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**OUR VIEW**



President Harry S. Truman and U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson (on his left) preside over the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty 75 years ago. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

# Honoring Truman, supporting NATO

The 75th anniversary of NATO is a moment to remind ourselves of the importance of this alliance, and also the central role a Missourian played in its creation.

Harry Truman knew war. As a young artillery captain he had seen — and survived — World War I. “I know the strain, the mud, the misery, the utter weariness of the soldier in the field. And I know too his courage, his stamina, his faith in his comrades, his country, and himself.”

In 1945, he inherited World War II, going in less than 11 years from being a Jackson County judge, responsible for paving local roads, to the White House, responsible for ending that war and preventing World War III.

Seventy-five years later we are the beneficiaries of Truman's vision — and better and safer for it.

At the heart of the North Atlantic Treaty is Article 5: “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all...”

Truman said at the North Atlantic Treaty signing: “If it had existed in 1914 and in 1939, supported by the nations who are represented here today, I believe it would have prevented the acts of aggression which led to two world wars.”

Russia's invasion of Ukraine more than two years ago has thrust NATO onto the front line. Finland and Sweden became the most recent nations to join NATO — the former country having an 830-mile border with Russia, and the latter nation ending its long-standing policy of neutrality.

“When President (Vladimir) Putin launched his full-scale invasion two years ago, he wanted less NATO, and more control over his neighbors. He wanted to destroy Ukraine as a sovereign state, but he failed,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said when Sweden joined last month. Instead, Putin got a NATO that Stoltenberg said is today “bigger and stronger.”

But only if Americans continue to support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Former President Donald Trump is not wrong to demand that its members live up to their obligations — NATO does not have a standing military force but depends on the militaries of its member states and their agreement to commit 2% of their gross domestic product to defense spending.

“As of 2023,” U.S. News and World Report recently noted, “a majority of NATO countries did not meet this (2%) pledge.”

But neither is he right to undermine the mutual aid commitment that is the heart of the alliance, saying that Russia could “do whatever the hell they want,” to nations that do not meet their spending commitments, and later adding, “Look, if they're not going to pay, we're not going to protect. OK?”

Seventy-five years later, we take for granted the achievements of NATO and the vision of Truman.

A bronze statue of Truman was recently unveiled at Truman Hall at NATO headquarters in Brussels, but it is not enough.

