KUDOS TO TRUMP, BIDEN

• It wasn’t pretty, but U.S. is out of Afghan hellhole

By Paul T. Angel

On Oct. 7, 2001, then-President George W. Bush announced he had ordered air strikes on Afghanistan where, he alleged, those responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks had been aided and were being sheltered by the Taliban, the regime that ruled Afghanistan at the time. That began America’s longest and possibly costliest no-win war.

For 20 years, the U.S. has been mired in Afghanistan, a country that is smaller than Texas, at a cost of $1 trillion to U.S. taxpayers. Over the course of two decades, over 7,000 U.S. soldiers and auxiliaries have been killed, and tens of thousands have been wounded. U.S. taxpayers paid billions of dollars to arm and train 300,000 Afghani soldiers, but, as we have all seen, the entire country fell to the Taliban in just 36 hours as the U.S. began pulling out the last of its troops on Aug. 16. The Afghans did what they have done for millennia: figured out some way to survive.

Despite being maligned by the mainstream media and his political opponents for his entire term, it was Donald Trump who lived up to his campaign promise and signed a historic peace deal with the Taliban on Feb. 29, 2020 that would bring our troops home.

What happens next, he said, would be left up to the Afghan people, not to the U.S., which can’t even efficiently manage America’s crumbling cities.

Then came Joe Biden. Sensing the anti-war mood of the American people, and the popularity of Trump’s America first policies—the crux of which is non-intervention in the affairs of other nations—Biden’s advisors decided this was one policy of Trump’s they had better not reverse.

Biden still has enough neurons firing to understand: Bringing the troops home and ending the war could earn him some points with Americans of both parties who detest war. Honestly, he could have caved under pressure from the U.S. military-industrial complex, who saw their trillion-dollar cash cow coming to an end. He could have listened to the media elites, who love war, and the neocons and neoliberals who both want to project American military power across the globe. But he didn’t. He honored Trump’s peace treaty and ordered the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Unfortunately, Biden badly bungled the withdrawal. His generals lied about the reliability of the Afghan army the U.S. had trained and equipped, allowing billions in advanced military hardware to fall into the hands of the Taliban. As we go to press, both left and right are alleging thousands of Americans have been trapped behind enemy lines. Suddenly, but not unexpectedly, the entire media establishment is condemning Biden for not leaving troops in Afghanistan, violating the treaty and beginning the war all over again. But he didn’t.

We grieve for those soldiers who lost their limbs, their eyes, their sanity and, many, their lives. We are saddened by the fact that thousands of wives are now widows and thousands more children are growing up in fatherless homes. We mourn for those soldiers who have been driven to suicide or struggle with PTSD and homelessness. And we lament the tens of thousands of innocent Afghani civilians killed in this senseless war based on so many lies, the vast majority of which were told for profit.

These two presidents—like them or not, love them or not, trust them or not, and for whatever reasons they did it—had the courage to stand up to the warmongers in both parties who would have had the U.S. continue to occupy Afghanistan in perpetuity with nothing but more tragedy on the horizon each and every sunrise.

In his speech on Aug. 16, Mr. Biden said, “How many more generations of America’s daughters and sons would you have me send to fight in Afghanistan’s civil war? I will not repeat the mistakes we’ve made in the past.”

We couldn’t agree more.

The war certainly did not end the way any of us would have liked, and it is not quite over yet (we have to get our people out of there), but we have to say: “Thank you Donald Trump and thank you Joe Biden.”