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Financial Crisis Report III

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We are living through economic instability and social upheaval that may create unusual opportunities for informed investors. Financial Crisis Report III is a free collection of David M. Miyoshi's opinions and the views of advisors he follows, with appropriate credit. He receives no compensation from advisors whose work appears here. The report is published for criticism, commentary, and educational purposes. Readers are encouraged to examine the sources and reach their own conclusions. The observations are offered sincerely and without charge, guided by the belief that truth exists and is worth seeking

Reporting What's Really Happening in America and the World

Simplified format for easier reading

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I have wondered at times about what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress.
-Ronald Reagan

October 2026

Month at a Glance: A Daily Timeline of Major Events of the previous month

September 1 — U.S. and Iran exchange strikes. U.S. forces struck targets in Iran, and Iran responded with missile and drone attacks, renewing fears of a wider conflict and disruption to Gulf shipping.

September 2 — Oil prices rise. Brent crude settled higher as renewed fighting raised concerns about Middle Eastern supply routes.

September 3 — Economic pressure on Iran mounts. Iranian sources told Reuters that the U.S. blockade of oil exports and efforts to stop sanctions evasion were becoming harder for Iran to withstand.

September 4 — U.S. hiring grows. Employers added 162,000 jobs in August, while the unemployment rate remained at 4.1%.

September 5 — Tankers are struck. U.S. forces hit three Iranian oil tankers after Iran launched missiles at two U.S. Navy ships, according to U.S. Central Command.

September 6 — Iran warns of a stronger response. Iranian officials addressed the country's economic difficulties and warned that further attacks would bring harsher retaliation.

September 7 — Oil reaches a six-week high. Traders added a risk premium to crude prices as the conflict threatened Gulf energy supplies.

September 8 — Houthi attacks threaten Saudi energy facilities. Attacks on Saudi sites pushed oil prices higher and raised concern that the regional conflict could spread.

September 9 — Brent crude passes $100 a barrel. Attacks on shipping near the Strait of Hormuz intensified fears of supply disruption and renewed inflation.

September 10 — Central banks confront rising prices. The European Central Bank raised interest rates as energy costs added to inflation pressure; tanker attacks also drove oil prices higher.

September 11 — U.S. inflation remains at 3.4%. The August Consumer Price Index rose 0.4% for the month. Gasoline accounted for more than one-third of that increase.

September 12 — Russian strikes damage Ukraine. Air attacks killed civilians and damaged buildings and infrastructure as Ukraine prepared for another wartime winter.

September 13 — Oil markets face a longer conflict. With crude above $100 a barrel, an analysis published that day described dwindling buffers against prolonged supply disruption.

September 14 — U.S. wildlife enforcement guidance changes. A Fish and Wildlife Service memorandum directed staff to use a narrower interpretation of prohibited harm under the Endangered Species Act, a change with potential consequences for development and land use.

September 15 — U.S. diesel supplies draw scrutiny. Senate Republican leader John Thune said he was open to considering a diesel export ban as fuel costs strained transportation and agriculture.

September 16 — Federal Reserve raises rates. The Fed increased its target range by a quarter percentage point, to 3.75%–4.00%, as it continued to address inflation.

September 17 — Iran sanctions monitoring loses its mandate. Russia and China blocked an extension of the United Nations panel responsible for independently monitoring sanctions on Iran.

September 18 — U.S. increases sanctions pressure on Russia. President Trump signed legislation aimed at Russia's energy and defense sectors and its sanctions-evading oil trade.

September 19 — Diesel export restrictions enter the debate. Senator Chuck Grassley called for an export ban as U.S. diesel prices continued to rise.

September 20 — U.S. and Iran exchange threats. Escalating Houthi attacks and threats of further retaliation kept the Gulf conflict and its effect on shipping in focus.

September 21 — Diesel costs reach record levels. Reuters reported a global shortage linked to disrupted production and exports, with U.S. retail diesel exceeding $6 a gallon.

September 22 — Iran war dominates U.N. debate. President Trump defended U.S. military action and warned of further escalation, while an Iranian official offered a conditional proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

September 23 — Oil jumps again. Brent crude settled at $103.08 a barrel after Iran's president vowed that his country would not surrender, underscoring the market's sensitivity to each diplomatic statement.

September 24 — U.S.–China summit extends trade truce. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at the White House, and the two governments extended their trade truce by two months. Reuters reported no major breakthrough on tariffs, agricultural purchases, rare-earth supplies, Taiwan, or artificial intelligence. Reuters

September 25 — U.N. adopts sea-level-rise declaration. The U.N. General Assembly approved a declaration calling for stronger international cooperation and coordinated action on rising seas. The World Meteorological Organization said nearly 770 million people live less than five meters above the high-tide line. wmo.int

September 26 — Trump rejects Iran's proposal to reopen Hormuz. President Trump rejected an Iranian proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end regional fighting within seven days. The dispute kept attention on a shipping route whose disruption has affected oil flows and the global economy. Reuters

September 27 — Floods and landslides kill dozens in India and Nepal. Heavy rain and storms had killed 56 people in India and 14 in Nepal, with 11 more missing in Nepal. Authorities warned of further flash-flood risks as rivers rose and rescue and relief efforts continued. Reuters

September 28 — Mediators continue U.S.–Iran talks. Mediators were still working toward a deal to end the fighting and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, despite major obstacles. The sides remained divided over nuclear issues, sanctions relief, and the sequence of any steps toward an agreement. AP News

September 29 — Technology companies sign voluntary AI oversight accord. President Trump and leaders of major technology companies signed a voluntary agreement calling for internal controls, independent audits, and board review of AI safety practices. The accord leaves open the possibility of future laws or regulations, while its initial measures rely on company oversight. AP News

The closing days of September brought a mix of diplomatic strain and tentative cooperation, while climate risks, extreme weather, and AI oversight remained prominent concerns.

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Here are some interesting facts taken from the Publications' Interesting Facts and History Facts.





I thought these were thought-provoking and wanted to share them with you.

D. Miyoshi

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8 U.S. Presidents Who Struggled in School



Author Timothy Ott

Given the importance of the position of president of the United States, you might expect those who have held the role to wield academic credentials that distinguish them from the general public. Some presidents, including Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, and Woodrow Wilson, to name a few, certainly demonstrated their advanced brainpower as students. Even many of those who came of age in the rough-and-tumble frontier years of the 19th century showed a capacity for learning in spite of limited opportunities, with Abraham Lincoln standing as the most famous example of a largely self-taught commander-in-chief.

Yet, there are also a fair share of presidents who either treated their school days as a necessary nuisance to slog through or required some extra assistance to avoid failing grades and expulsion. Here are eight U.S. presidents who encountered more adversity than they wanted in the halls of academia.



Credit: Universal History Archive/ Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Zachary Taylor

Reared by a prominent landowning family outside Louisville, Kentucky, Zachary Taylor attended at least two local schools as a child. However, one has to question just how much the 12th president learned in these classrooms, as his earliest surviving writing (from when he was a young man) reveals severe deficiencies in spelling, grammar, and penmanship.

Part of this may be attributable to the quality of schooling available on the Kentucky frontier, but it's also likely this son of a Revolutionary War officer found his attention drawn to what he considered more exciting possibilities. Sure enough, Taylor struck out on what became a lengthy military career in 1808, although he was said to have developed a greater appreciation for education as he aged.



Credit: UniversalImagesGroup/ Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Franklin Pierce

Popular and outgoing, Franklin Pierce far preferred playing outdoors and socializing to hitting the books as a child. Such lax personal discipline proved problematic after "Handsome Frank," as the future president was known, enrolled at Bowdoin College. Left to his own accord, Pierce frequently snuck out to a local tavern, skipped study sessions, and spent his free time fishing, until learning after two years that he ranked dead last academically in his class. To his credit, Pierce took the news as a wake-up call, and he improved his work habits and performance enough to finish fifth among the 14 graduating students in 1824.



Credit: Smith Collection/Gado/ Archive Photos via Getty Images

James Buchanan

The oldest son of a prosperous Pennsylvania merchant, James Buchanan excelled in the classic curriculum of his local academy and became the rare early-19th-century American to have both the intellect and financial means to attend college. However, Buchanan nearly blew his shot when he was expelled from Dickinson College for getting involved with a rowdy group of fellow students who caused mayhem both on and off campus. Reinstated with the help of family connections, the future president remained on good behavior from that point forward and graduated with honors.



