

This Horrible Fiasco Demands Change

by Conrad Black



It might seem that there is little to be added to what the whole world has witnessed viewing the unutterable shambles of the U.S. departure from Afghanistan. But that would be an illusion. The story of the perilous departure from Afghanistan of NATO forces and civilians and their Afghan collaborators who are now in mortal danger is obviously a matter of great suspense. The United States could certainly tell the Taliban government of Afghanistan that if all those whom the Western powers wished to evacuate were not allowed to leave it would be an act of war. If there were the will to act on that ultimatum, it would be successful.

But under the circumstances, the credibility of such a threat would probably have to be proved by acting on it. As some commentators have mentioned, this would be morally justified

and is morally required and the administration would simply have to accept that it has bungled the withdrawal, and must execute an immediate but brief return. The Biden Administration, after seven months, has shown no competence whatever in foreign or national security policy.

A moron would know that when evacuation is intended, the vulnerable, the civilians, the dependents, and the local supporters should all be evacuated under cover of the military and the armed forces should leave last in an orderly manner and in a well-covered and protected retreat. The United States had the military capability to do this and the explanation for not doing it, from Secretary of State Antony Blinken, has been that everyone in Afghanistan and the whole world had plenty of notice that the Americans were leaving. He should have been fired within one minute of uttering that statement.

Biden, in his address last Monday, in his midweek interview with George Stephanopoulos, and in his address on Friday, uttered a series of egregious falsehoods that were quickly exposed. He said there was no expression of discontent from America's allies. For the first time in history, references to an American president in the British Parliament were met with shouts of "shame." When Thomas Tugendhat, the chairman of the House of Commons Foreign Relations Committee and a retired colonel who served with distinction in Afghanistan and was decorated by the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division for combat bravery, said that it was shameful for a commander-in-chief who has not served under his own colors to mock the sacrifice of men who have, all parties in the British House agreed. No American president has been so severely or—unfortunately—deservedly insulted.

No American, consuming only mainstream media narratives, would realize that there were three times as many allied forces from

assorted NATO countries in Afghanistan as there were Americans, or that they were *not consulted* before the Americans abruptly departed and brought the roof down on all of them. The Western alliance, as former President Trump emphasized, has its problems. Most of the members were not pulling their weight. Germany, the strongest NATO country after the United States, has almost disarmed and has effectively made itself a Russian energy satellite through the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline. But they did not deserve this.

After this horrifying fiasco, where the Americans scuttled and turned tail and left their European allies and Canada to fend for themselves, the NATO members have already indicated that they are in no mood to follow this administration anywhere. No one can blame them. Biden said on Friday that the United States was not sending armored vehicles to collect its citizens and bring them to Kabul airport as the British and French were doing because, he explained, Americans were not being stopped by Taliban checkpoints. Half an hour later, the inarticulate Pentagon spokesman John Kirby squarely contradicted his commander-in-chief, and the official explanation was changed to advise Americans not to try to reach the airport because of the danger.

Biden said the Afghans wouldn't fight so they weren't worth the risk of American lives; but 50,000 Afghan soldiers and scores of thousands of civilians have died in this war. No Americans have died in Afghanistan in 18 months (in stark contrast to the soaring crime rates in almost all American cities). As Tugendhat told the House of Commons, it is not for the commander-in-chief of this cowardly, shameful, and disastrous flight from American national responsibilities, who has never served in his own armed forces, to disparage those who have died in allied forces for a cause that he has abandoned and doomed.

The one potentially positive aspect of this horrible debacle

has been the unarguable revelation that the president is not up to his job.

I would certainly wish to give him the benefit of the excuse of declining mental and physical powers, although I never imagined that even at the height of his powers the defamer of Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas, the candidate who cribbed a campaign message from a twice-defeated leader of Britain's Labour Party, and a man who cannot tell the truth even about his own university background or most other things, could serve successfully in such a great office. The powers that be in the Democratic Party plucked him out of the ditch where the primary voters had left him and put him in as president to execute Senator Bernie Sanders' socialist platform. The administration has been a pantomime horse with the front legs and the back attached to different torsos. It has been a catastrophic failure in every field: foreign and defense policy, illegal immigration, crime, inflation, and even the COVID-19 pandemic, which was the Democrats' chief ally in getting elected, both through the incitement of public hysteria and as the excuse in the selective rigging of voting and vote-counting rules.

In the consistency of its failures and its evident incapacity to govern effectively, this has been the most catastrophic presidency in American history. Though it must be admitted that at this point the consequences of the errors of the Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan administrations, which brought on the Civil War, and of the Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover administrations, which brought on the Great Depression and facilitated the outbreak of World War II, were more damaging than the Biden Administration's blunders are likely to be—if it ends soon.

Biden, Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan should all resign at once, after Biden has fired the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Mark Milley. They are jointly responsible for the most

horrible foreign policy fiasco in American history and, to compound matters, they have all lied to the public and to Congress about it.

President Obama said Sullivan is “wicked smart.” He may have been half right. Milley should have been court-martialed for denouncing President Trump’s walk to the church of the presidents after the attempted destruction of it by arson in June 2020, in which Milley participated. The Obama-elevated senior officer corps of the U.S. armed forces now believes that white racism and climate change are the principal obstacles to U.S. national security. Any officer above one star who believes that bunk should be sacked and no retiring officer should be allowed near a corporate boardroom in a defense-related industry for five years after leaving the service. The woke movement conducted by Biden and Obama has rotted and corroded most of the American state following the American academy and the national political media—they have atrophied in choreographed synchronization.

If this horrible fiasco contributes to the radical change of course necessary in American political society, it will be worth it—though it is cruelly unjust that the population of Afghanistan should pay for it. Americans might also wish to reflect on the fact that having smashed up Iraq and helped to foment the disintegration of Syria and Yemen and now, after attempting and having failed to drag Afghanistan into the 21st century, some level of self-criticism is justified. The motives were positive but no one can say that any of those countries is in better condition today because of the American-led interventions there. Hundreds of thousands have died and millions displaced, largely because of American interventions in the Middle East.

The United States should show some awareness of what it has done, rather than simply cursing the Afghans for not fighting harder after they’ve been abandoned by their Great American champions. America desperately needs new people, new policies,

and new public attitudes. American students are taught to hate their country, and police are defunded and restrained to assure higher crime rates, while over-decorated military officers fret about wokeness and the climate. It all has to stop and back up. At least the Democrats will not be able to paper over this shambles with more Trump-hate. That ship sailed, and has sunk.

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