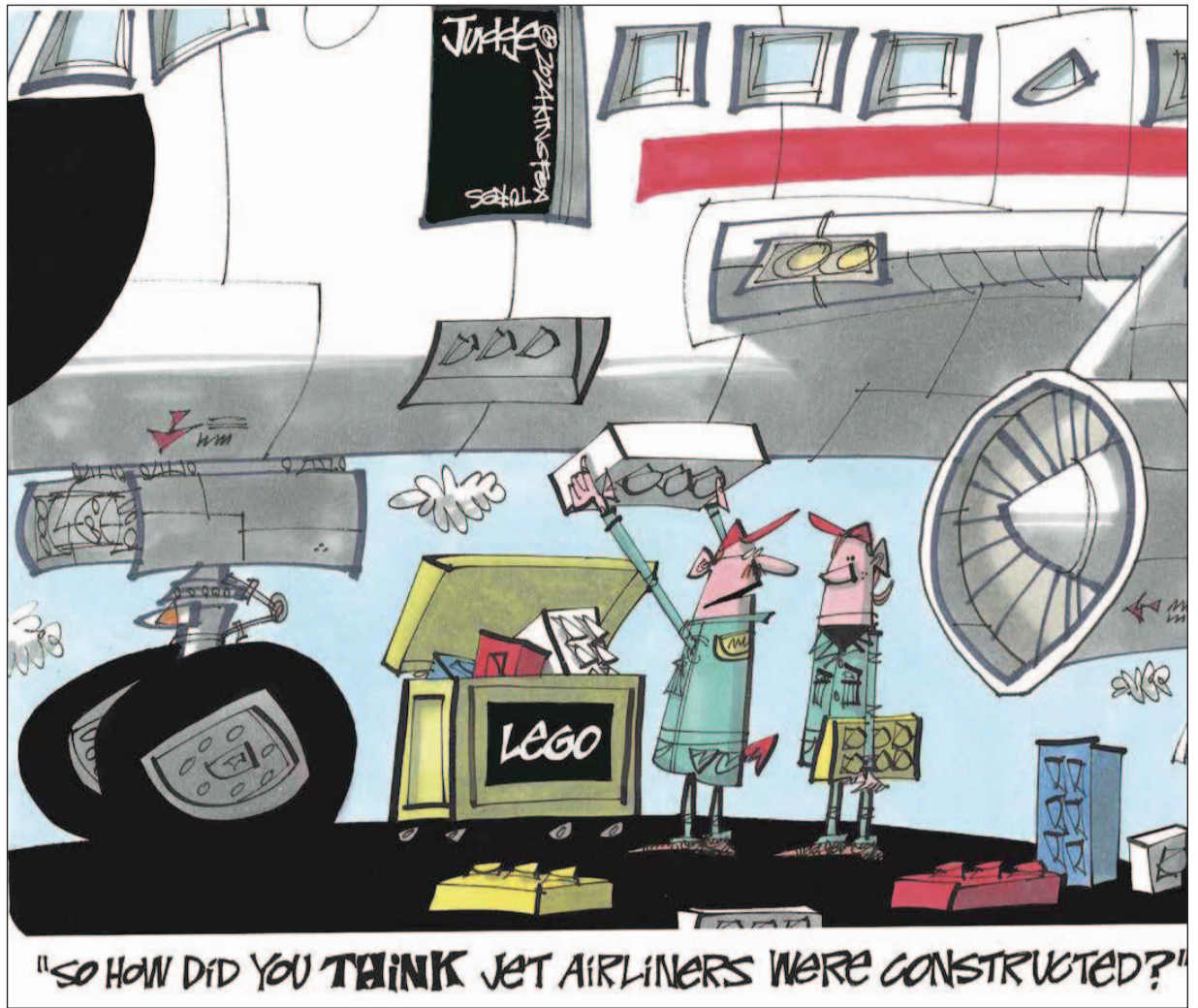
We must continue to demand that our leaders support Truman's vision.

Presidential historian Michael Beschloss said after the unveiling of that statue: “I wish Harry Truman were back to explain to Americans why this (NATO) is absolutely essential.”

**Verse**

*‘And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’*

Luke 10:27



## Mandatory minimum sentences are an old idea but not a good one

It should be common sense: Criminal justice laws ought to make us safer.

Currently, in Missouri, there are many pieces of legislation under consideration that would increase the use of mandatory minimums and roll back parole eligibility. The truth is, these bills won't make us safer — but they will cost a lot.

Mandatory minimum sentences are an old idea but not a good one. They're a one size fits all scheme that force judges to operate as glorified clerks, ticking off boxes that add up to certain mandatory minimum prison terms. These types of laws restrict judges from taking into account the full situation of each case. Rather than making “the time fit the crime,” mandatory minimums make judicial disasters far more common.

All Missourians deserve to be safe, yet 64% of violent crimes reported to police in Missouri in 2022 were not solved. If we are concerned about safety, shouldn't we focus on solving that 64% instead of increasing punishment for the 36%? Mandatory minimums may sound tough, but long sentences across the board just don't simply reduce crime, as proven by more than 30 years of evidence that shows it.

One 50-state study found no relationship between long drug sentences and drug use or overdose rates, and another study found that mandatory minimums for illegal gun possession did not reduce gun ownership or violent crime rates. People committing crimes either don't know or don't care about these laws. But the bureaucratic rubber-stamping of mandatory minimums carry staggering costs.

Outside of Medicaid, prison costs are the second-fastest growing area of state budgets. Prisons cost most states almost five times more than they did in the mid-

**We all deserve to live in safe communities. Taxpayer dollars should go toward cost-effective solutions that work, instead of outdated and ineffective policies like minimum sentencing requirements. We should start by untying the hands of judges and letting them do their jobs.**



**MARIA GOELLNER**

Columnist



**JEREMY CADY**

Columnist

successfully reentering society and finding housing and job success.