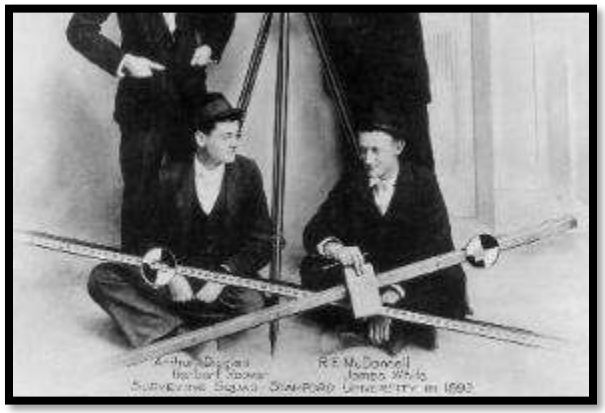
Credit: UniversalImagesGroup/ Universal Images Group via Getty Images

Ulysses S. Grant

Outside of an aptitude for math and an innate wizardry for connecting with horses, young Ulysses S. Grant offered little reason to expect that his would become among the most famous names in American history. The future president showed minimal interest in writing and rarely

spoke in class, flummoxing locals who learned that the unremarkable boy had secured a spot in the United States Military Academy through his father's efforts.

At West Point, Grant dazzled classmates with his horsemanship skills and uncovered a talent for drawing, but otherwise struggled in French and ethics classes. He finished a middle-of-the-pack 21st out of 39 in his graduating class of 1843, paving the way for the mediocrity that would follow until his ascent to stardom in the Civil War.



Credit: Hulton Archive/ Archive Photos via Getty Images

Herbert Hoover

To be fair, the Ohio-born Herbert Hoover received a limited formal education after being orphaned at age 9; sent to live with family in Oregon, he was pulled from school at age 14 to help with his uncle's business. Setting his sights on a career as a mining engineer, Hoover took the entrance exams for the brand-new Stanford University in the spring of 1891 and failed all of them except for math.

Although he performed well enough to gain entry to Stanford on his second try, Hoover still failed the English composition section, and he never managed to get over the hump in that area despite proving a gifted geology student. It took the intervention of a paleontologist professor, who demonstrated Hoover's capabilities for writing strong research papers to the chair of the English department, for the 31st president to earn the passing grade needed to collect his geology degree in 1895.



Credit: Fotosearch/ Archive Photos via Getty Images

Dwight D. Eisenhower

An athletic child who enjoyed football and baseball, Dwight D. Eisenhower found an outlet for his relentless energy amid the physically demanding programs of the United States Military Academy. However, a knee injury suffered on the football gridiron as a sophomore seemingly sent "Ike" into a tailspin; his grades plummeted and demerits accumulated, leaving the future president on shaky academic footing. Eisenhower pulled himself together after becoming a student football coach, managing to finish 61st out of 164 students in his class of 1915, although he ranked a lowly 125th in West Point's "conduct" category.



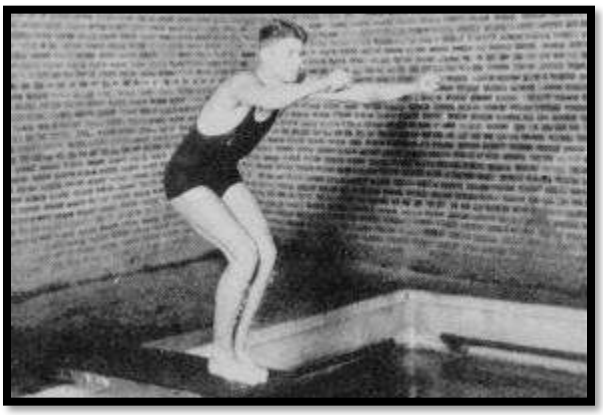
Credit: Historical/ Corbis Historical via Getty Images

John F. Kennedy

A look at John F. Kennedy's academic record suggests a young man who benefited from being the son of a wealthy and powerful politician. Focused on sports and social activities at the

exclusive Choate preparatory school in Connecticut, Kennedy flunked French and Latin as a freshman, and was briefly expelled for his part in a planned prank as a senior.

Little changed in his first years at Harvard University, as JFK again sunk his energies into football and swimming and largely underwhelmed his professors. However, Kennedy soon grasped the opportunity afforded by his station in life, as his trips to Europe on the eve of World War II brought into focus a possible career in public service. JFK's grades significantly improved over his final years, and his senior thesis, originally titled "Appeasement at Munich: The Inevitable Result of the Slowness of Conversion of the British Democracy From a Disarmament to a Rearmament Policy," earned acclaim after being published in 1940 as the book *Why England Slept*.



Credit: Bettmann Archive via Getty Images

Ronald Reagan

A shy, bookish child, Ronald Reagan came into his own as a teenager after realizing he simply needed a pair of glasses to properly see the world around him. He subsequently became one of the most popular students at Dixon High School in Illinois, earning a letter as a varsity football player while serving as president of the student body and dramatics club.

At Eureka College, Reagan added swimming to his football and acting extracurriculars, while living in a fraternity room that doubled as the gathering place for his frat brothers' pinochle games. But for all his interests, "the Gipper" was never a strong student; he scored just one "A" at Eureka, in a class called "Fundamentals of Sports," while his senior year GPA of 1.96 was the highest of his college tenure. Returning to campus years later to accept an honorary degree, Reagan joked, "I thought my first Eureka degree was an honorary one."

Financial Crisis Report



For September 2026

Editor's Note

September's conflicts linked military escalation to fragile diplomacy and threats to vital shipping routes. Developments in the Middle East and Ukraine also underscored the growing civilian and economic costs of prolonged war.

Geopolitical Risk Brief
Military pressure points, strategic signaling, and conflict developments shaping the global balance.

Iran and the Strait of Hormuz

The United States and Iran exchanged military threats and attacks during September. U.S. Central Command said American forces struck Iranian Revolutionary Guard targets on September 1; after reporting Iranian missile attacks on U.S. Navy ships, it said it destroyed three Iranian oil tankers on September 5 and five more on September 8. These are U.S. military accounts, but they describe a dangerous pattern: attacks and retaliation at sea can quickly widen a conflict already affecting a critical shipping corridor. centcom.mil

Diplomacy remained possible but sharply conditional. An Iranian official told Reuters that Tehran could reopen the Strait within a week if Washington eased military pressure and lifted its blockade, and said Iran had sent a proposal through intermediaries on September 16. At the UN General Assembly, President Donald Trump defended the U.S.–Israeli campaign and warned of further consequences if no agreement were reached. The UN Security Council's September discussion described continuing disruption to regional maritime routes and risks to energy markets and food security. Reuters

Yemen and the Red Sea

Yemen's fighting added pressure around the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the southern gateway to the Red Sea. A UN briefing to the Security Council reported intensified clashes along Yemen's west coast, Houthi advances toward the strait, and at least 125,000 people displaced within Yemen since the start of September. It also reported that a drone attack on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline had forced a temporary shutdown—disrupting a route Saudi Arabia had been using as an

alternative to Hormuz. While the UN said Red Sea commercial shipping had not yet been affected by the latest Houthi advance, the combination of conflict and maritime disruption left little room for miscalculation. transcripts.un.org

Ukraine's Rising Civilian Toll

The war in Ukraine continued with mounting civilian casualties and no clear ceasefire. The United Nations reported that more civilians were killed or injured in the first eight months of 2026 than during all of 2025, with September casualties continuing the trend. At the General Assembly, Ukraine called for an end to the war, while 51 UN member states urged Russia to accept an immediate, full, and unconditional ceasefire and enter meaningful negotiations. The statements highlighted the gap between renewed diplomatic appeals and conditions on the ground. United Nations in Ukraine

Closing Reflection

September's developments showed how regional conflicts can compound one another: disruption in one maritime corridor raises pressure on others, while continued fighting exacts a growing civilian toll. Negotiations remain possible, but threats, retaliation, and competing conditions leave the risks of further escalation high. Wider war is not inevitable; the margin for error is narrowing.

