

In Our Opinion

Ready for fall

By Shawn White

I'm pretty ready for fall. School is starting back up, football is getting going again and it feels like everyone is settling back into a normal routine after summer. There is just something I like about this time of year, when things start feeling a little busier again and the calendar starts filling up.

I'm especially ready for the weather to cool down. We are obviously not there yet, but those first mornings where you walk outside and it is a little chilly are probably my favorite part of the year. After a few months of summer heat, I am more than ready to wear a jacket again, open the windows and not immediately regret stepping outside in the afternoon.

It is also nice seeing everything around the schools start back up. Practices, games, events and all the other stuff that comes with a new school year make the towns feel more active again. Kids are heading back to class, parents are getting back into their routines and teachers and school staff are starting another busy year.

Fall also brings a lot of the things I look forward to most around here. Friday night football, homecoming, cooler evenings and eventually the leaves changing in the higher country all make this part of the year feel a little different. There is something about being outside on a cool evening after months of summer that is hard to beat.

Of course, this time of year always seems to move way too fast. School starts, football gets underway and then suddenly Halloween is here, Thanksgiving is around the corner and everyone is wondering where the year went.

Summer went fast, but I can't say I'm sad to see fall coming. Good luck to all the students, teachers, parents, coaches and school staff heading into another year, and hopefully some cooler weather gets here sooner rather than later.

Shawn White
Publisher

Another View

Trump appears to order the government to lie on behalf of tariffs

By Fareed Zakaria

For those who thought the Supreme Court had ended Donald Trump's obsession with tariffs, think again. In February, the court struck down his sweeping "Liberation Day" levies, ruling that the president did not have emergency powers to tax imports from almost every country on earth. Trump's response has been to search the statute books for ever more unusual, obscure and maybe illegal ways to restore very similar tariffs.

First came a temporary global tariff. When that expired, the administration imposed tariffs of 10% to 12.5% on 60 economies - more than 80 countries - claiming unfair trade practices. For Canada, Trump reached back to Section 338 of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, a provision that had never been invoked before.

For these new sweeping tariffs, the rationale - discovered suddenly in the last few months - is alleged forced labor. The administration has declared that countries ranging from Cambodia and China to Norway, Japan and Australia have failed to keep products made with forced labor out of their markets, and that this failure burdens American commerce. The charge is so obviously spurious and sweeping (Sweden is as bad as Cambodia?) that it gives away the game. It was almost certainly devised because the White House needed a legal pretext to subvert the spirit of the Supreme Court ruling against Trump.

This is more than ordinary political spin. The president appears to be ordering the United States government to formally certify as fact something it knows is not true. Agencies must publish findings, construct legal arguments and affix the authority of the American state to a falsehood manufactured for the apparent purpose of evading the nation's highest court. That is how institutions are corrupted: First they are asked to bend the truth, then to attest to the lie. And then the lies become routine, so no one thinks they are unusual. It is the road to Orwell's world.

Incidentally, Walk Free, the human rights group that compiles the Global Slavery Index, estimates that America imports \$169.6 billion worth of goods annually that are at risk of being made with forced labor - by far the highest total among the Group of 20. That does not prove American enforcement is worse than that of every country Trump has targeted. But it makes the administration's moral posture look even more absurd than it already is.

The economic case against tariffs is stronger by the day as the numbers roll in. Spending on manufacturing construction, which surged under Joe Biden and peaked at about \$250 billion at an annual rate in September 2024, fell to about \$175 billion by May of this year. Manufacturing employment is down roughly 75,000 jobs since Trump returned to office. Factory output has risen, but the gains are concentrated in advanced manufacturing and artificial intelligence, much of it reflecting investments planned before Trump took office, and little related to tariffs.

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The Iran War is eating Trump's presidency

By Rich Lowry

An Iran war that was supposed to be brief, and then was supposed to be over, is imposing an increasing price on Donald Trump's presidency.

We've seen a second term of a Republican administration go this way before.

There are distinct echoes of George W. Bush's Iraq War -- the conflict that Trump has long excoriated -- in the president's predicament.

Now, the Iran War is different from Iraq. There is no ground invasion, no regime change, no occupation, no counterinsurgency. The casualties aren't close to the same scale, and Donald Trump has been fighting Iran for months, whereas George W. Bush was embroiled in Iraq for years (and so were his successors).

Yet, the political trajectory looks similar. Then, as now, an unpopular conflict is putting downward pressure on a Republican president's approval rating.

Mainstream pollsters routinely have Trump's approval rating below 40%, and some put it below 35%; Fox News has him at 39%, while CNN (34%) and AP (33%) are lower. At this juncture of Bush's second term, his average approval rating was a roughly comparable 38%, although he had further to fall as the war continued and the financial crisis hit.

If the Iran War is not exacting nearly the same price in blood and treasure as the

Iraq War, it is inflicting a direct economic cost on Americans that wasn't present during the Iraq war.

It was often said of violent clashes in the streets of the U.S. in the 1960s, "The Vietnam War has come home." Well, the Iran

War came home the first time the average price per gallon of gasoline went above \$4. Trump

would have much more leeway to engage in a protracted operation to bring Iran to heel if the public could, in effect, forget about the war for a while, but there's a reminder every day of what's happening in the Strait of Hormuz on gas signs across America.

