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Déjà Vu: Saigon, Vietnam, 1975; Kabul, Afghanistan, 2021



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In addition to global warming (floods, fires, destructive storms, water shortages and water pollution), a pernicious pandemic (COVID virus with all its offspring variants), a depressed economy, abuse of power, rabid racism, graft and corruption at all levels – Hubris and Arrogance, the afflictions to which all empires succumb, are but two of America's tragic flaws.

Pundits, politicians, and sycophants will no doubt debate and thrash the following question: Did President Joe Biden make a huge mistake pulling out of Afghanistan on

short notice as per his orders to pull out under the cover of dark – even without properly informing the Afghani government of forwarding the withdrawal timetable?

In all the public punditry and babble about the wisdom of Biden's decision to pull US troops out of Afghanistan, the sycophantry of media talking heads and elected officials (on the right and the left) rightly decry the 2+ billion dollars spent on a senseless adventure and the death of 2,312 US personnel and 20,066 wounded. Sadly, there's been hardly any mention of the tens of thousands Afghani dead, wounded, and maimed. And that includes women, children, the elderly, hospitals, schools, and entire villages vaporized in heinous drone attacks.

Barak Obama's Tuesday morning meetings to choose targets hangs like a Giant V (for villainy) over his Exceptional head. Just recently he who vaporized some 60 wedding party extended family members celebrated his 60th birthday to much fanfare. The children vaporized in this and other Exceptional Orgy of Tuesday Killing Decisions have had their lives swatted as though they were pesky flies to be disposed into the bin of history.

Was the Nobel Prize for Peace perhaps not a premature award? Better yet, did this unmerited and sardonic award give the Change We Can Believe In Prince of Drones a sense of false invincibility and immunity?

And the life-long PTSD traumas borne by US Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, including the millions of Iraqi and Afghani civilians, are *heavy crosses* and *crescents* they have to bear for the rest of their lives.

Ironically, it is these same hypocrites who, in 2001, were George Bush et company' cheerleaders.

Strategically located, Afghanistan, after all, sits on mineral deposits worth billions of dollars, deposits to be exploited by Brown and Root, Bechtel, Exxon Mobil, and scores of mining conglomerates sharpening their greedy fangs and claws to lay claim to Afghanistan's subterranean wealth. Don't believe me, just ask oilman Bush and Dick Cheney, Brown and Root, Halliburton, and Bechtel's front scavenger.

After an 18-year American involvement/war in Vietnam, in 1973 Saigon fell to a determined Vietcong. Will Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, fall to the brutal Taliban in 2021 – after yet another 20-year futile war?

Inasmuch as I hate to frame the Taliban's current advance on Kabul as a pattern in the execution of US foreign policy/wars, this movie is not new. In both instances the US was/is a key player, making the same mistakes, over-and-over-again.

In addition to waging war on Vietnam, neighboring Cambodia and Laos also fell victim to napalm strafing, B-52 carpet bombing, the dropping of cluster bombs in the tens of thousands, and the spraying of defoliants such as Agent Orange.

Agent Orange has not only destroyed the lives and livelihoods of the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians, but it has also destroyed the lives of thousands of American military personnel in the service of Johnson and Nixon's "Economic War."

A dear friend, the father of three daughters and a Vietnam veteran, died from a morbidly excruciating lung disease.

In 1973 the US's adversary were the Vietcong. Today's US adversaries (one of many) are the Taliban, a ruthless religiously fanatical lot led by a 7th century mentality tribal leaders who've exploited the weakness of the current Afghani government, an equally corrupt and inept entity.

I will leave it to others to detail all the atrocities committed by the US and its many NATO allies that began way back in 2001. And the myriad atrocities committed by the US in Vietnam (to, supposedly, stop the spread of communism) have been memorialized in hundreds of books and documentaries.

