

# Afghanistan Rings Down the Curtain on Biden Administration Honeymoon

by Conrad Black



The astonishingly ignominious collapse of the international antiterrorist activity in [Joe Biden](#)'s campaign for him as he hid in his basement invoking the coronavirus as the excuse for his inability even to read a teleprompter.

But having massively overpromoted Biden and covered for the new administration's colossal failures in immigration, crime, inflation, and the COVID-19 crisis, the media will sense that its own survival as a credible source of information is at stake. They were already in their life vests, and as early as the evening of Aug. 16 as CNN and MSNBC brought on a parade of guests excoriating the administration, they could be seen clambering into the lifeboats.

After seven months, the Biden administration has been capsized by the proportions of its own disasters.

The prolongation of the Biden honeymoon until the middle of August is an expression of the relief of the majority of Americans to have a quieter political atmosphere in the country and not have a president constantly on television every day and tweeting at them all night.

It's understandable that a welcome feeling of serenity carried the Biden administration forward into August, despite the mounting evidence of its dangerous incompetence. But the constant presentation on television of Biden and his spokespeople expressing high confidence in Afghan military ability and assuring viewers that, as the egregious Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, put it a couple of weeks ago, "The victory of the Taliban is far from a foregone conclusion," will not soon be forgotten.

He should have been sacked for his insolent defection from Trump in the ceremonial walk to "the Presidents' Church" to demonstrate that the administration wouldn't allow such places to be burned down; he should have been sacked again for his fatuous comments about reading about white racism. But he should be fired now, for presiding over this shameful fiasco in Afghanistan.

## **A Failing Administration**

The domestic political watershed is that it will be impossible henceforth to present as plausible this administration, which is failing by practically every measurement of leadership and policy initiative.

They respond to every challenge with new and more feeble and irrelevant attacks upon the previous administration, which

was, in policy terms, one of the most successful in the country's history.

Trump almost eliminated illegal immigration, did eliminate unemployment, and created conditions in which the lowest 20 percent of wage earners were in percentage terms advancing more quickly than the top 10 percent. Trump shaped up the Western alliance, eliminated energy imports, and drew the country's attention to the challenge of China without demagoguery or hyperbole.

While Trump was president, there was little talk of the United States being overtaken and surpassed by China; now, there's little talk of anything else. The Democrats have managed by their ineptitude to resurrect their great ally of 2020—COVID-19 hysteria—as a potentially mortal enemy.

As the media hedges its bets and stops trying to breathe air into the punctured Biden balloon, the Democrats will face the inexorably approaching elections like hunted outcasts who fear the people's verdict.

The media, while they are unlikely to warm too much to Trump, don't like being used and now realize that their airtight facade of solidarity for the administration was the only strength that it had. The Democrats, whose only political argument for the past five years has been that they aren't Trump, won't find that such a persuasive argument henceforth.

## **Western Alliance in Question**

We are approaching also a geopolitical watershed, especially in the Western alliance. That alliance has been plodding in stalled condition since the end of the Cold War. NATO has been the most successful alliance in the history of the world: an entirely defensive gathering of countries that by practicing containment won the rivalry with the Soviet Union when that country simply collapsed like a fallen soufflé without the

United States and the Soviet Union exchanging a shot in anger.

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Western alliance was allowed to deteriorate into "an alliance of the willing," meaning that various small or under-armed states would generously consent to have their security and borders guaranteed by the great United States of America but wouldn't contribute significantly to the general budget, despite their commitments to do so and would generally abstain from assisting in the contribution of manpower to NATO missions, apart from mere tokens.

Britain and France have retained the psychology of Great Powers, though only barely the military means for that role, but Germany, which by most measurements is next to the United States the strongest Western power, is a risible military power. Under the baneful influence of the militant greens, it has shut down a splendid nuclear power capability and has submissively signed on as a natural gas energy satellite of Russia.

The Europeans show little sign of being prepared to join in any move to counter the declared aggressive ambitions of China to become the world's most influential and powerful country. Alliances shouldn't be maintained merely because they exist, and it's becoming more difficult each year to see what the utility of the Western alliance is, though, with timely reforms, it would certainly be able to write a new mission statement for itself.

I think it should become a worldwide alliance of democratic states, but to lead such an organization effectively will require an administration a great deal more effective and knowledgeable of international and strategic affairs than this one.

But even at maintaining this status quo, instead of just bumbling on from year to year, the debacle in Kabul may have

shaken the preparedness of a number of America's allies to continue to accept Washington's leadership. America has left its allies entirely in the ditch in Afghanistan, a country they only entered out of loyalty to the American alliance 20 years ago, after the 9/11 attacks, and where the Americans have generally chosen their domestic Afghan allies indifferently.

## **Evacuating Allies**

At one level, it must be said that there is no reason for the United States to be particularly preoccupied with who governs Afghanistan. It's strategically a worthless country and if the Chinese sink a lot of effort into it building their "Belt and Road" there, they won't accomplish anything useful for themselves.

The Taliban is a divided entity, and the Iranians, Uzbekis, Pakistanis, Indians, and Chinese all have their factions there.

If the Americans can get all of their domestic and foreign allies safely out of Afghanistan and embark on a new policy of restricting U.S. interventionism to what is undoubtedly related to the country's national interest, it would probably use its resources more wisely, and the Chinese are in no position to try to replicate the extravagance of the Americans when they conducted and generally defended a tighter perimeter around the Soviet Union and China.

If there were any such design as this around the Biden foreign policy, we could be partially reassured, but the abandonment of Afghanistan appears to be simply chaos by mistaken analysis, which will only make China's advance easier and weaken the perception of the United States in the area.

If the Taliban happily returns Afghanistan to being a breeding ground of terrorists, the United States will have to make

reprisals. The Taliban is essentially an outgrowth of the Mujahedin whom the Americans put on the map of the world by providing them with over-the-shoulder anti-helicopter missiles that made Russia's 10 Afghan years very difficult.

We may come full circle and the Taliban could destabilize Pakistan, always a misgoverned country (and a nuclear power). There is no indication that this administration has learned anything from America's dismal experience in Afghanistan or has the remotest idea of what to do next except retreat.

The one act that could slightly redeem this dreadful shambles is if the United States remained in force at Kabul Airport, and sent helicopters around to collect its loyalists and allies and evacuated all of them who might otherwise be in grave danger. It would distinguish this failure from Saigon, 1975. The United States owes them, and itself, that at least.

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