COWARDICE FROM THE PENTAGON TO THE WHITE HOUSE

In Stephen Sondheim's *Into The Woods*, there's a point in the story when things have gone terribly wrong for everyone. The characters respond by disavowing personal responsibility and telling everyone else that it's "Your Fault."

That song could have been the background music to the nauseating spectacle in the Senate Tuesday (9/28), when Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, and head of U.S. Central Command Gen. Kenneth McKenzie testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee about the debacle in Afghanistan.

Each general swore under oath that he advised Biden to leave troops in Afghanistan:

> *"Top generals told lawmakers under oath that they advised President Joe Biden early this year to keep several thousand troops in Afghanistan — directly contradicting the president's comments in August that no one warned him not to withdraw troops from the country. pic.twitter.com/cqGmpcJkJI*
>
> *— POLITICO (@politico) September 28, 2021"*

In other words, Biden was either lying or being senile when he assured George Stephanopoulos that "No one said that to me [keep 2,500 troops in Afghanistan] *that I can recall*." Note the wiggle room about maybe not recalling. Heck, I can believe both (lying *and* senile).

After all, Biden is both the most corrupt man ever to occupy the Oval Office and the first person to be actively senile when he took the presidential oath of office.

Having said that, Austin, Milley, and McKenzie are such a disreputable, craven, dishonest, pathetic bunch of political hacks that it's entirely possible to believe that they're just singing the Sondheim song: "It's Biden's fault!" I mean, look at these three:

Austin shut down the military to weed out imaginary White Supremacist extremism. And now, when it comes to whether anyone actually told Biden about those 2,500 troops, he lapses into passive voice, saying "input was received by the president."

Milley? Gen. White Rage himself consistently bad-mouthed Trump, openly (and illegally, given his

role in the military) celebrated Biden's win, and admitted that he'd promised to give the Chinese advance warning should American launch an attack against it.

Think about that last one in connection with Gen. Mike Flynn having been destroyed merely for urging a Russian politician not to overreact to a diplomatic slight from the outgoing Obama administration.

And there's Gen. McKenzie who tried in August to sell the embarrassing withdrawal as "a monumental accomplishment." Or as Milley finally admitted, what happened in Afghanistan "was a logistical success but a strategic failure." That's a nice way to say a humiliating defeat for America and a betrayal of her allies.

These embarrassments to America's long and honorable military history were desperate to place blame anywhere but on themselves. Milley (as was to be expected) was the worst. He insisted that Americans abandoned in Afghanistan would have "been at greater risk" if the military had stayed "past the 31st."

But here's the thing about all these guys saying that Biden is to blame: All three are right, he is. Why then did they go along with a plan that they now claim they knew in advance would be disastrous?

And having gone along with it, perhaps in the naïve and unfounded belief that they could somehow prevent the worst from happening, why did they try to spin defeat as success?

And when they got called out on it by a single brave Marine Lt. Col. Stuart Scheller, why did they go full Soviet, sending him to a psychiatrist and the brig, rather than doing what any decent Japanese politico would have done under these circumstances—resign in disgrace and, perhaps, commit seppuku?

It's very clear that these poltroons and their equally craven predecessors in the Pentagon squandered American lives in Afghanistan for two decades. They never imagined victory. They imagined career advancement for themselves until their retirement, at which point they'd get economic advancement in the military-industrial sector.

Meanwhile, over 2,400 American troops died, as did over 1,800 civilian contractors. Another almost 21,000 Americans were sent home with wounds, some (thankfully) light, some so appalling it's a miracle they survived. They left America able-bodied; they came home to a life of physical disability.

And meanwhile, these medal-bedecked political hacks sit there and say "It's his fault; it's not my fault. It's their fault; not my fault." These moral weaklings should be shamed out of the military. (I'm absolutely sure that all three men have physical courage much, *much* greater than mine but

this was a time for moral courage—and they failed.)

Marsha Blackburn gets the last word on this one:

> @MarshaBlackburn: "Maybe we're going to remember you three as the three that broke the military." pic.twitter.com/RCLjvJvtrU
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> — Townhall.com (@townhallcom) September 28, 2021

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