We don't have to paint with such a broad brush all the time. Yes, some people are dangerous or have done things so bad they should never leave prison.

That's not most people.

Most people can and do change as they age. Ninety percent of incarcerated people eventually complete their sentences and come home to work and be with their families.

Overly harsh prison sentences, including those that relocate people away from their community, can harden people and prevent rehabilitation by severing critical family ties.

We all deserve to live in safe communities. Taxpayer dollars should go toward cost-effective solutions that work instead of outdated and ineffective policies like minimum sentencing requirements. We should start by untying the hands of judges and letting them do their jobs.

Missouri lawmakers should keep mandatory minimums and parole rollbacks off the table this year, so that families can be part of the solution for a safer and healthier Missouri.

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**THIS COLUMN** first appeared in the Missouri Independent.

**OUR VIEW**

**We must continue to stand up for Constitution**

I applaud the Joplin Globe for speaking out against the insanity that accepts the behavior of Jan. 6 and vicious advertising that we're experiencing in the United States. We need to speak up more.

We are definitely a minority in this area defending our democracy.

Local citizens are concerned about the anger speaking against Trump's hatred may bring, almost afraid of being assaulted.

We must continue to stand up for our Constitution.

Irene M. Young  
Joplin

**The affirmation — and antithesis — of common sense**

The Globe's editorial board hit on all of the right notes (April 9) with regard to the recent successes in the popularity of women's athletics.

Caitlin Clark is certainly masterful and a talented athlete who has almost single-handedly expanded the audience for women's NCAA basketball.

Title IX is given credit for the expansion, and I think it justified. This is an example of a law passed at the federal level that benefits a significant portion of the populace and is really just an affirmation of commonsense principles.

Now to the winner of the women's NCAA tournament, the South

Carolina Gamecocks — their record over the last five years is 105 wins, three losses — dominant, to say the least.

In the championship finals, they demonstrated once again that there is no one in their class, and they certainly deserved the championship, particularly with a 38-0 record in the 2023-24 school year. Not even close.

Their talented coach, Dawn Staley, recently announced that biological male athletes should be allowed to participate in traditional women's athletics.

Most all of us would conclude this thinking to be the antithesis of common sense.

Those who express this opinion on a national media format are, for the most part, marginalized.

Perry Davis  
Carthage

# Left blames Israel for war it didn't want, didn't start

**M**SNBC's talk show "Morning Joe" is catnip for political junkies, especially those who detest Donald Trump. Hundreds of thousands of us, our body clocks by now conditioned to wake in time to grab coffee and hop on the treadmill just before 6 a.m., start each weekday with predictable, comfortable left-of-center patter from the show's regulars.



**JEFF ROBBINS**

Columnist

In fairness to Joe Scarborough, after whom the show is named, the former congressman has consistently condemned Hamas, the genocidal, jihadist organization that launched the Gaza war by invading Israel and massacring every man, woman and child in sight six months ago. He has repeated that Hamas can't be permitted to control Gaza if either Israelis or Palestinians are ever to know peace. Like an increasing number of people who carefully recite all the right generalities, however, he has descended ever deeper into drivel as the conflict has persisted and as Hamas, holding a winning hand by hiding among civilians and



Israelis killed by Hamas militants lie on the road near Sderot, Israel, on Oct. 7, 2023. Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip infiltrated southern Israel and fired thousands of rockets into the country, prompting Israel to begin striking targets in Gaza in response. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

holding hostages in underground dungeons, gloats and rejects Israeli ceasefire proposals. Scarborough is smart enough not to swallow hooey. But as Hamas eats popcorn watching Democrats mindlessly insist that Israel simply do what Hamas demands and accept whatever

it offers, you'd never know it. The civilian suffering that Hamas purposefully triggered in the first place has made it increasingly fashionable in Democratic circles to blame Israel for a war that it did not want, did not cause and does not deserve. But that's MSNBC's market.