I shall never forget the images of the last days of April 1975, images of carnage that included the hurried loading of US military hardware aboard impotent naval ships; masses of people congregating in front of the US embassy protective cordon of metal and concrete fencing, scaling the walls and begging to be airlifted to the safety of US navy ships; Vietcong assaults in the Greater Saigon area; and then, on April 30, 1975, the rolling of Vietcong tanks into the South Vietnamese presidential palace compound.

The footage of civilians scrambling to reach American ships was gut wrenching. Equally disturbing was the footage of US military hardware, including several helicopters, being pushed off naval vessels into the Saigon Bay harbor.

Was this perhaps a burial metaphor for American military might in southeast Asia?

Caught in the struggle between the two superpowers of the time, Vietnam (a poor 3rd world nation) persevered in forcing out American forces. Likewise, Afghanistan, with covert US support of Usama Bin Ladin and the Taliban, forced Russia, America's Nemesis, out of Afghanistan.

Shameful, disgraceful, and humiliating does not even begin to describe the fateful retreats of the two superpowers from their ill-advised adventures. And just as Russia pulled out of Afghanistan in disgrace, so is mightiest military power in the world pulling out of Afghanistan.

And thus emerged the Vietnam Syndrome.

In 1991 Daddy Bush waged a war against Iraq, bombing it back to the stone age. He as much as said the following: This victory (a hollow one) makes up for the embarrassing Vietnam defeat.

With the Soviet Empire on the wane, Daddy Bush gloated that 1991 Iraq War was an affirmation of a military victory over an emaciated Iraq, America could now claim that “a new world order [emerged]. [and] What we say goes.”

Ten year later Daddy Bush’s Boy, the supreme court choice for the Presidency, waged a war on Afghanistan.

The unforgivable and cowardly Osama Bin Ladin-led assault on America, a perniciously heinous onslaught on three iconic US entities, shocked the nation to its very core.

How could a cave-dwelling Muslim fanatic accomplish this murderous act? And who supported him became the battle cries for an immediate and swift act of retribution?

The Gods of anger and revenge delivered their speedy venom.

Afghanistan had to pay a price. And from the start and for twenty years “the mission” was not properly defined. Instead of a well-planned military action to bring those responsible to justice, Lyssa, the Greek goddess of mad rage, frenzy, and rabies and her close kin Mania, the goddess of madness and insanity, blitzed the White House, the Pentagon, Congress, every media outlet, and every living room across the nation.

Ah, the *unschooled* Vietnam lesson!

It is much easier to wage a war than to halt it and bring it to a close. And once in, the mission sprouts too many unintended consequences.

So here we are, 20 years and four presidents later, facing yet another humiliating withdrawal. And like Vietnam’s burgeoning war into neighboring countries, the last four US presidents have either waged wars or are responsible for expanding the Afghanistan mission into Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya. Looming on the horizon of forever US wars in Asia Minor is the specter of a war with Iran, a country that has been, and continues to be, in Israeli-Saudi crosshairs. Woe unto us if we wage a war on Iran to appease Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the Emiratis.

The Abu Ghraib prison brutalities, the killing of hundreds of thousands of civilians, and the rendition of thousands at Guantanamo and other torture chambers across the globe put a blight on America’s reputation. And this does not include the many restrictions imposed on free expression – here at home.

The Taliban have smelled blood and are going in for the kill.

President Biden's decision to reintroduce US military forces into Afghanistan is too little and too late. On August 12, 2021 State Department and Pentagon spokesmen scrambled to provide political cover for Biden, and folks such as Tom Cotton and his ilk are braying about Biden's flip flop decision/s. They, too, smell blood, and are going in for the kill. American politics has turned into a *gotchya* war with money flowing in from those who benefit from the forever wars – to the detriment of the masses, many of whom are struggling to make ends meet on a \$7.50 per hour pittance.

Only time will tell how the 20-year Afghanistan adventure, at a cost of over 2+ trillion plus hard earned US taxpayer dollars, will play out.

Just think of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Libya, and Yemen as casinos whose high stakes vainglorious gamblers gamble BIG.

And when they lose, they lose BIG.

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