

# OPINION



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## ANOTHER VIEW | THE LONDON GUARDIAN

# US must pivot back toward Middle East

Washington has no choice but to manage the unendurable violence before it spreads

In the wake of the carnage wrought by Hamas in southern Israel, killing at least 1,300 people; with bombs still raining on Gaza, having killed at least 3,000; and with 199 children and adults held hostage, the horror is increased by the prospect of this violence begetting more.

The U.S. hopes two aircraft carrier groups in the eastern Mediterranean, non-stop shuttle diplomacy by the secretary of state and a presidential visit to Israel will see off the twin spectres of even greater humanitarian disaster in Gaza and regional catastrophe drawing in Hezbollah in Lebanon and perhaps others. Officially, President Joe Biden's visit to Israel on Wednesday demonstrates the U.S. stands with Israel. It may offer Benjamin Netanyahu, disgraced in the eyes of his nation, a political lifeline.

But if it is a warning to Hezbollah and Iran, it is also being used to rein in Netanyahu. The U.S. reportedly agreed to the trip only after Israel agreed to move on humanitarian aid and safe areas for civilians to avoid the bombing.

But the statement that the two countries will "develop a plan" for delivery is noticeably modest. Even if implemented, it might not hold. Though Israel told the U.S. it would restore the water supply to southern Gaza, those on the ground reported only tiny quantities getting through. And while aid is essential, delivering food and medicines is hard to do and of limited use while air-strikes continue.

More critical may be that the U.S., with its own disasters in Afghanistan and Iraq in mind, is pressing Israel to think hard about its plan for Gaza. Presi-

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dent Biden warned publicly that occupying Gaza would be a mistake. ...

Hezbollah has indicated that it has two red lines: the forcible displacement of large numbers of Palestinians outside Gaza — though Egypt has made it clear it does not want them — and a ground invasion aiming to destroy Hamas: Israel's stated intention. Behind Hezbollah stands Iran. Its foreign minister has warned of "multiple fronts" opening against Israel if it continues to kill civilians in Gaza.

Iran does not want to lose Hezbollah, its main proxy force. But nor does it want to see Hamas wiped out. If that looks likely, experts suggest it would probably also ask Iraqi militias to deploy to Syria or Lebanon. Washington has sent clear warnings to Tehran to stay out of it, while also indicating that it is not looking for a fight. The danger is that while neither the U.S. nor Iran want to be drawn in further, the dynamics on the ground have their own momentum.

The unendurable violence witnessed this month in part has its roots in the belief of the U.S. and other governments that the conflict at the heart of the Middle East was unsolvable but manageable, and could be sidelined. Many warned at the time that was wrong. It appears all the more impossible to manage now — and yet that is precisely why the U.S. and others must attempt to do so.

## MY VIEW | MARSHALL RAMSEY



# Words bring us hope

What is it about gratitude which is so important to our lives each day? Showing and expressing gratitude is similar to how blood is oxygenated in our veins; it literally pumps us up by taking our own minds off present troubles and reminds us the world is bigger than just ourselves.

Remembering gratitude allows us time to focus on being thankful for others. Showing, practicing, and developing attitudes of thankfulness can transform our lives in myriad ways. The simple art of writing down the things we are thankful for changes our sleep patterns and causes many other health improvements. And whether it can be completely quantified or not, gratitude, both given and received, immeasurably changes our lives.

One of the first mannerisms we might learn as a young person is to say "please" and "thank you." Tragically, as we age and become filled with ambition, some of our manners and habits lessen the importance of continuing these very significant words and acts. In a recent study of gratitude, it became evident when people practice gratitude, they appear to recover quicker from mental health ailments, exit traumatic experiences quicker, increase the value they place on personal relationships, and reduce the amount of toxic emotions in their lives.

The study took individuals and suggested one group write a gratitude journal and notes of thankfulness to individuals in their lives. Interestingly enough, whether the individuals mailed

their letters or not, both their psychological and physical lives improved. Whether one believes practicing gratitude is really a practice or more of a habit, expressing an appreciation for others flushes out anger and pessimism, altering our brain waves in ways researchers are still trying to completely quantify.

A teacher recently began an experiment to write a short note to every individual who works with him. He takes a small card and writes a short message. He is nowhere near accomplishing this task with over 100 people in the building, but he is already seeing the affect the notes are having on himself and within the culture of the school. He is learning gratitude may be more of a practice than a habit, but it is, above all, an act of intention and purpose. Gratitude and thankfulness bring about joy and a larger sense of contentment. In many cases, it leaves people, both givers and receivers, with a smile on their face and an enlarged heart.

Studies reveal displaying gratitude appears to affect older generations more than younger ones. As one ages, individuals may define their sense of worth and purpose differently. Developing a sense of gratitude and thankfulness becomes even more essential to living. Becoming a good example for others may become more paramount as some people think more about their character and legacy.

Even in the midst of these positive studies of the benefits of gratitude, it appears we are losing some of this behavior, too. The number of letters we actually write to one another is decreasing. Like most behaviors and actions, writing a letter or sending a text or email takes both intention, time and thought. Expressing true and honest grat-

itude goes deeper than a simple but important: Thank you.

