound like the ravings of a desperate man, not someone who is in control of the events around him. He surely knows he has no war-winning strategy in Iran and that his presidency is likely to be badly damaged, if not ruined, by this war, which he foolishly started against the advice of his principal advisors.

As I remarked to the Judge, it reminds me of what happened to President Johnson during the Vietnam war. He was sworn in on 20 January 1965 (sixty years to the day before Trump was sworn in for his second term) after winning a landslide victory in the presidential election on 3 November 1964. Johnson was on top of the political world, but then in March 1965, he sent the first US combat troops into South Vietnam and launched the famous “Rolling Thunder” bombing campaign against North Vietnam. In effect, he started a losing war that destroyed his presidency and made his life a living nightmare. It looks like President Trump is heading into a similar situation.



*“Is this about me always taking a penny, but never leaving a penny?”*

# The Stone Cold Boot of Naked Zionism

Donald Trump has hedged all his bets, tied whatever legacy he will ultimately have to the corrupt thugs that run Israel. And basically this country as well. Trumpenstein now has both feet in the Middle East quicksand. On the surface, it's a seriously stupid move, but he's following the script. If he goes off script, there are guns to his head.

As always, it's very difficult to find out what's really happening over there. "Over There," the title of a George M. Cohan piece of propaganda which inspired the "lost generation" a century ago to sacrifice their lives for absolutely nothing. We hear reports, from Fox News and the like, that our glorious military is performing as would be expected. Glistening bombs blowing up everything that needs to be blown up. This doesn't include that girls' school, where 185 mostly preteen Iranians were spared any further abuse from their monstrous government. Tattooed pushup specialist Pete Hegseth has assured us that the U.S. would never do anything like that, and it was in fact the Iranians themselves who did it.

Iranians have been accused of this before; in 1988, the U.S. Navy seemingly shot down an Iranian civilian airliner over the Persian Gulf, killing 290 people. But then we blamed the Iranians themselves, some even accusing them of planting mannikins in the ocean. Sounds pretty "wacko" to me.

So blaming the Iranians for the deaths of those schoolgirls is in keeping with tradition. It's an American Exceptionalism thing, you wouldn't understand. According to our state-controlled media, America is really kicking some Iranian ass. This includes Iranian's latest Ayatollah, their spiritual leader. Kind of their pope. Now, we'll take credit for that all day long. It was a better kill than when Trumpenstein assassinated Soleimani the first time around. That's the cool thing about assassination now. We can talk about it openly. Everyone from Hillary to Obama to Trumpenstein brags about it. As the beloved Obama boasted, we're really good at killing, just like we're good at childhood cancer and obesity. Since we're being open now, why don't they just admit that they killed the Kennedys? It's not like that many people would care. And it's been accepted by all that it is no longer *wrong* to assassinate, if the Americans do it. So come clean. Ask Kenneth Copeland for forgiveness.

But there are other reports, coming from Col. Douglas Macgregor and many in the alt media, which claim that things are not going so well for the U.S. military. Or the Israel military. In fact, they claim that the Iranians are actually winning! What is this- the 1969 Super Bowl again? Is Joe Namath guaranteeing an Iranian victory? Well, this war will undoubtedly be as fixed as that Super Bowl was, but I don't think they're fixing it for Iran to win. Has Iran really wiped out all those U.S. military bases which conveniently surround Iran, as Macgregor and others claim?

"I Protest"

By Donald Jeffries

March 10, 2026

Lew Rockwell.com

Have they really caused significant damage to the mighty Israelis? Again, we're dealing with competing sources, with differing agendas. I could pull a Miles Mathis, and just claim nothing is really happening at all. War is fake. Nuclear weapons don't exist. I mean, otherwise wouldn't the maniacal Israelis have dropped one on Iran already? They could just blame the Iranians, since they have been on the verge of developing them since 2002.

One positive is that I don't see the normal flag waving you usually see once USA! USA! commits to invading and bombing some country, and then blames them for making us do it. Sure, there was Jon Stewart waving his arms and attempting to paint the Iranians as the bad guys. He even trotted out the old "40 virgins" mantra, and joked about killing the Ayatollah. Well, murdered Ayatollahs are going to seem really funny to you if your real name is Leibowitz. And there was Rachel Maddow, telling her estimated 53 viewers that the real responsibility for this nonsensical conflict lies with the Gulf States. Not Israel. As Alex Jones once reminded us, Saudi Arabia runs Hollywood. Leibowitz/Stewart blasted the Iranians for bombing all those countries who weren't involved, much as my friend Naomi Wolf did. He left out that they were actually bombing the U.S. bases in those countries, which had been bombing them. And some dare to suggest that it was actually Israel who bombed our military bases.

Well, it's not like Israel hasn't been renowned for that kind of thing; there was the attack on the USS Liberty in 1967, which was covered up for decades. Tucker Carlson recently reported that Mossad agents were caught planting bombs in both Qatar and Saudi Arabia. I wonder who they were trying to frame? It's not like we could stop them if they wanted to do that. Who would have the balls to even object? John F. Kennedy has been missing from Washington, D.C. for 62 years. We are so intertwined with Israel that it's hard to identify who's Mossad and who's CIA. Just the other day, U.S. Marine Brian McGinnis was rudely escorted from a Senate hearing for shouting out, "No one wants to fight for Israel." Apparently the cops who roughed him up think we should, as does Senator Tim Sheehy, who jumped in and broke McGinnis's arm. The brave Sheehy filmed an ad for AIPAC in Israel, so you know he'll be depicted heroically. The incident reminded us once again of just who's in charge.

Polls are all over the place. I've seen many that say most Americans are against this senseless interventionism. But Fox News is now reporting that Trump's base is "stronger than ever," with some 90 percent of MAGA voters supporting "Operation Epic Fury" in Iran. Mockingbird, Desert Storm, Northwoods, Iraqi Freedom, there are so many cool names to describe the horrific behavior of this government. How much of Trump's MAGA base is even left? Who can still possibly support him at this point? No politician in history has ever broken promises at the rate Trumpenstein has. Not only that, but repeatedly done the exact opposite thing. This is way beyond Bush the Elder's "Read my lips, no new taxes," or even FDR promising not to send our boys off to a foreign war. Trump's rhetoric was pretty consistently anti-intervention. He was called an isolationist. Instead, he has become an orange imperialist, threatening not only Greenland, but Turkey, and now even Cuba. Or Cuber, as JFK liked to call it.