Scarborough has joined Democrats whose spines have disintegrated under pressure from the party's left in returning over and again to the fiddlesticks that the Gaza conflict continues because of this Israeli government's refusal to endorse Palestinian statehood. He knows better.

He knows that Israel — from its very birth — agreed to a two-state solution, and that every time one has been offered in return for peace, Palestinian leaders have blocked it.

He knows that when Hamas sent 3,000 gunmen into Israel to slaughter, mutilate and kidnap innocents, it wasn't in search of a two-state solution. It was to prevent one.

If only the Israelis would agree to a ceasefire, bleat "Morning Joe" hosts and guests alike. Are they not following the repeated rejections by Hamas of proposal after proposal? But when you have a television show, well, you can say these things, and say them bombastically. It may be nonsense, but plenty of people believe it.

Scarborough's responsibilities extend all the way to getting to the set early in the morning. This is no small obligation, but it doesn't necessarily match that of protecting civilians from an attempted annihilation. He has rightly berated the Netanyahu government for its negligence in protecting those civilians, and, going further, demands to know how the Israelis have not already completed an official investigation while simultaneously defending itself on multiple fronts. "Where's the damned investigation?" he sneers.

One of the enviable advantages of having a successful talk show is that no one who wants to return to the set ever calls BS on the host's BS. The 9/11 Commission created by Congress to examine what happened that terrible morning wasn't even created until late 2002, a year after the attack. And the commission did not release its report until July 2004 — three years later.

After the Israel Defense Forces mistakenly fired on a convoy carrying humanitarian aid workers last week, a sputtering Scarborough, knowing that the IDF would not have targeted the convoy knowing it was transporting aid workers, told his viewers that there would not be an investigation until well in the future. The IDF released its report within 72 hours, accepting full responsibility for what it stated was a grave mistake, and detailing how it occurred.

It was left to prominent attorney and anti-Trump advocate George Conway to capture on X, formerly known as Twitter, the inanity that has metastasized. "Still waiting for Hamas's report on what happened on Oct. 7," Conway posted.

**JEFF ROBBINS** is a former assistant United States attorney and United States delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

# U.S. must press Israel to halt war, allow in humanitarian aid

**A**s a humanitarian aid worker, having traveled to over 40 refugee camp sites around the world throughout Europe, the Middle East and South Asia, I have seen the worst of human nature: experiencing second-hand trauma through horrific recounts of torture, sexual assault, slaughter and oppression.

Yet even after all of my field experiences, I have yet to see anything so intentionally cruel on such a wide scale as what we are witnessing in Gaza.

For the first time in history, a genocide is being livestreamed by the very population that is being targeted. Horrific scenes of wide-scale devastation, slaughter and now starvation flood our screens.

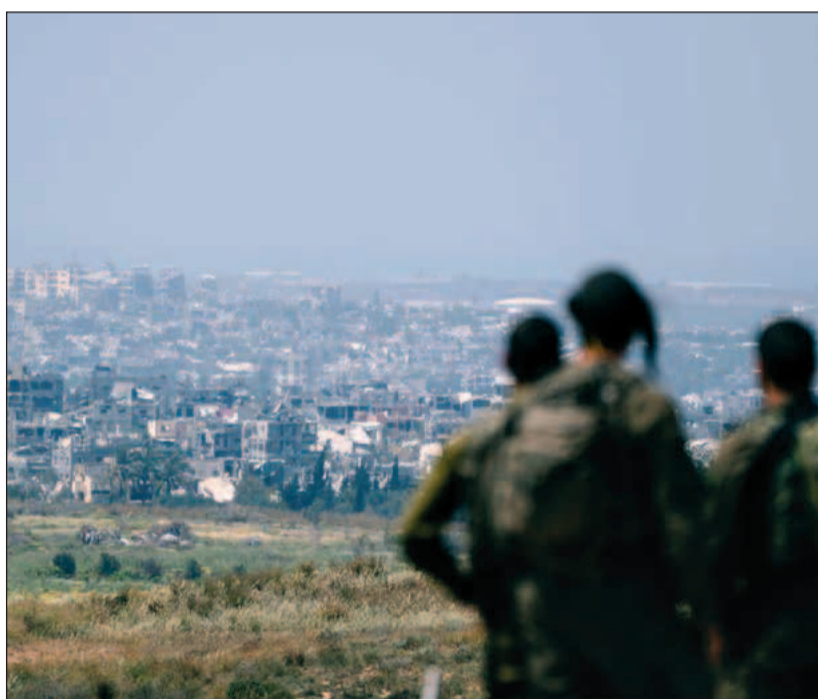
Israeli military forces, armed predominately by the United States, have killed more than 32,800 in Gaza (as of April 2), including over 13,000 children. More than 8,000 Palestinians are missing and presumed dead under the rubble of bombed buildings. About 75,000 more Palestinians have been injured, with at least 1,000 children having lost one or more limbs.

