

Essay

Utopia and Desire: Biden's Retreat from Afghanistan

Umberto Sulpasso

In a hundred years when the history of the war in Afghanistan is rewritten -- there is no war that maintains the same written views for more than a hundred years -- its real winner is likely to be the last US emperor, Joseph R. Biden Jr. better known as Joe Biden. Afflicted by the cathartic syndrome of declaring themselves defeated in the wars that matter, and to atone for the damage of the unfortunate story of Vietnam, the American people almost joyfully saw the tears of the Emperor President, anxious to listen that the empire has stopped to go eastwards.

The same syndrome that prevented Hadrian, as Trajan's successor, from proceeding further eastwards, and pushed him to take the first ever steps towards the consolidation of the Roman frontiers, abandoning the regions of Mesopotamia conquered by Trajan and building Hadrian's wall to protect the future Brexit people from themselves. Hadrian, a great lover of art and culture, among other things, rebuilt classical Greece, made what is by far the most beautiful Villa of antiquity, villa Adriana, and erected a wonderful Mausoleum in the centre of Rome-- later renamed by the Church "Castel Sant'Angelo". He has among his great merits that of having allowed the entry of the first woman in the Academie Française, Marguerite Yourcenar (Belgian), who in her wonderful book, *Memoirs of Hadrian*, where that syndrome was explained wonderfully, step by step. The East syndrome was the first ever in seven centuries, that a military decision was taken to limit the expansion of the Roman empire. In those seven centuries, from a few hills in the countryside where the first foundation of Rome was laid, the military ambitions of the Romans drove them to conquer practically the entire western world,

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useful African territories, the Balkan countries, and of course, all the Middle East. When Caesar was eliminated by the conspiracy of the senators, he was about to leave Rome for years to expand the empire to the east. He was preparing an enormous military response, supplemented by a court of artists and writers of the highest caliber. Caesar, himself was perhaps the highest-level Latin prose writer, and it is not hazardous to think that by going to the conquest of the east, he would in fact have transferred the cultural and political centre of Rome to the east. Trajan had inherited Cesar's military ambition and had conquered Dacia, part of Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, and was determined to proceed eastward. However, an infection caused him to die during his conquests. Hadrian said enough to the east, he returned the newly conquered Iran to the Parses, ignoring the first military principle of Rome: if you stop expansion, you will be attacked. But the "East syndrome" won because Hadrian wanted to concentrate on consolidating his territory.

It was the same syndrome – far less stupendous – that pushed Donald Trump to affirm the need to isolate Americans in order to affirm American superiority, an obvious contradiction in terms in the global world of the Internet Age as he would discover when he was prevented from using Twitter and Facebook for purposes of insurrection. This syndrome has a precise process: change from Utopia to Desire. A passage that manifests itself in the media in the masochistic satisfaction by which a military defeat is celebrated as a society's defeat.

The Masochistic Western Media

The European media are the mirror of this phenomenon. There is not a day when you do not read that the American empire is disintegrating and that those who will replace it are ready to come over. China is just around the corner. The Western press – especially the European one – announces almost joyfully that China's GDP has surpassed that of the US (it is not true), that China has managed to reach Mars even as US rovers also manage to fly helicopters there, that Africa is now a Chinese dominion -- another nonsense that forgets the fact that Africa is now African even if dictators and supreme tribal leaders sell themselves to corruptors of all nations. Paying for Chinese presence, means that leaders can be corrupted but no longer be dominated. Power bestows favours, does not buy nations.

The way the Afghanistan defeat is being judged shows that History has no

memory, otherwise it would not repeat the same mistakes endlessly, smuggling them in for the right reasons. And above all, History is short of memory when it comes to declaring or closing a war. The war in Afghanistan was neither started to free women from the Islamic fundamentalist yoke, nor to give the country a new democratic culture. Obviously, both are desirable causes, especially the first, but they were not at the origin of the American intervention. To complain about the negative consequences of the withdrawal of American troops for the equal rights of Afghan women is to forget why that war “at least formally” was started, and to confuse UTOPIA with DESIRE.

