

## Mr. Biden's Neighborhood

by Anil Shrivastava "Musafir"



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Enough has been said and written about America's chaotic retreat from Afghanistan. I didn't want to add another voice to the undeniable noisy choir. All I know is that "this too shall pass." The next presidential election is more than three years away. All will be forgotten and forgiven by that time. What will remain is a divided nation fighting over party allegiance, abortion, LGBTQ rights, guns, and maybe the economy. That's what happens in America.

Most Americans can't differentiate between Afghanistan and Lebanon, maybe, rightly

so. They wake up in the morning (most of them), earn a living, come home, have a beer, watch TV, pay bills and go to bed. They elect career politicians to worry about the rest.

"You would need an electron microscope to detect the effect of Afghanistan on any congressional race in the last decade," Biddle said, referring to the American political picture. "It's been invisible." Russonello, Giovanni (NY Times, August 15, 2021)

Who cares what Mr. Biden promised and what is he delivering? Mr. Biden said, "America is back, multilateralism is back, diplomacy is back." Back to where? If you

don't have an answer, don't worry. The core Democrats will vote for him no matter what just like the core Republicans will vote for Trump, no matter what. It's the Independents like me who will be caught in the middle rationalize our choices.

Betraying allies and fighting wars without a cause is nothing new for America. We have done that in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and most recently in Afghanistan. Just recently Donald Trump abandoned the Kurds of Syria, leaving them vulnerable to attack by Turkey. President George W Bush promised Qaddafi of Libya that the United States would not attempt to overthrow his regime if he destroyed weapons of mass destruction. Later, President Barack Obama's administration ignored that earlier pledge and collaborated in Qaddafi's overthrow. The lessons of Libya have not been lost on other countries. North Koreans have repeatedly invoked this example to justify the country's nuclear weapons program and to warn against ever trusting assurances from the United States.

Under these conditions, why would any sensible government take America's word for anything? Why would any halfway smart adversary make substantial concessions to the United States in exchange for U.S. promises, assurances, or pledges?

No one trusts America anymore. The British Member of Parliament, Gavin Barbell made this statement about America, "The lesson for Europeans is clear. Whoever is president, the US is unlikely to offer the same support that it used to in parts of the world where its vital interests are not involved. Europeans are going to have to develop the capability to intervene without US support."

"We lived a little bit the great illusion," said French Parliamentarian Nathalie Loiseau. "We thought America was back, while in fact, America withdraws."

According to U.S. News and World Report, America's trustworthiness is at 34 on a scale of 1 to 100 ranking at number 20 among the world's most trusted nations.

Mr. Biden's approval rating among Democrats is still above 90% and Mr. Trump's approval rating among Republicans is still above 70% (Source Washington Post).

And no matter how disappointed one maybe, I don't see any scenario where the Americans would care about Mr. Biden's faux pas and miscalculations. So, don't worry, be happy; we are in America.