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by ROBERT FANTINA
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Afghanistan, Venezuela and U.S. Interference

In this troubling week, this writer has seen a variety of disturbing news stories. Ok, that's nothing new, we all know. But there are two that he would like to focus on today.

First, he saw an editorial saying that the U.S. must not abandon Afghanistan. He attempted to make some sense of this series of words, but while each is easily understood, when strung together, they lose all meaning. The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001, and has been bombing and terrorizing that nation every day since then. What the U.S.'s goal there is one cannot say; the war is certainly, in the minds of many in the U.S., a forgotten war, although it is all too real for its Afghani victims. As of November, 2018, civilian deaths are conservatively estimated at 80,000. The infrastructure is destroyed, and the air quality has become one of the worst in the world. One would think that the people of Afghanistan would be desperate for the U.S. to 'abandon' their country.

With Venezuela currently big in the news, this writer saw a second article, another opinion piece, saying that U.S. President Donald Trump is right on Venezuela. Trump, in usual U.S. fashion, wants to ignore and thwart the will of the people, by declaring an opposition candidate as the legitimate leader of Venezuela. If the consequences were not so dire, this would be a laughable statement, coming from someone who can hardly be seen as the legitimate leader of the United States. There is an old adage that 'majority rules', but that doesn't apply in the U.S. If it did, Trump would be back on his reality television show, where he belongs, and Hillary Clinton would be president of the United States (heaven help us all!).

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Why does the U.S. government feel it needs to insert itself into every trouble spot in the world? Is it because of its sterling reputation in solving global problems? Is it because, wherever it chooses to intervene, after just a short time, the opposing forces in whatever nation it has 'helped' all join hands and sing Kumbaya around some giant campfire?

And as we consider these trouble spots, it's certainly worthwhile to note that it is the U.S. that frequently causes these problems in the first place. Already it is being suspected that the U.S. is arming anti-government forces in Venezuela. In Afghanistan, it was the U.S. who armed and trained the Taliban when it was a rag-tag group opposing the Russians during that long and deadly war. When the Russians left, U.S. government officials seemed surprised and puzzled to learn that the people they supported against the Russians weren't willing to hand over the government to some U.S. puppet. As a result, the U.S. is now engaged in Afghanistan in the longest war in its long and bloody history.

Where else has the U.S. caused untold suffering? Let's consider Chile, where, under the rabid anti-Communist president, Richard Nixon, the U.S. government overthrew the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende, and supported the seventeen-year long reign of terror of dictator General Augusto Pinochet.

We could look to Iraq, where the U.S., in the 1963, overthrew the government of Abdel Karim Kassem, and threw its support behind a young, anti-Communist leader named Saddam Hussein. In the decades between that first support and the overthrow of Hussein in 2003, the U.S. ranged from naming Iraq a state sponsor of terrorism, to supporting it with advanced weaponry when Iraq was at war with Iran.

And while we're speaking of Iran, let's take a quick look at the U.S.'s violent history there.

In 1953, the U.S. overthrew the democratically-elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, and replaced him with the brutal Shah of Iran. Relations between the U.S. and Iran were quite cozy during this time, although the people of Iran suffered horribly. The Shah's oppressive, barbaric reign ended when the people of Iran overthrew him, and installed a government of their own choosing. The U.S. government has never forgiven Iranians for daring to indulge in the luxury of self-determination, and as of this writing, continues to threaten Iran as it continues with cruel sanctions (illegal under international law, since they violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)), and even threatening its closest allies with sanctions if they dare comply with the terms of the JCPOA.

Need we even mention Vietnam? Perhaps we should; there were many lessons to be learned from that imperial disaster that, if they had indeed been heeded, would have prevented much of the international suffering that has occurred since then. In the south, the U.S. first selected Bao Dai, who had a long record of collaboration with Vietnam's previous colonial masters, the French and the Japanese. Later, the U.S. supported Ngo Dinh Diem, a repressive dictator, who provided many rights and privileges to the Catholics in that nation, but not so many to the vast number of Buddhists. Ho Chi Minh, who, despite his education and international travel, never lost his native identity, led Communist North Vietnam, and sought to reunite the nation. But the U.S. was determined that Vietnam not 'fall' to Communism, despite the wishes of the Vietnamese people. And so it launched its war, which killed at least 2,000,000 people, decimated the countryside, nearly destroyed the U.S. economy and tore the U.S. apart. Despite all that, the people of Vietnam were victorious.

And now we have the brilliant pundits and politicians telling us that the U.S. must not 'abandon' Afghanistan; rather, it should continue to destroy the country. Certainly there are many people left to be killed. And the U.S., we are also told, is right to support an opposition candidate over the democratically-elected one in Venezuela. Will the outcome of either of these disastrous mistakes be as successful as, say, the U.S. intervention in Iraq? Will they bring the same 'benefits' to either country that U.S. 'help' brought to the people of Chile?

For two centuries, the U.S. has run amok on the world stage, killing millions upon millions of innocent people, causing the torture of millions more, and destroying prospects, hopes and dreams for more people than can be counted. The world will be a more peaceful and just planet when the U.S. is eventually eclipsed in terms of military and the economy by any other nation. This cannot occur soon enough for the people of Afghanistan, Venezuela, and too many other nations to mention here.