Utopia is to ensure women in all latitudes an equal status in rights; Desire is to avenge a terrorist attack. The first one can garner goodwill around the world; the second can advance only material interests. If the motivations of the war in Afghanistan were so different from what had been declared that they could not be expressed openly, and so difficult to get them accepted by the American people, that underlines the difference between Utopia and Desire, and explains why in the chronicles of the twenty-first century Biden wins at the level of military strategy and political vision. Biden wins by creating a Utopia and abandoning a Desire. That seems not to be adequately appreciated by Europeans. At least by the European media.

It almost seems that the European media, inspired by clumsy attempts to appear free and independent, has forgotten that Europe has been saved --thanks to America-- from centuries of uninterrupted wars since 476 AD, the year of the fall of the Roman empire, and that Europeans, now want to make the Americans pay for this peace that has enabled them to be rich beyond their own merits. And the way to take their revenge is to assert not only that China is about to take over the USA, because of a few dollars more of GDP for a population which is 3-4 times larger, and that America is ready to surrender to China's global leadership.

A New Utopia

If there is anything certain it is that it is impossible for China to acquire planetary leadership. compared to the USA. Planetary leadership is kept alive only with the force of Utopias and the Chinese are unable to produce planetary Utopias, they never did, while the United States did it all the time in the last two centuries. Thanks to “Joe”, the US has just produced a new one that will remain on track for at least four years, and

possibly for eight, waiting for the Utopia President Female. And here we see the most significant difference between the defeat of Vietnam and that of Afghanistan. The United States lost the Vietnam war because it was unable to produce a Utopia. Walter Cronkite, CBS communication genius, would every evening end his broadcast on the war in Vietnam with his famous “today that’s the way it is.” In those stark words, he proved that Vietnam was a war without Utopias. The photo of the little girl burning from Napalm or that of the Massacre of Mi Lay, showed that you cannot win a war without a Utopia, and even less than ever can you acquire a planetary leadership. China has a great wonderful culture and millennial old extraordinary artistic creations but it does not have a Utopia to offer to the planet. Therefore, China can extend its network of interests, but notwithstanding some victory, it cannot be a leader. America instead will continue to be a leader, notwithstanding some defeat, because it has produced its new Utopia. And Biden is the interpreter.

Militarily, by withdrawing from Afghanistan, Biden intelligently left-- it will be said in the chronicles of the twenty-first century – a territory in which China and Russia will find a way to be defeated not only in foreign policy but also domestically. Machiavelli argues that you govern a foreign territory in three ways. The first, by ruining them (as the USSR tried to do with Afghanistan). The second, by going to live there (what the King of England should have done with America). The third, by obtaining gold (as Spain tried to do with South America).

Joe Biden invented a fourth one by ceding the hot wax to Russia and China who will have to decide whether to ally themselves with the Taliban. In the positive case, China could pay the greatest price with a strong recovery of Islamic fundamentalism within its territory, for example, in the Xinjiang region among the Uygur ethnic groups. But Russia is also not exempt from these dangers. This means that during their alliance with the Russian and Chinese, Taliban will not find it impossible to create a geographical Utopia of Islamic fundamentalism that could extend to China, to Russia and even to Iran.

And here is where the Biden Utopia manifests itself as a winner - says the historian of the XXII century. The withdrawal from Afghanistan takes place because “Emperor Joe” is a good family man, as people would like all emperors to be. It is a winning Utopia because peoples of all latitudes have grown tired of aggressive and violent emperors.

Thanks to the birth of this new Utopia, in the next century, Biden will be celebrated as a modern diplomatic and political strategist capable of transforming the American retreat into a new American imperial frontier fueled by a new Utopia, something that no American president has succeeded to do since Kennedy. Trajan was called “optimus princeps”, the Best Prince. Trajan, although a great general, was also celebrated by all citizens of the Roman Empire as the “the best prince”, because he promoted within the empire his utopia of civil life, his papers with Pliny the Younger prove it. Biden’s retreat from Afghanistan could be that of an “excellent emperor”, because he promotes his Utopia of an Emperor as a family man. It is unfortunate that Europeans tired of not having wars and nostalgic for the glories of the most infamous century they produced, the twentieth century, find a way to criticize Biden instead of celebrating his new Utopia.