Of the 2.2 million people living in Gaza, more than 70% are now internally displaced, with the majority of the population crammed and cornered into Rafah. More than a million Palestinians will face famine in the coming weeks, as Palestinians have resorted to eating grass and animal feed in a desperate attempt to ward off starvation. As a barbaric and international-



**RASHA ABOUSALEM**

Columnist



Israeli soldiers look at destroyed buildings in the Gaza Strip as they stand near the Israeli-Gaza border, as seen from southern Israel, Tuesday, April 9, 2024. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ally illegal form of collective punishment, the population in Gaza — besides being bombed — is literally being starved, dehydrated and diseased to death by Israel. By many metrics, Gaza has become the most severe humanitarian crisis in modern history and has turned into a 21st century concentration camp.

Since World War II, the international community has developed a legal framework that, at least theoretically, prohibits acts of apartheid, genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

After the horrors of World War II, the world said "never again." Yet time and again, the same

world has stayed largely silent and watched as genocides and other atrocities have taken place in Rwanda, Bosnia, Guatemala and elsewhere. Today, the same leaders and nations that have developed these international laws of moral conduct are the very same ones ignoring them, as they passively stand by and watch Israel blatantly disregard international law after international law on a massive scale.

South Africa, on the other hand, demonstrated international leadership last year in bringing Israel to the International Court of Justice, which agreed in January there is a "plausible" case that Israel has been com-

mitting genocide in Gaza. The ICJ ordered Israel to halt its ongoing crimes against Palestinians as their investigation continues, but time and time again Israel has carried out its deadly campaign in Gaza by continuing its decadeslong flouting of international law. Meanwhile, human rights organizations and aid workers collectively call on world leaders to immediately intervene and put an end to this carnage.

Soon after the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, the Biden administration bypassed Congress to assist in arming Israel's war on Palestinians. In an investigation by The Washington Post, it was revealed that the Biden administration quietly approved and delivered more than 100 different weapons transfers to Israel.

From October to December, it is estimated that U.S. weapons sales made to Israel amounted to over \$573 million. By the end of March, U.S. officials stated that the State Department authorized the transfer of fighter jets and engines worth roughly \$2.5 billion to Israel. Meanwhile, the vast majority of Democratic and Republican officials continue to openly support Israel's "right to defend itself" by numerous resolutions in support of a foreign government that is currently in court on genocide charges.

The United States needs to exercise its leverage and press Israel to immediately both halt its war on Gaza and allow in without delay desperately needed humanitarian aid to Palestinians through its border crossings. It's long past time for the U.S. to terminate its partnership in Israel's ongoing campaign of occupation and apartheid against the Palestinian

people, and to altogether cut off military aid to the veritable rogue state.

I am the child of Palestinian refugees from the original 1948 Nakba (or "catastrophe" in Arabic). My father, one of the 700,000 Palestinians expelled or forced to flee, was a mere 8-year-old child when his family was violently forced out of their home in Haifa, and my mother's family was expelled from their ancestral land in Nazareth. Both families were forced to walk their way into Lebanon, where my father spent 21 years in a Palestinian refugee camp. My entire existence as a Palestinian is politicized, vilified, dehumanized and questioned.