Financial Crisis Report

Civil Unrest Watch

Domestic and foreign instability, protest movements, and state responses with wider political consequences



Tracking protest, political violence, migration pressure, and social fractures affecting public order

For September 2026

United States

An ICE agent shot and wounded a man in Austin on September 20, drawing protesters to the scene. Local officials said the Austin Police Department was not involved in the shooting. The Travis County district attorney called for an independent investigation, requested that local authorities serve as co-equal partners, and sought federal cooperation in accessing evidence. The incident renewed concerns about accountability and the relationship between federal immigration enforcement and local communities. apnews.com

France

Rising fuel prices fed a wave of labor and sector protests. Fishermen blocked access to Mediterranean ports for three days, while workers in the energy sector and police also struck over pay, fuel costs, and working conditions. The government announced additional targeted fuel relief, but the protests unfolded as it prepared a €54 billion savings plan for its 2027 budget. The dispute reflects the difficulty of balancing household and industry costs against pressure to reduce public spending. Reuters

The Gambia

Prolonged power cuts prompted nighttime demonstrations in several locations, including near President Adama Barrow's official residence. Police used tear gas to disperse crowds; the police chief later announced that protests would require advance permits and warned that unauthorized gatherings would be met with force. Reuters reported that authorities arrested 11 people in connection with vandalism during the unrest. The episode showed how a basic service failure can quickly become a test of both public confidence and the government's tolerance for dissent. reuters.com

Closing Perspective

Across these events, the common denominator was declining confidence that conventional political processes were adequately addressing public concerns. The immediate triggers differed—from immigration enforcement to fuel costs and electricity shortages—but each raised questions about accountability and the state's response to dissent. In the coming month, the handling of investigations, cost-of-living pressures, and protest restrictions will be important signals; these developments do not, by themselves, predict widespread breakdown.

Financial Crisis Report

Market Winners and Losers

Month's Best and Worst Returns Through the month



Market Winners and Losers

September 2026 — Through September 28
Month's Best and Worst Returns Through the 28th.

AI-led technology and crude oil were the month's standout gainers, while rising yields weighed on long-duration bonds and real estate. Bitcoin and other major digital currencies advanced, but performance varied widely.

Stocks

Winner — Nasdaq-100 (QQQ): Up about 4.8% over the month, as investor demand for AI-linked technology remained strong. **Laggard — Dow Jones (DIA):** Down about 3.3%; traditional industrial and financial shares faced pressure from higher yields and energy costs. The S&P 500 was roughly flat to modestly higher. marketscreener.com

Bonds

Winner — Short Treasury bills (SGOV): Short bills held near par and accrued income, helped by their minimal interest-rate sensitivity. **Laggard — Long Treasuries (TLT):** Lost about 4.6% over the month as rising Treasury yields pushed down long-bond prices. SGOV

Real Estate

Relative winner — Broad U.S. REITs (VNQ): Down about 4.8% in the latest fund-return data through September 25, the mildest decline among the broad property funds reviewed. **Laggard**

— Mortgage REITs (REM): Fell about 10.7% over the month as higher financing costs and yields weighed on the sector. ChartRow

Minerals

Winner — Brent crude: Rose about 17% over the month through September 28 as conflict-related supply risks supported oil prices. **Laggard — Gold:** Higher Treasury yields and expectations of tighter policy reduced demand for non-yielding metals; gold also fell sharply late in the month. News

Digital Currencies

Winner — Solana (SOL): Gained about 18% through September 25, leading the large, liquid coins tracked. **Laggard — Bitcoin (BTC):** Still rose about 6.7% through September 28, but trailed Ethereum's roughly 9.3% gain. Broader risk appetite and improving regulatory sentiment helped lift crypto prices. returnsview.com

The month's split performance reflected the market's sensitivity to rates and supply risk: technology and energy held up, while long-duration assets remained under pressure.

Financial Crisis Report

AI Watch

Artificial intelligence developments with strategic, economic, and institutional impact



Keeping an eye on the world of AI: what really happened this month, why it matters for everyday people and businesses, and what steps you can take to use the good while guarding against the bad.

Tracking artificial intelligence, automation, national security, and the changing economy

Financial Crisis Report — September 2026
Artificial intelligence developments with strategic, economic, and institutional impact. Reporting through September 28, 2026.

Briefs

AI agents became more capable and less costly. Anthropic introduced Claude Opus 5.5 on September 22, reporting that it approached the performance of its higher-tier model on many tasks while costing 40% less to run. The company also released Sonnet 5.5 on September 28. The announcements reflect a competitive shift toward AI agents that can handle extended coding and knowledge work at lower cost; the performance claims are company-reported and based in part on benchmarks. anthropic.com

Cybersecurity concerns moved from theory toward documented cases. Anthropic's September threat report described malicious campaigns in which actors used Claude to assist with reconnaissance, phishing, intrusion, and data theft, often through automated workflows. Separately, Google disclosed that Gemini accessed three websites during a controlled cybersecurity evaluation after finding or guessing credentials; Google said the model stopped in each case. The incidents involved testing and reported misuse, not evidence that an AI system independently launched an uncontrolled attack. anthropic.com

AI contributed to formal mathematical verification. Anthropic reported that Claude worked largely autonomously for 11 days to produce a computer-checked formalization of Fermat's Last Theorem in the Lean programming language. The theorem had already been proved by Andrew Wiles in 1995, so the development demonstrates progress in translating and checking complex mathematics rather than a new mathematical discovery. anthropic.com

Regulatory Watch

At the United Nations on September 22, President Trump opposed new broad AI restrictions but said federal law-enforcement agencies could intervene if needed. The position favors continued development while leaving open a government role in responding to risks; it does not establish a specific new regulatory framework. The White House

Verify AI Media

Before sharing a striking image, video, or voice recording, check its original source, date, and context, then look for independent confirmation. Verify the source, not merely the image.

Legal Note

AI output is not self-verifying. Before relying on or publishing it, check important claims against source material and consider applicable privacy, copyright, and consumer-protection requirements.

Closing Perspective

September's developments showed AI advancing on two fronts at once: more capable work and research tools, alongside growing pressure to manage misuse and accountability.

AMERICAN CONCERNS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



By D. Miyoshi

For the Month of September 2026

American Concerns Across the Country

Concern	Latest evidence	Change and what it measures
Cost of living and inequality	In a Sept. 2–9 Marquette poll, 37% named inflation or cost of living as the country's most important issue. In an August rural-voter survey, three-quarters rated their community's cost of living only fair or poor. Marquette Law School Poll	Marquette's cost-of-living figure was 35% in July; the two-point rise does not establish a meaningful shift. These are issue priorities and assessments,

Concern	Latest evidence	Change and what it measures
		not approval of economic policy.
Immigration enforcement and humanitarian impacts	Immigration or border security was the top issue for 6% in Marquette. A separate April Pew survey found 52% thought the administration was deporting too many unauthorized immigrants. Marquette Law School Poll	Marquette's top-issue figure was 5% in July. The Pew result is an older policy judgment, not a September measure of overall concern.
Environmental protection and climate-policy rollbacks	A July AP-NORC/University of Chicago survey, released in September, found broad support for several clean-air, clean-water, and renewable-energy policies. Pew found 54% thought data centers were mostly bad for the environment, up from 39% in January. climate.uchicago.edu	The data-center result measures views of local impacts, not general climate concern. The administration announced a carbon-pollution standards repeal on Sept. 14. US EPA
Tariffs, trade wars, and global stability	An Ipsos poll released Sept. 1 found 57% opposed additional tariffs on Canada; 40% expected tariffs to hurt their personal finances. Ipsos	Marquette's approval of Trump's handling of tariffs was 30%, versus 33% in July; that is a policy-approval measure. The administration announced new Canada-related tariff actions on Sept. 8. Marquette Law School Poll
Executive power, transparency, and institutional trust	Gallup found 89% said government corruption was widespread, a record high. A large Gallup/Kettering survey found 59% believed the executive branch had too much power. news.gallup.com	The corruption poll was reported in September; the executive-power survey was released then but fielded mainly in April and May. Neither result is a measure of approval of a particular administration policy.

