

# Shouldn't Have Been in Afghanistan

Nearly everyone criticizes the way the U.S. left Afghanistan and claims to know what the right way would have been. I see it differently. The tragic situation in Afghanistan has lessons for Americans, but I see most Americans missing the lessons because they are looking at it wrong.

The problem wasn't in the leaving; it was going there.

It's smarter to not make mistakes in the first place, rather than to dig yourself in deeper and deeper for 20 years and then realize there's no good way out. The time to worry about what's going to happen to someone you've pushed off a cliff is before you push them off the cliff, not as they smack the ground below.

Yes, I realize some people chose to join with those who then pushed them off the cliff, but they've had 20 years to find a parachute, and chose not to do so. Maybe they see the error of their ways now, when it's too late.

The most important lesson to be learned from the situation might be this: Government is not your friend. Do you think anyone is paying attention and learning this lesson?

Another lesson is: Don't meddle in other people's business. Doing so is usually a mistake, especially if you're using them as pawns and putting them in the position to die if — or when— things go wrong.

Yes, I know there are those who believe the US government should police the world. They are wrong. This ought to remove any remaining doubt. Those who most need to learn this lesson, won't.

The Afghans would have benefitted from understanding another truth before the lesson forced itself on them in a horrible way: Don't trust government. Don't rely on government employee promises that they'll keep you safe. Don't imagine your life matters more than their own life, or even more than their job. It doesn't, no matter what they say to get you onboard.

The Americans stranded in Afghanistan would have been better off had they understood this as well.

Yet another lesson everyone should pay attention to: Never imagine a political situation won't change. It will. If something can't continue unchanged forever, it won't. And nothing can. Part two of this lesson could be stated as: Don't side with the team that is going to have to hang you out to dry sooner or later.

Were you paying attention? Are you learning?