

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Afghan situation

THE calamitous and volatile events now unfolding in Afghanistan and the ensuing chaos prevailing were centuries in the making.

What is happening in Afghanistan

today was caused by the vacuum left by the hasty and ill-planned withdrawal of occupying military forces from the West, Australia included.

The physical destruction of government and private facilities, the suspension of essential infrastructure and social services, the crackdown on businesses, wanton arrests, summary executions, the prevailing human rights violations and the desperation of inconsolable families is very raw and real.

Rich or poor, the Taliban doesn't discriminate.

Society as the Afghans know it has been up-ended.

What is happening in Afghanistan right now is not a movie, a story of fiction, a video game – it is the stuff of your worst nightmares.

Once again, Afghani women can no longer participate in public life, they are banned from obtaining an education and holding positions of responsibility and authority in politics, government or business.

The Taliban has rushed in another era of authoritarian repression.

Many Afghani citizens, especially those who helped Allied forces in any way, shape or form, are desperate to get out of their country as it sinks further into an abyss of tyrannical fanaticism.

A catastrophe of biblical proportions.

But sadly, there are some in our

community who are vehemently opposing, and against helping those fleeing with their lives and just the clothes on their backs.

“Not our problem,” some say.

“We don't need any more refugees in our community,” so say others.

The apathetic opinions of some are typical of many oblivious Australians who have never experienced war, invasion, arbitrary arrest, the seizure of their property, torture, the witnessing of summary executions, deportation, slave labour, murder, starvation, having to leave one's life, family, assets and all that one has come to know, love and cherish – exile.

In the true blue Aussie spirit of the “she'll be right mate” cliché, “it's their problem – not ours”.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

My advice to the many naive, ill-experienced and unenlightened keyboard warriors living sheltered and privileged lives, if you have no experience in situations and things akin to what the Afghans are going through then please keep your ill-founded and ignorant comments and opinions to yourself.

The Taliban are crafty like the generations of Communists before them who had once seized and dominated most of Eastern Europe thanks to the Allied Powers of the USA, Britain and France who naively believed the assurances of Comrade

Stalin that he would allow the independence of, and free elections in those countries caught in its maw.

But instead, those countries abandoned by the Allies were enslaved under the yoke of the totalitarian and authoritarian rule of communism for almost 70 years.

Unlike some, I can well empathise with those in Afghanistan, those fleeing, those who have fled, and those who have experienced so much physical loss, uncertainty in their lives, emotional trauma and pain because my families have been there and done that.

My parents and their families, including my paternal great grandparents were arbitrarily arrested, deported, starved, murdered and exiled by Russian communists to Siberian labour camps.

When the remnants of the Polish families were freed from the Russian Gulag and Special Slave Labour Camps under a so-called “amnesty” (brokered by the Allies), many were shot as they left and those who stayed or returned to Communist occupied Poland were persecuted, arrested, or just simply disappeared.

With the few remaining members of my family I have found a home in Toowoomba where I live in exile, unable to return to the country of my forefathers which now lies within the geographical boundaries of another.

The people of Afghanistan and their families around the world

cannot wait weeks, months, or even years for help; the help these unfortunate souls so desperately need should be given now.

The world has a moral obligation to answer the cry for help and assist all those pleading for help and assistance.

GEORGE W. HELON (Polish émigré), Kearney's Spring