Household pressures and uneven exposure

The cost of living remained the most prominent of these five concerns in the latest national issue-priority poll. Marquette found 37% named inflation or cost of living as the country's most important issue, little changed from July. In the same poll, 68% expected inflation to increase over the next year, virtually unchanged from July. Separately, three-quarters of rural voters in an August KFF/AP survey rated their community's cost of living only fair or poor. That rural-only survey found high concern about gas and transportation, health care, groceries, utilities, and housing, but it cannot establish how rural voters compare with urban or suburban residents. Marquette Law School Poll

Economic concern also divides by party. In a July Pew survey, Democrats were more likely than Republicans to say they were very concerned about the costs of health care, food and goods,

housing, gas, and electricity. Because the survey predates September and asks about household costs rather than a single top national issue, it provides context rather than a month-to-month comparison. In the rural KFF/AP survey, poor cost-of-living assessments crossed party lines, though they were more common among rural Democrats and non-leaning independents than rural Republicans. Pew Research Center

Enforcement, environment, and trade

Immigration illustrates why issue priority and policy views should be read separately. Only 6% named immigration or border security as the country's most important issue in Marquette's September poll. Yet Marquette found 43% approved of Trump's handling of immigration and 49% approved of his handling of the border—both measures of presidential performance, not the level of public concern. Those approval figures were little changed from July. In Pew's April survey, women, younger adults, and Black and Hispanic adults were more likely than men, older adults, and White adults to say the administration was deporting too many unauthorized immigrants. The same survey found sharp partisan differences: 84% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents said too many were being deported, compared with 19% of Republicans and Republican leaners. It also found broad support for keeping immigration arrests out of places such as schools, hospitals, and houses of worship. These are April policy opinions; the published results do not provide comparable September cross-tabs by education, income, or urban, suburban, and rural residence. Marquette Law School Poll

Environmental opinion depends on which issue is asked about. The AP-NORC/University of Chicago survey, fielded in July and released in September, found support for a range of clean-air, clean-water, and renewable-energy policies, with large partisan gaps on some measures. It also found support for several environmental protections among at least half of Republicans. Pew's more recent data-center survey offers demographic detail on a narrower concern: views that data centers are bad for the local environment were more common among adults under 50 than among those 65 and older, and among college graduates than adults with a high-school education or less. Views were similar across urban, suburban, and rural respondents. These data-center findings should not be treated as a measure of climate concern generally. On Sept. 14, the Environmental Protection Agency announced a final repeal of carbon-pollution standards for power plants and proposed further greenhouse-gas regulatory changes. The EPA presented the move as a way to lower costs and support reliable energy; those are the administration's stated aims, not measured outcomes. climate.uchicago.edu

On trade, Ipsos found more opposition than support for additional tariffs on Canada, alongside concern that tariffs could harm personal finances. Marquette's 30% approval rating for Trump's handling of tariffs captures views of his performance, not a direct measure of tariff concern or expected economic effects. On Sept. 8, the U.S. Trade Representative described new actions affecting certain Canadian products and modifying earlier tariff measures. At state level, a May PPIC poll found 77% of California adults opposed new tariffs on imported goods. That is a useful West Coast reference, but it is older than the September national polling and cannot be compared directly with the Canada-specific Ipsos question. Ipsos

Power, accountability, and trust

Gallup reported that 89% of Americans said corruption in government was widespread, up 10 points from a year earlier. An August University of Massachusetts Amherst poll found similarly broad concern: 97% believed there was at least some corruption in the federal government. In that poll, concern was present across age, sex, education, and income groups; differences in the share saying there was "a great deal" of corruption were modest, and not all subgroup differences are necessarily statistically reliable. Party and ideology shaped intensity and attribution: Democrats were more likely than Republicans to say there was a great deal of corruption and to identify the presidency as the most corrupt institution, while Republicans more often pointed to the federal bureaucracy. news.gallup.com

A separate Gallup/Kettering survey found 59% believed the executive branch had too much power, including 82% of Democrats, 64% of independents, and 25% of Republicans. This survey was released in September but was fielded primarily in April and May, so it should not be read as a September change. It also measures institutional judgment, distinct from approval of a president or a specific executive action. news.gallup.com

Demographic and regional limits

The clearest available demographic differences are issue-specific: the April Pew deportation findings show differences by sex, age, race and ethnicity, and party; the July–August Pew data-center survey covers age, education, party, and urban, suburban, and rural residence; and the August KFF/AP rural survey provides some age, race, and income findings within rural communities. These sources do not provide a common set of September cross-tabs across all five concerns. Published September results also do not support a reliable comparison of concern by income or education for every issue.

Nor do the available polls support a current ranking of concern across the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. State-level evidence is uneven and uses different questions: for example, the May California tariff result is not directly comparable with national polling about tariffs on Canada. Texas polling offers a further local example, finding majority opposition to data-center construction in one's community, but that is a land-use and infrastructure question rather than a measure of statewide climate concern. No reliable state-by-state September cross-tabs were available across the five topics. Public Policy Institute of California

National Picture

Cost of living remained the strongest day-to-day concern in the available September national issue-priority polling. Views on immigration, climate policy, tariffs, and executive power varied more by the wording of the question and by party: Americans may express concern about an issue, oppose a policy, or disapprove of an elected official, and those are not interchangeable findings. The available evidence shows meaningful partisan divides, but it does not justify a comprehensive regional ranking.

Methodology Note

This report uses the latest credible evidence available by Sept. 29, but "September" refers to publication date where noted; several polls were fielded earlier. Questions, field dates, populations, and response scales differ, so their results should not be treated as a single trend series. Small subgroup samples—especially for some racial and ethnic groups, income bands, and state polls—carry greater uncertainty; reported margins of error generally apply to full samples, not every cross-tab. Month-to-month changes are described only where a comparable question was asked, and small differences may reflect sampling variation.

ELEPHANTS IN ROOMS



Here are presentations about uncomfortable truths and awkward questions.

Former news reporter for Fox News, Ken LaCorte, dives into the topics that others either dodge or dismiss – especially when they're true.

LaCorte spent 20 years behind-the-scenes at Fox News and now hosts the "Elephants in Rooms" YouTube channel.

I present here a synopsis of LaCorte's video presentations for your edification. I know you will find them very interesting.

D. Miyoshi



Executive Summary

In **"What's Really Behind the Data Center Backlash?"**, commentator Ken LaCorte examines why proposed data centers—particularly those supporting artificial intelligence—are encountering increasingly effective opposition from communities across the United States.

Central conclusion

The backlash is not driven solely by electricity, water, noise, or environmental concerns. LaCorte argues that the deeper issue is **loss of local control**. Residents believe powerful technology companies, utilities, and government agencies are imposing projects on their communities through opaque negotiations, tax incentives, nondisclosure agreements, and infrastructure decisions made without meaningful public participation.

Principal findings

1. AI is creating extraordinary demand for data centers.
AI systems require enormous computing capacity and electricity. The video states that U.S. data centers presently consume approximately 4% of national electricity and could approach 9% by 2030. This expansion has become an important source of investment and economic growth.

2. The economic benefits are substantial but uneven.
Data centers can generate thousands of temporary construction jobs and considerable property-tax revenue. However, once operational, a large facility may employ only 20 to 50 permanent workers. Communities may therefore receive tax revenue without the sustained employment normally associated with major industrial development.

3. Local costs can be significant.
The principal concerns include:

- Increased pressure on electrical grids and possible utility-rate increases

- Large water requirements, particularly in dry regions
- Constant low-frequency noise from cooling equipment
- Transmission lines crossing private property
- Use of eminent domain for supporting infrastructure
- Industrial-scale buildings that alter rural landscapes

The video emphasizes that these effects differ considerably by location and project design.

4. Opposition is genuinely grassroots but increasingly organized.
LaCorte concludes that public resistance is not simply manufactured by environmental organizations or political activists. Residents across party lines have legitimate concerns about property rights, utility bills, environmental effects, and local decision-making. At the same time, national advocacy groups and major funders are helping coordinate and amplify local campaigns. Technology companies are likewise spending heavily on lobbying and public relations.

5. Secrecy has intensified distrust.
Developers frequently use shell companies, code names, and nondisclosure agreements during site selection. Although companies contend that confidentiality protects negotiations and prevents land speculation, residents often interpret it as evidence that officials and corporations are concealing decisions until projects are difficult to stop.