Thus, our reactions to someone else's gratitude towards us deserves an equally meaningful response. And just as important, if we are the ones dishing out the gratitude, we should be just as humble and intentional. Gratitude offers all of us the hope we are making a difference in the avenues of life we are choosing to travel and, more importantly, spurring others on in their own journeys.

Isn't it wonderful when we choose to express gratitude and thankfulness? We may be adding years to another person's life. According to researchers, we are easing tension in their lives too. In an act of caring for another brother or sister in community, we are also helping someone bear a burden which is deeper than ourselves. What a hopeful thing!

In this current discussion about the benefits of gratitude, we all have arrived at a truth. Caring for others is so very important to our own individual lives, and we do not care for people enough. Caring, and showing thankfulness, and listening to the hearts of others, and offering help, both written and unwritten, pays dividends which we are still trying to figure out.

Bottom line, gratitude is good. A good word to someone else is a positive and enlightening one in our own lives. Words bring us hope. Words sustain us. Actions, too. We need to continue to pursue gratitude and give more than we receive.

Brent Tomberlin is a social studies instructor at South Caldwell High School and an adjunct instructor at several local institutions. He can be reached at [coachtomberlin@gmail.com](mailto:coachtomberlin@gmail.com).



**BRENT TOMBERLIN**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### There are no off years in a democracy

On Election Day — Nov. 7, 2023 — voters will make important decisions regarding the future of our communities. In Catawba County municipalities, residents will choose aldermen, city and town council members and/or mayors.

Because voters don't tend to turn out as much during these municipal elections, the margins are smaller. That means a few votes can make an enormous difference. During early voting, which began Oct. 19 and ends Nov. 4, you can register and vote simultaneously.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization with the primary mission to empower voters and defend democracy. We urge you to go to [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) to prepare to vote in this election. [VOTE411](http://VOTE411.org) can be viewed in English or Spanish. By entering your home address on the site, you can see what's on your ballot, check your voter registration status, find your Election Day polling place, learn about early voting hours and locations and compare

candidate responses to League questions.

Please urge your friends to vote too! And don't forget to bring your photo ID with you, a new requirement this year. Contact the Catawba County Board of Elections with any questions. Let's make voting a habit!

**Tiffany Canaday, Claremont**  
*Canaday is president of the League of Women Voters Catawba Valley.*

### Danner knocks on doors, so vote for her

Lately I have seen a lot of voting signs but I have not seen the people who are running for office. A good friend of mine, the late Cass Ballenger, said, "If a person puts up a sign but doesn't knock on your door or call you, they are not worth voting for!"

Signs mean nothing to voters. You should go in their neighborhood and find out their concerns. I've only seen one person going into neighborhoods and that's Councilwoman Beverly Danner. So, voters, please remember to vote for Mrs. Danner.

**Eric Heller, Newton**

### There is an alternative for mentally ill, homeless people

As a psychiatrist, I want to challenge a recent editorial, "From Harrop: Bring back locked mental facilities"; (Oct. 6), connecting the rise of the homeless mentally ill to the 1963 Mental Health Act, an act supporting the development of community mental health centers.

The acknowledged crisis for the homeless mentally ill however is much more complex than reestablishing extensive state-supported hospitals. (Journal of ethics.ama-assn.org/article/deinstitutionalization-people-mental-illness-causes-and-consequences/2013-10.)

Federal funding for these centers was short lived. The states were to take up, along with Medicaid, the ongoing treatment for these individuals. As you can imagine, the states varied greatly in this responsibility. Unenforced outpatient commitment laws, funding problems, and lack of outreach programs all have left these individuals to fend for themselves. Both pri-

vate and public psychiatric beds, (which do exist and are locked) have diminished, even for the short-term treatment of what are relapsing illnesses. Thus, the numbers of homeless mentally ill have increased.

These severe illnesses, schizophrenia, severe bipolar or schizoaffective disorders if untreated, are now known to cause further brain injury. There is an effective, well-established alternative. I work for what is called an Assertive Community Treatment team, a Medicaid- and state-funded outreach program. This nationwide program is said to save states money over inpatient care. We provide services previously found in hospitals: psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation, substance abuse treatment, peer support, nursing and social work, in the communities where these individuals live. While this is currently a voluntary program, the team, working with its clients, increases the likelihood that people will adhere to the medications, have food, shelter and other health care.

I have seen many people thrive

with these supports. Many return to the workforce, live in their home community, near or with their family support system, and have the opportunity of life choices that all of us wish for.

**David Branyon, MD, Hickory**

### Give Robert Kennedy fair treatment

You posted two articles recently referring to Robert F Kennedy, Jr. as "anti-vax," either for statements he made years ago or by deliberately misquoting his more recent statements.

When will you refer to Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton as "racists" or "white supremacists" for their "racial jungle" or "bring those thugs to heel" comments?

When will you call Rashida Talib and AOC anti-Semitic for their recent comments? You won't. Because you are partial.

Any semblance of journalistic integrity your paper had has been lost.

The citizens of Hickory deserve the truth. And you won't give it to them.

**Chris Marshall, Conover**