In the CNN poll, 28% approve Trump's handling of Iran, while 25% approve his handling of inflation and 21% of gas prices. These issues are related. Trump wants his presidency to matter. So, rather than being content with doing whatever he could at the margins to lower prices, he went for big, legacy-defining initiatives -- tariffs and the Iran War -- that raised prices. In so doing, he forfeited his signature issue of economic stewardship. In the latest Fox News poll, 33% approve of his handling of the economy and 67% disapprove.

When the memorandum of understanding with Iran was signed, Trump boasted about how, by reopening the strait, it would avoid greater economic distress; he said he didn't want to be another Herbert

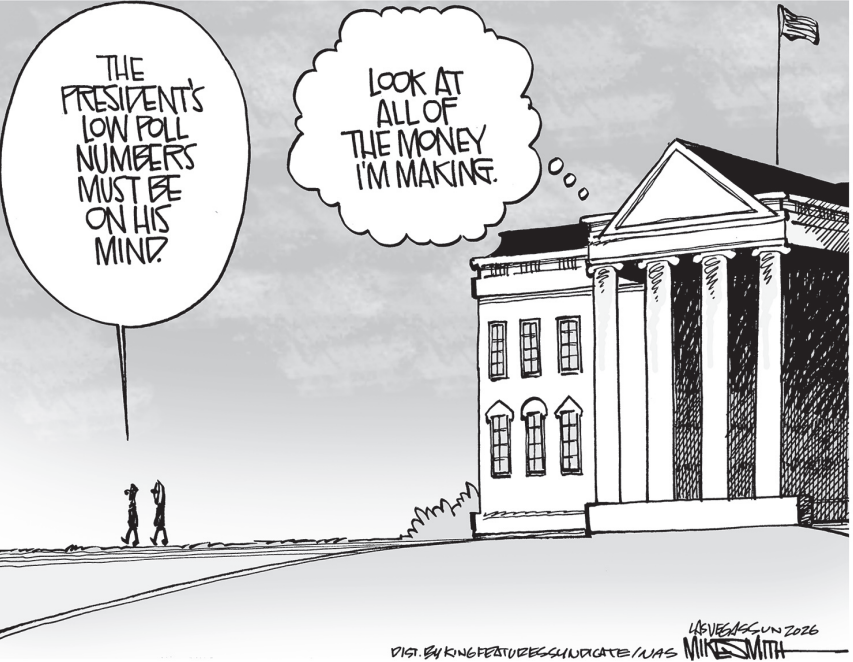
Hoover. Now, the strait is basically closed again. Absent another deal, he's faced with the choice of escalation or an ongoing low-level conflict, neither of which is going to be palatable to the public.

The CNN poll found that nearly three-quarters of Americans think Trump hasn't paid enough attention to the country's most pressing problems. The fact is that Iran wasn't a priority for the public and there was no attempt by the White House to make it one until after it had already launched the war.

Just as Bush's success in toppling the Taliban created the predicate for the Iraq War, Trump's stunning capture of Nicolas Maduro made it easier to believe that the Iran war would be a cakewalk. The idealistic establishment Republican and the "America First" populist both got lured into overestimating the efficacy of American military power.

We still don't know how the Iran war will end. Perhaps Trump will manage a satisfactory conclusion, and he has more room to bounce back up again politically than Bush did after years of the Iraq War. Still, the next Republican president would be well served to be more prudent and mindful of worst-case scenarios when launching major military operations than either of his two, otherwise very different, GOP predecessors.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Contemplating Life

"We are shaped and fashioned by what we love."
--Johann Wolfgang

Love is a powerful emotion that should be reserved for God and for other people. When we love God and other people, we can receive love as well as give it. But material possessions can never return our love.

One thing that we can be sure of is that although God does want us to love ourselves as well as others. He certainly does not want us to love only ourselves to the exclusion of others. People with the narcissistic personality disorder do love themselves almost to the total exclusion of others. Psychologists believe that narcissists are virtually incapable of giving love to others because all of their love is focused upon themselves. Everything they do seems to be motivated by how it will benefit them. For example, they cultivate a public image of almost perfection. They want to be thought of as extraordinarily wonderful people by the public.

The private lives of narcissists bear almost no resemblance to their public image, which they so carefully cultivate. They see their spouse and children as existing solely for the purpose of meeting their needs. They seem to have a strong need to gain psychological control over their victims. They rarely hug, or in any other way show affection to their spouse and children. In fact, they often treat strangers better than their own immediate families because of their need to project an image of perfection to the outside world.

Narcissists usually gain a high degree of psychological control over their victims and are verbally abusive to the point of destroying the self-confidence of their victims. They don't view the world like normal people. They are preoccupied with their public image, and will often go to great lengths to preserve and enhance that image. Author and psychiatrist M. Scott Peck refers to narcissists as people who have no particular desire to be good, but who have an enormous desire to be thought of as good.

We must all guard against any narcissistic tendencies that we might have. We are all born with narcissistic tendencies. A small infant focuses its attention on getting its needs met. When it is hungry, it cries. When it needs to have its diaper changed, it cries. The child soon learns that it has a great deal of control over its parents, and may develop the habit of crying whenever it wants anything. But as the infant matures it begins to realize that other people have needs, too, and little by little it learns to care about the needs of others. Adult narcissists are people who have never matured emotionally to the point of caring about others. In some ways, they are like two-year-olds who have temper tantrums whenever things do not go their way. We must all grow up emotionally as well as physically.

Think about it.

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