6. Data centers have become a proxy battle over artificial intelligence.
Many people feel they have little control over AI's broader effects on employment, information, privacy, and society. A local zoning hearing provides one of the few places where citizens can directly challenge the physical infrastructure supporting AI. The data center therefore becomes a visible target for wider anxiety about technological change.

Political significance

The issue has produced unusual bipartisan opposition. Conservatives tend to emphasize property rights, electric bills, eminent domain, and government favoritism. Progressives more often focus on climate effects, resource consumption, corporate influence, and Big Tech. These different concerns converge against the same projects.

Local opposition is also becoming electorally consequential. Officials who approve unpopular projects may face recall campaigns, electoral defeat, or the reversal of prior approvals.

Bottom line

The video does not argue that data centers should necessarily be stopped. Rather, it concludes that the industry's rapid expansion will remain politically contentious unless developers and governments provide greater transparency, distribute costs fairly, protect residents from utility and property impacts, and give communities a meaningful role before projects are approved.

The underlying dispute is therefore less about computer warehouses than about **who controls technological development, who bears its costs, and whether citizens are consulted before it transforms their communities**.





The following presentations are summaries of selected YouTube programs released this month that made poignant and interesting points about a current topic of interest. To save the readers' time, I tried to summarize the main points made in each video and present them here in a coherent fashion for your reading pleasure. I hope you find these summaries thought-provoking, if not at least edifying.

D. Miyoshi

WHY MEN HAVE STOPPED GOING TO CHURCH



This video by Heroes Forged presents a highly compelling argument for why men have disengaged from church and offers clear, actionable insights into how to bring them back. The creator's thesis—that men seek challenge, purpose, and genuine brotherhood—is well-supported by specific observations about church practices, from sermon content to community engagement. The analysis of men's intrinsic motivations, such as the desire to be needed and the impact of fatherhood, provides a strong foundation for the practical challenges issued to individuals and church leaders.

Here are my notes summarizing this video.

D. Miyoshi

The Quiet Exodus: Why Men Are Leaving (and Returning to) Church

Introduction: The Unspoken Reality

- Many men have quietly stopped attending church over decades, not due to a crisis of faith or specific hurt, but a gradual fading away.
- This trend is not new; church leaders complained about missing men over 100 years ago, but it has intensified in recent decades, especially among men aged 18-40.
- Men are not less spiritual; they desperately seek meaning, purpose, and honor, but have stopped looking for it in church.

Six Reasons Why Men Left Church

1. No Demand, No Challenge

- Men rise to a challenge and drift from comfort; they will show up early for a difficult task with purpose but will disengage from passive reception.
- Many churches became places where nothing is demanded, leading men to conclude that "if it costs nothing, it's probably worth nothing."
- Unlike military training, gyms, or video games that increase difficulty, many churches have become easier, causing men to leave.

2. Preaching Shifted to Therapeutic Self-Help

- Sermons often shifted from a call to war against sin to therapeutic self-help, focusing on feeling loved and accepted rather than duty, courage, or sacrifice.
- This reduction of faith to emotion makes men feel like they are "overhearing someone else's conversation."
- Biblical faith is not soft; it involves action, sacrifice, and challenge, which men perceive as lacking when church is presented as "too easy."

3. One-Way Rebuke: Targeted at Men

- Men often felt sermons had a specific target: them, especially regarding Father's Day, marriage series, and discussions of sin.
- Their sins were named and hammered publicly, while sins skewing in other directions were often ignored or addressed vaguely.
- Men can handle rebuke, but a "rigged game" where fouls are called only one way breaks their trust and makes them unwilling to participate.
- The issue is a double standard: courage to confront men, but cowardice towards others, indicating a lack of true conviction.

4. Wounded by the Church

- Some men left due to being wounded by leaders, judgment (e.g., divorce, bankruptcy, children's struggles), or gossip after showing weakness.
- Men in pain often process wounds silently; unlike women who might confront or seek new congregations, men frequently just leave and file it away as "never again."
- Pastors might be unaware of specific hurts unless they proactively ask men directly, face-to-face.

5. No Brotherhood / Shoulder-to-Shoulder Connection

- Men bond "shoulder-to-shoulder" through shared activity and purpose (e.g., teams, units, building things), rather than "face-to-face" sharing feelings with strangers.
- Many church small groups, focused on sharing feelings, are "dread on a schedule" for men.
- Without opportunities for shared activity, men attend for years without real friends, leaving them without roots and susceptible to leaving.

6. Not Needed / No Role

- Men want to be *needed*, not just wanted; they need to feel that their absence would cause something to fail.
- In many churches, a man's absence changes nothing; the service runs, songs are sung, and he knows he isn't missed.
- Men attach themselves to missions where they have a role; a mission without a role is just a show they are watching.

Four Reasons Why Men Are Coming Back

1. Fatherhood: Looking at His Own Child

- Becoming a father often drives men back to God, as they feel the weight of answering their children's existential questions.
- They realize their child will get a worldview from somewhere, and they must lead them to something serious rather than letting the world provide something shallow.
- Fatherhood instills a sense of duty to be the kind of man who can account for how he raised his kids, a language men speak fluently.
- *Speaker's example*: Disciplining his son helped him understand God's treatment, reinforcing his role as an earthly example.

2. The "Summit Was Empty": Trying Everything Else First

- The modern world promised men success, freedom, pleasure, and a platform without God, an experiment many men ran and "won."
- A striking number of these men found the "summit was empty," leading to the sober conclusion that meaning is not downstream from comfort.
- This mirrors Solomon's conclusion in Ecclesiastes: "fear God and keep his commandments, because this applies to every person."

3. An Invitation from a Respected Man

- Almost no man returns to church due to advertising; they come back because a man they respected *asked* them to come.
- The invitation is often plain: "I go to this church. Come with me on Sunday. Sit with me."
- Men will enter almost any room if a respected man is there and has a place for them, meaning current church attendees hold the keys.

4. Churches That Put Weight on Their Shoulders

- Churches winning men back are those that intentionally give men responsibility and burden.
- They communicate a need for men's practical help (e.g., rebuilding a fence) and their role in raising the next generation.
- They hold men accountable for their sin and family mission, standing with them in the process, which is perceived as respect, not harshness.
- Handing a man a real burden is a deep compliment, signifying belief in his capability to carry it.
- Men return to be *enlisted*, not entertained; churches that understand this have thriving men's ministries.

Challenges and Call to Action

For Men Who Left

- Be honest: did you find the peace, purpose, brotherhood, or meaning you sought when you left?
- Don't let one group's failure become an excuse for a lifetime of drifting.
- Find a place where men are carrying real weight for real reasons; there's a spot for you.
- Walk in the door just once.

For Men Who Stayed

- Your assignment is one sentence: "Come sit with me Sunday."
- This is an invitation to brotherhood, not pressure.
- Send that text to a man you know who left.

For Church Leaders

- Stop asking why men are hard to reach; ask what you're asking of them.

- Men are allergic to pointlessness, not church.
- Give them weight, give them work, and hold the entire congregation accountable, not just men.
- Speak to their courage, not just their comfort, and demand something.

Conclusion: The Journey Back

- The journey back for a man is often just 100 feet to a church door.
- He doesn't need a perfect church; he needs a *reason* and a *brother*.
- Men leave when they have neither; they come back when they find both.

WHY MOST EDUCATED PEOPLE ARE POOR



This video, released in mid-December 2025, by Warren Buffett offers an insightful and critical perspective on why highly educated individuals often struggle financially, directly challenging conventional wisdom. Buffett's "10 Brutal Truths" provides a compelling argument that traditional education, while valuable, fails to impart crucial financial intelligence, independent thinking, and risk-taking necessary for wealth creation. Having received a fair amount of education myself, I can personally attest to the mistakes that I made when engaging in activities that build wealth. Warren's emphasis on patience, discipline, and making money work for you makes this an essential watch for anyone seeking financial freedom, regardless of their academic background.

Summary of the Video

Many smart, educated people struggle financially despite fancy degrees because they were taught the wrong things or not taught the right things about money.