For decades, Palestinian history has been erased, appropriated, and taken over by settler-colonialist propaganda. Anti-Palestinian sentiment and rhetoric is so normalized and acceptable that American politicians can openly call for mass killings and dropping atomic bombs in Gaza (as we heard since October from several public hearings). American society has been all too easily convinced that Palestinians are undeserving of even the most basic human rights.

When future generations study this war, they will discuss how the world failed to stop yet another genocide. They will read accounts of the horrors that took place in Gaza and think to themselves exactly what so many of us think now about past atrocities — "I would have said something!"

**RASHA ABOUSALEM** is a humanitarian aid worker, researcher and adjunct professor. This column first appeared in the Missouri Independent.

# From 'free and independent' to 'talking points' — the drift of the media

**T**hose of you who've been with me on these pages over the years know that not one of those years has gone by without a smattering of columns tackling the scourge of national journalism — bias in news reporting, and in more recent years moving away from objective, "facts and both sides" and moving to the concept of "activist journalism," where the media should shape, not report, on policy.

You are reading these words today because of one person and one person only: the great Carol Stark, the epitome of what journalism — and by extension the press that printed it — meant.

She was the last of an era — an era when objectivity and an independent mind still counted, an era when journalism wasn't a "J school" call to activism but an instinctive desire to dig for the truth and to report that truth no matter what political side it might help or hurt.

One of my favorite memories is a phone call in the early years regarding one of those "smattering" columns where she chided me "for someone who is writing in the press, you sure spend a lot of time bashing it."

It was that call where we exchanged our personal histories with the industry and it was that call where she realized my criticism wasn't out of a hate for the press but rather a lifelong love of it.

I couldn't just sit on the sidelines and watch it destroy itself before my eyes. It was



**GEOFF CALDWELL**

Columnist

of a free and independent people that they made that concept the First — not the Second, not the Third — but the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights. If the republic they had risked so much to form was to survive, the individual, not the government, must reign supreme."

I asked: "But what happens when that free press abridges itself? What happens when that 'free press' abandons its special place under the Constitution in favor of promoting its own group ideology and supporting but one single political party? What happens when the desire to promote replaces responsibility to inform?"

And answered: "You get the 2016 election coverage, that's what. You get a mainstream press and corporate media network reallocating every spare resource into destroying one side while doing ev-

that call where two of many different opinions, but both saw the fault lines widening and the danger coming.

On Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016, my column "American press playing Russian roulette" dropped.

It opened by highlighting the First Amendment and that "The Founding Fathers of this great nation felt so strongly about the importance of free speech and a free press for the protection



everything possible to prop up the other." After noting recent examples of a national press clearly in the Hillary Clinton camp, I closed with a further answer to the question of coverage:

"You get these last weeks leading up to Nov. 8, not filled with coverage of who is the candidate more likely to protect or to dismantle the constitutional principles upon which America was founded.

"Or who told a Brazilian bank group: 'My dream is a hemispheric common market with open trade and open borders.' Or who wants to appoint Supreme Court justices who will use their opinions to shape a 'living' Constitution rather than interpret the same

Constitution as the founders intended.

"No, you will instead see these remaining weeks filled with the type of 'journalism' that, until this election, was reserved to supermarket check-out aisles.

"And that same press will also tell you that you shouldn't believe the WikiLeaks emails about Clinton because the FBI is blaming the Russians.

"Yes, the very same FBI that decided not to put Hillary Clinton under oath or even transcribe said interview, are now supposed to be credible on a 'trust us, the Russians did it' claim.

"Such is the state of 'journalism' today, and such is the perilous state of the future of this republic."

To this day, that one column generated more feedback than I'd ever imagined. The most valuable from the retired publishers and editors who nodded in agreement via email that, yes, the bias was not only real but getting worse.

Next week comes a look at the past eight years and where we stand today. The week after, a look to the future — a future where independents in the likeness of Carol are setting a course back to journalism's North Star, a course where what's left of the paper press will either embrace or find itself crawling out from under the ashes mummified "What happened?"

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