



People of Wisconsin,

The events unfolding in Afghanistan invoke intense feelings in many of us. In the years since 9/11 we have watched as thousands of Wisconsin National Guardsmen and Airmen have deployed into theaters of operation in the Global War on Terrorism. We have watched as our state lost 122 service members to combat, and over 725 more to suicide. We have watched as men and women served with great honor and distinction, and today we take another opportunity to thank them for their sacrifice.

We thank them today because we are watching the chaotic and destructive results of the withdrawal from Afghanistan; and although it is painful, we must admit to ourselves that President Biden's decision to pull back all troops from Afghanistan is the correct decision. We wish that this inevitable chain of events was set in motion before the loss of so many lives, but it is by this loss and destruction that we have before us the truth of nation building. It is ugly and it costs lives just like the rest of war, and it is an ugliness that we will see again and again so long as we allow our elected officials to send our nation's youth into unnecessary wars.

To prevent these unnecessary and painful wars, we must ask ourselves some fundamentally uncomfortable questions, questions that Ron Paul asked us years ago, and have now come due for an answer. "What if our foreign policy of the past century is deeply flawed and has not served our national security interests? What if we wake up one day and realize that the terrorist threat is a predictable consequence of our meddling in the affairs of others and has nothing to do with us being free and prosperous?"

With the systems we fought for 20 years returning in a matter of days, with the world standing back as the flood gates fall, it is time that we admit to ourselves that if we are asking the question, we already know the answer. We need to take those answers and move past this interventionist war path to work towards peace. We need to bring all our troops home and end all foreign conflicts. We must ensure that the Veterans of this nation who have dedicated their lives to supporting us, are supported in return.

We as one people must unite behind liberty to stand any chance of granting ourselves security. We must show the world that when we rise up and stand together, no regime, no nation, no army on Earth can stand a chance against us. We must stand up as one people and declare in one voice that we are united in Liberty.

In Life and Liberty,

Jacob VandenPlas

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