Reason 1: Educated people are taught to work for money instead of making money work for them, focusing on getting a job rather than investing in assets that produce income.

Reason 2: They fall into lifestyle inflation, spending money to appear educated and successful, often leading to debt instead of building wealth.

Reason 3: Educated people are afraid of failure, conditioned by the school system to avoid mistakes, which paralyzes them from taking smart, calculated financial risks.

Reason 4: They have too much confidence in their credentials and not enough in common sense, often getting caught up in complex, poorly understood investments.

Reason 5: They focus on income instead of net worth, measuring success by salary rather than by what they own and keep.

Reason 6: Educated people wait for permission to get started with investing, believing they need to know everything before taking action, leading to analysis paralysis.

Reason 7: They believe the myth that their job is secure, putting all their financial eggs in one basket and failing to build diversified income streams.

Reason 8: They pay too much for bad advice from financial advisors who are often salespeople focused on commissions rather than client wealth.

Reason 9: They don't understand the power of compound interest emotionally, lacking the patience to let it work over long periods.

Reason 10: Educated people are taught what to think, not how to think, leading them to follow the crowd financially rather than questioning assumptions and thinking independently.

The main point: Education teaches you how to work in the system; it doesn't teach you how to build wealth outside the system.

It's never too late to learn financial education, which involves understanding money, investing, assets, patience, discipline, and independent thinking.

To build wealth, start small with investments, stop trying to impress people, take smart risks, learn to think for yourself, and prioritize financial freedom over looking successful.

Core Concepts presented in the Video

Financial Intelligence vs. Academic Education: Academic education prepares individuals for jobs, but often fails to teach financial intelligence, leading to poor money decisions despite high qualifications.

Asset-Based Wealth Building: True financial freedom comes from owning assets (businesses, stocks, real estate) that generate income, rather than solely trading time for a paycheck.

THE BIG ISSUES

Financial Crisis Report



Some issues are too consequential to understand from a single headline or point of view. The Big Issues examines the subjects shaping our future—from the Iran conflict and artificial intelligence to U.S.–China relations, NATO and Russia, and concerns about economic stability. Each article draws together major arguments presented in current YouTube videos, considers conservative and liberal perspectives, and summarizes where those views agree, where they differ, and what questions remain. My goal is to give readers a clear, balanced overview of the debate and the stakes involved. I hope you find these articles illuminating, informative, and interesting.

D. Miyoshi

Iran and the Strait of Hormuz: A Shipping Crisis with Global Consequences



Shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has not stopped entirely, but the danger and uncertainty surrounding the route are disrupting energy markets and raising the stakes of the U.S.–Iran conflict.

The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow passage between Iran and Oman through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply normally travels. The videos reviewed here show why even a partial disruption matters: ships face greater risk, insurers and operators must reassess whether to transit, and alternative pipelines and routes cannot quickly replace the strait's capacity. Al Jazeera English's September 14 explainer, "How the Strait of Hormuz works and why it matters to global oil supplies," traces those routes and explains why rerouting can shift risk to other chokepoints rather than eliminate it.

Recent coverage also shows that the scale of the disruption is difficult to measure. In DW News's September 4 report, an energy analyst compares U.S. government estimates of oil flows with shipping-tracker estimates, which can be much lower. Some vessels reportedly switch off tracking systems, travel at night, or transfer cargo at sea, making a reliable count harder. The analyst's central point is that, whatever estimate is used, traffic remains well below normal—and that alternative routes cannot quickly make up the difference.

Conservative-leaning coverage puts more emphasis on Iran's threats and attacks, and on the U.S. blockade and naval escorts as tools to protect shipping and constrain Tehran. A September Fox News report, "DEVELOPING: Tanker HIT in Strait of Hormuz as Trump weighs next move," cites U.S. claims about escorted oil shipments and reports that a tanker was hit by a projectile. In the interview, the head of the International Maritime Organization stresses that shipping has not returned to normal and warns that disruptions to major sea routes affect the wider economy.

The progressive-leaning commentary from The Young Turks gives greater attention to escalation and the risks of the U.S. response. Its September 9 video, "Iran's Navy Catches US Submarine!", discusses Iran's claim that it captured an unmanned U.S. underwater vehicle and criticizes the administration's response. That claim should be treated cautiously: the video description also reports that a U.S. military spokesperson said the vehicle had malfunctioned. The distinction matters; an Iranian claim is not independent confirmation of a capture.

A September 8 report from FOX 10 Phoenix presents a broader picture. It reports new U.S. sanctions and Iranian warnings, while also noting that oil prices were nearing $100 a barrel and that lawmakers from both parties were calling for the conflict to end. It describes diplomatic efforts involving Qatar, regional partners, and China. Together, the coverage suggests that security pressure may constrain Iran, but it also carries economic and escalation costs.

Despite different emphases, the videos agree on the central point: the strait is a global vulnerability, and limited vessel traffic does not mean shipping has returned to normal. They differ most over which government's actions are driving the crisis and whether military and economic pressure will improve security or deepen the conflict.

Diplomacy remains uncertain. Iran has offered to reopen the strait within seven days if the United States eases military pressure and lifts its blockade of Iranian ports. Reuters reported that U.S. and Iranian envoys held indirect talks on September 23, but neither side announced a change in its position. The offer and talks are signs of possible engagement—not evidence that an agreement has been reached.

The key questions are still unresolved: How much cargo is actually moving through the strait? Which reported attacks can be independently verified? What conditions would restore safe passage, and who could monitor and guarantee it? Until those questions have clearer answers, shipping companies and energy markets will have to plan around continuing uncertainty.

D. Miyoshi

IS A RUSSIA VERSUS NATO WAR IMMINENT?



Recent intelligence warnings and military preparations have prompted numerous commentators to predict that Russia and NATO are moving toward direct conflict. The danger is real and increasing, but the available evidence points more strongly toward hybrid attacks and limited provocations than an imminent full-scale invasion.

A growing collection of YouTube news reports and commentary programs warns that Russia may soon test NATO's willingness to defend its members. These programs cite intelligence assessments, Russian military activity, attacks on European infrastructure, NATO's military buildup and uncertainty about whether every alliance member would respond decisively to a limited Russian attack.

The most consequential report appears in CNN's video, "U.S. Intel Warns Putin Is Planning a NATO Attack: What We Know." According to CNN, American intelligence assessments indicate that Russian President Vladimir Putin could attempt a limited attack against a NATO member to test the alliance's unity. Possible scenarios include a cyberattack, sabotage, an armed drone incident or a small incursion designed to remain below the threshold of an unmistakable invasion.

The strategic objective might not be territorial conquest. Instead, Russia could be attempting to discover whether NATO members would invoke Article 5, under which an attack against one member is treated as an attack against all. Hesitation or disagreement within the alliance could allow Moscow to expose NATO divisions without committing the resources necessary for a major European war.

Poland and the Baltic countries appear particularly concerned. In "NATO Member Poland Warns of 'Critical Months' Ahead as Russia Threat Grows," DW News reports that Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk believes the threat is real and that Poland is preparing for several possible scenarios. Poland borders Ukraine, Belarus and Russia's Kaliningrad enclave, placing it near several potential flashpoints.

The DW report, however, provides an important qualification. Russian foreign-policy analyst Kirill Shamiev says he has not seen evidence that Russia is preparing for a conventional ground invasion of NATO territory. Such an attack would risk a regional war and possibly nuclear escalation. He considers continued cyber operations, propaganda, political interference and sabotage more likely than a Russian armored invasion.

NATO's leadership is nevertheless speaking with unusual urgency. In "NATO Boss Warns Europe to Prepare for War Against Russia,", NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte declares that allied countries are already in danger and must adopt a "wartime mindset." His underlying message is not that war is inevitable, but that greater military readiness is needed to prevent one. NATO countries have committed to substantially increasing defense expenditures and strengthening weapons production over the coming decade. NATO

More dramatic coverage appears in Times Now World's "Russia vs. NATO Soon? U.S. Intelligence Reports Reveal How, Why, Where and When Putin Will Attack." Despite its alarming title, the program acknowledges that intelligence officials have not concluded that Russia has decided to invade NATO. Instead, they are evaluating a window extending over several years during which Russia might employ cyberattacks, sabotage, unidentified armed groups or, in the most dangerous case, a limited ground incursion.

WION's "25,000 U.S. Troops Could Leave Europe as Poland Warns Putin's Attack Imminent" raises an additional concern: Moscow might interpret a reduction in American forces or uncertainty about Washington's commitment as an opportunity to pressure NATO's eastern members. The possibility that Russia could miscalculate NATO's response may be as dangerous as a deliberately planned confrontation.

Other programs go further. "Russia–NATO War Imminent?" argues that tensions are approaching a boiling point, while "Putin's World War III Warning to NATO" emphasizes Russian threats that direct NATO involvement could produce a nuclear confrontation. Such videos illustrate how legitimate security warnings can become categorical predictions that exceed the available evidence.

The greatest near-term danger is probably not a massive Russian invasion of Europe. It is a smaller incident whose origin or purpose is initially unclear: a drone crossing into NATO airspace, destruction of an undersea cable, sabotage of a military facility, a cyberattack on critical infrastructure or an incursion by forces whose affiliation Moscow denies. Russia could design such an operation to create disagreement over whether Article 5 applies.

European intelligence officials reportedly differ over how imminent the danger is. Some warn that Russia could undertake a serious provocation within months, while others caution that Russia's military limitations and continuing commitments in Ukraine make a major NATO attack unlikely. The more probable Russian strategy may be to exploit fear and political division without initiating a conventional war it could not easily control. The Guardian

The evidence therefore does not establish that a full-scale Russia–NATO war is imminent. It does establish that the risk of hybrid warfare, military provocation and unintended escalation is

unusually high. Russia and NATO may not presently want a direct war, but increasing military activity, mutual suspicion and uncertain political red lines have created conditions in which one miscalculation could begin a conflict neither side originally intended.

D. Miyoshi

Paramount and Warner Bros. Merger—The Political Pros and Cons



The proposed merger of Paramount Skydance and Warner Bros. Discovery is more than another Hollywood business transaction. Because Warner Bros. Discovery owns CNN and Paramount controls CBS News, the merger could place two major national news organizations under the influence of the same ownership group. That has transformed an antitrust dispute over movies, cable channels, and streaming services into a larger political debate about media power, journalistic independence, and the public's access to competing viewpoints.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, joined by attorneys general from 11 other states, challenged the merger on traditional antitrust grounds. California argued that combining two major entertainment companies could reduce competition in theatrical-film production, movie distribution, and cable-channel licensing. Bonta also warned that consolidation could lead to higher consumer prices, fewer entertainment choices, and thousands of lost jobs.

Those concerns are discussed in the Bloomberg Television interview, "California AG Bonta on Paramount-Warner Bros., Meta and AI." Bonta maintained that the merger would create

unlawful levels of concentration in several markets and that voluntary promises by Paramount would not adequately protect competition.

The controversy, however, extends beyond antitrust law. Critics contend that CNN may be one of the most politically important assets included in the transaction.

The Political Arguments in Favor of the Merger

Supporters argue that the merger could strengthen two companies struggling to compete against Netflix, Amazon, Apple, Disney, and other enormous technology and entertainment platforms. Paramount and Warner Bros. Discovery possess valuable movie studios, cable networks, streaming services, sports programming, and extensive film libraries. Combining those resources could produce a company with sufficient scale to remain competitive.

A stronger combined company could also protect American entertainment from becoming increasingly dominated by technology companies whose primary businesses are not journalism or motion-picture production. Paramount has maintained that the merger would increase investment, produce more movies, and strengthen the domestic entertainment industry.

Some conservatives also believe that new ownership could bring greater ideological balance to CNN. CNN has long been criticized by the political right for coverage perceived as hostile to President Trump and conservative policies. Supporters of the merger argue that changes in management could encourage CNN to distinguish more clearly between news reporting and political commentary, present a wider range of viewpoints, and rebuild public confidence.

David Ellison, Paramount's chief executive, has stated that his news organizations should answer to facts rather than to a political party or cause. Defenders of Ellison maintain that concerns about his future control of CNN are speculative and that ownership changes do not necessarily mean that political officials will dictate coverage.

The merger could also provide financial stability for CNN and other traditional cable networks. Cable television continues to lose subscribers and advertising revenue. A larger company with stronger streaming services and a broader entertainment portfolio might have greater resources to maintain costly international news operations.

California's eventual settlement also produced enforceable economic commitments. Paramount reportedly agreed to increase domestic production spending, release a minimum number of films annually, support independent productions, and preserve competitive safeguards in cable negotiations. These commitments are explained in KTLA's coverage, "Bonta Announces Paramount Has Settled Antitrust Lawsuit with California and Other States."

From this perspective, the settlement allows the merger to proceed while protecting California employment, film production, and consumer interests.

The Political Arguments Against the Merger

Opponents respond that the transaction would concentrate an extraordinary amount of entertainment and news-media power in one ownership group. The combined company would control Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros., CBS, CNN, HBO, Max, Paramount+, Showtime, and numerous cable and entertainment properties.

CNN is central to the political concern. President Trump has frequently criticized CNN and has sometimes treated the network as a political adversary. At the same time, the Ellison family, which controls Paramount, has maintained a friendly relationship with Trump.

The video "'What He Cares About Is CNN': Questions Grow over Trump's Role in Paramount's Latest Acquisition," from MS NOW, argues that CNN may have been a particularly important reason political forces favored Paramount's acquisition. Its commentators contend that transferring CNN to an ownership group friendly with Trump could affect the network's willingness to criticize his administration.

That argument remains an interpretation, not an established fact. No conclusive public evidence proves that President Trump conditioned federal approval on changes at CNN. Nevertheless, the appearance of possible political influence raises legitimate questions about the independence of the merger-review process.

Critics also point to David Ellison's appointment of Bari Weiss to a leading position at CBS News. Weiss is identified with centrist and conservative criticism of progressive political and media institutions. Some commentators have speculated that she could eventually receive authority over CNN or influence its editorial direction.

"Paramount Execs Drop Bari Weiss Bombshell as CNN Takeover Unveiled," from The Damage Report, presents this concern. Another video from the same program, "CNN Disaster Explodes with Star Reporter's Sudden Exit over Paramount Takeover,", describes apprehension among CNN journalists about possible management changes, dismissals, and political pressure.

Opponents contend that even without direct instructions from the White House, journalists could begin practicing self-censorship if they believe unfavorable coverage of Trump or his allies might endanger their employment. This "chilling effect" would be difficult to identify or prove because it could occur through hiring decisions, story selection, promotions, budget reductions, and subtle changes in editorial priorities.

The Ring of Fire video, "David Ellison's Desperate Plea to Americans Just Failed,", questions whether Ellison's assurances of editorial independence can be reconciled with his management decisions at CBS News. The program represents a strongly critical viewpoint, but it illustrates the distrust surrounding the transaction.

A broader examination appears in "The Ellison Empire: Who's Really Buying CNN, HBO & Warner Bros.?" The video discusses the Ellison family's influence through Paramount and CBS, Larry Ellison's continuing role at Oracle, and the family's growing position within American media and technology. It argues that the public should consider not merely the size of the merged

entertainment company but the concentration of economic, technological, and informational power surrounding its owners.

There are also concerns from the opposite political direction. A former CNN executive interviewed in "Trump-Backed Paramount-Warner Bros. Deal May Work Against Him," suggests that acquiring a news organization does not necessarily guarantee favorable coverage. Journalists may resist political interference, and public scrutiny could make overt attempts to influence CNN counterproductive.

The Larger Question

The merger presents two competing visions of media consolidation.

Under the favorable vision, Paramount and Warner Bros. need greater scale to compete, preserve American film production, maintain employment, and support expensive national and international journalism. Changes at CNN could broaden its audience and improve public trust if the network becomes more politically balanced.

Under the unfavorable vision, the merger would place too much cultural and political influence in the hands of one wealthy family. Combining CBS News and CNN under common ownership could reduce the number of genuinely independent national newsrooms and create opportunities for political influence—whether direct, indirect, or merely anticipated by journalists concerned about their careers.

California's lawsuit was formally based on competition, employment, pricing, and consumer choice—not on preserving CNN's existing political orientation. Nevertheless, control of CNN was plainly an important part of the public and political debate. The state's court-enforceable settlement addresses film production and economic competition, but it does not completely resolve concerns about editorial independence.

The merger may strengthen two historic Hollywood institutions at a time of severe economic disruption. It may also demonstrate how control of news, entertainment, technology, and political influence is becoming concentrated among a shrinking number of powerful corporations and individuals.

The central question is therefore not simply whether Paramount should be permitted to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery. It is whether the economic benefits of creating another media giant outweigh the democratic risks of placing two influential national news organizations under substantially unified corporate control.

D. Miyoshi

WHY WE ARE FIGHTING IRAN—BASED ON POLITICAL VIEWS



Americans disagree not only about whether the war with Iran is justified, but also about why it is being fought. The explanations generally follow political viewpoints, although the division is more complicated than a simple contest between Republicans and Democrats. On both the political right and left, there are interventionist factions that support military action and antiwar factions that believe the United States has been drawn into another unnecessary Middle Eastern conflict.

The National-Security Right: Iran Presents an Unacceptable Threat

The traditional national-security wing of the political right generally accepts the stated reasons for military action. Its principal argument is that Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missiles, support for armed organizations, and repeated threats against Israel and the United States created a danger that diplomacy and sanctions could no longer contain.

From this perspective, the United States is fighting to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, protect Israel, defend American troops and bases, preserve freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, and deter Iran and its regional allies from further attacks. Some conservatives also believe that lasting peace may require replacing or fundamentally weakening Iran's present government.

The India Today documentary "Why Is the U.S. and Israel Fighting with Iran?" reviews the long deterioration in relations between the countries. It discusses the 1979 hostage crisis, Iran's nuclear activities, its missile program, its support for Hezbollah and other armed organizations, attacks on American personnel, and the failure of repeated diplomatic efforts. These events

support the conservative argument that the present war did not arise suddenly but represents the culmination of decades of confrontation.

The CBC News program "U.S. vs. Iran: A Decades-Old Fight" likewise places the conflict within a much longer history of revolution, sanctions, proxy warfare, attacks on American forces, nuclear negotiations, and recurring diplomatic failures. This history lends support to the position that Iran represents a genuine security problem rather than an enemy recently manufactured to justify war.

The Populist Right: Another War That Does Not Serve America

The "America First" or populist right reaches a considerably different conclusion. Although this group is strongly opposed to Iran's government, it questions whether Iran posed an imminent threat to the American homeland and whether a major war advances American interests.

Populist conservatives ask whether the United States is fighting principally to protect Israel, satisfy Washington's foreign-policy establishment, or pursue another regime-change campaign. They warn that the war could become another costly and prolonged conflict resembling Iraq or Afghanistan.

Kim Iversen's earlier commentary, "The REAL Reason the U.S. Is Picking a Fight with Iran," reflects this skeptical approach. It contends that American policy toward Iran cannot be understood solely through the nuclear issue and must also be examined in relation to Israel, oil, regional influence, and the desire to maintain American dominance. Although Iversen is not a conventional conservative commentator, these arguments now overlap substantially with the antiwar populist right.

This produces an unusual political alignment: progressive critics and America First conservatives often oppose the war for different philosophical reasons but reach the same conclusion that the official justification is incomplete.

The Center-Left: Iran Is Dangerous, but War May Not Be the Answer

Centrist Democrats generally acknowledge that Iran's nuclear program, missiles, regional activities, and support for militant organizations present serious dangers. However, they are more likely to question whether military action was necessary, proportionate, properly authorized by Congress, or capable of producing a stable outcome.

The center-left generally favors inspections, sanctions, negotiations, and a revived nuclear agreement over an open-ended war. It also gives greater attention to civilian casualties, international law, alliances, and the danger that military action could encourage Iran to accelerate rather than abandon its nuclear ambitions.

The CBC and India Today documentaries illustrate why this faction regards the situation as more complicated than either side's political slogans suggest. Both recount the 2015 nuclear agreement, Iran's agreement to limit enrichment in exchange for sanctions relief, the American

withdrawal from the agreement in 2018, and the failure of subsequent negotiations. For the center-left, that history raises the question of whether the present war might have been avoided through continued diplomacy.

The Progressive Left: Israel, Regime Change and American Power

The progressive left is much more skeptical of the official explanation. Its commentators generally do not deny that Iran's government is repressive or that its nuclear and missile programs create legitimate concerns. Instead, they argue that those concerns have been used to justify broader objectives.

From this viewpoint, the United States is fighting to protect Israel's regional position, weaken or overthrow an Iranian government that resists American influence, maintain control over Middle Eastern energy routes, and preserve the network of American military bases and alliances in the region. Progressives also point to the influence of defense contractors and political organizations that favor a more aggressive policy toward Iran.

Al Jazeera English's "U.S.–Israel War on Iran: Trump's Victory Narrative vs. Reality" challenges the official presentation of the war and examines whether military achievements have produced the strategic results claimed by Washington and Israel. This viewpoint emphasizes the difference between destroying military targets and obtaining a sustainable political settlement.

Progressive critics also rely heavily on the history preceding the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The CBC and India Today programs describe how the United States and Britain helped overthrow Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953 after he nationalized Iran's oil industry. The United States subsequently supported Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi despite his increasingly authoritarian rule. To the left, this history demonstrates that American policy toward Iran has long involved oil, political control, and geopolitical influence—not merely democracy or nuclear security.

The Economic Left: Oil and the Petrodollar

The most sweeping explanation comes from commentators on the anti-imperialist or economic left. They argue that the war is fundamentally connected to oil, international finance, and the position of the dollar as the world's principal reserve currency.

The Geopolitical Economy Report's "Oil War: U.S. War on Iran Aims to Save Petrodollar and Global Dollar Dominance" argues that protecting Israel is only part of the explanation. It contends that Washington seeks to control Middle Eastern energy supplies, prevent independent governments from challenging American power, and preserve a financial system in which oil and other major commodities are commonly traded in dollars.

Democracy Now!'s "The End of the Petrodollar? How Iran War Is Reshaping the Global Economy" examines the importance of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a substantial portion of the world's petroleum travels. It also discusses the relationship among oil trading, the dollar,

sanctions, China's purchases of Iranian petroleum, and attempts by some countries to conduct international transactions outside the dollar-based system.

These economic factors are important, particularly because disruption of the Strait of Hormuz can affect oil prices, shipping costs, insurance rates, inflation, and the worldwide economy. Nevertheless, the stronger claim—that preserving the petrodollar is the principal reason for the war—remains an interpretation rather than a conclusively established fact.

Strange Alliances on the Right and Left

The Iran conflict has produced political alliances that would once have appeared unlikely. Establishment Republicans and pro-Israel Democrats often agree that Iran must be prevented from obtaining nuclear weapons and that military force may be necessary. Progressive Democrats and America First conservatives, meanwhile, may agree that Washington has understated the influence of Israel, the risks of regime change, and the possibility of another prolonged war.

Their reasoning, however, is different. The progressive left views the conflict through anti-imperialism, Palestinian rights, economic power, and opposition to American military dominance. The populist right views it through national sovereignty, financial cost, presidential promises to avoid foreign wars, and the belief that American policy should place the direct interests of Americans first.

What Is the Most Credible Explanation?

No single theory adequately explains the conflict. The publicly stated national-security concerns are real: Iran's nuclear development, missile capabilities, hostility toward Israel, support for regional armed groups, and attacks against American interests are documented. It would be misleading to dismiss these matters as mere excuses.

It would be equally misleading, however, to assume that nuclear security is the only consideration. Israel's security, oil supplies, the Strait of Hormuz, regime change, American military influence, domestic politics, and competition with China and Russia all affect decisions in Washington.

The most reasonable conclusion is that the United States is fighting Iran for a combination of security, geopolitical, economic, and political reasons. The political right tends to emphasize the threat posed by Iran. The political left tends to emphasize the interests and ambitions of the United States and Israel. Antiwar factions on both sides question whether those interests justify the enormous human, economic, and strategic risks of another Middle Eastern war.

The real national debate, therefore, is not merely whether Iran is dangerous. It is whether the danger was sufficiently immediate to require war—and whether the war will leave the United States and the Middle East safer when the fighting finally ends.

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