

Biden's Withdrawal Will Have Global Consequences | Opinion

Would you trust Joe Biden in a crisis?

That's the question the United States' allies around the world are asking themselves these days, thanks to the president's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. In what can only be seen as a purely political decision—rather than a move to make our nation, our allies or our Afghan partners any safer—Biden has enabled the enslavement of roughly 39 million people to the Taliban. A population the size of California's was cavalierly discarded with no thought of the consequences, and no consideration of the American citizens left behind or the Afghans who helped America's war effort for years. This move can only create doubts in capitals around the world about Biden's decision-making capability, something no U.S. president should ever have to worry about.

But is any of this really a surprise? Over his decades as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and eight years as vice president, Biden has frequently been at the center of foreign policy train wrecks. Afghanistan, while only the most current example, could prove to be the most costly. The Taliban could take thousands of Americans hostage, and America's enemies will surely be emboldened. If Biden wouldn't come to the rescue of thousands of U.S. citizens as Afghanistan collapsed, would he really come to the aid of Taiwan in a crisis with China? Would he really help South Korea if North Korea attacked? What about Ukraine if Russia decided to invade?

The president's track record of getting things wrong in the Middle East is evidence that his only national security instinct is to try and gain a political advantage, and to play it safe, with no vision of how to keep America secure at all.



Afghan armed men supporting the Afghan security forces against the Taliban stand with their weapons and Humvee vehicles at Parakh area in Bazarak, Panjshir province on August 19, 2021. AHMAD SAHEL ARMAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

For starters, Biden opposed the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. Biden was also against the first Gulf War—if that had been the majority view, the United States would have left Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in charge of 20 percent of the world's oil reserves. Biden was then somehow in favor of the invasion of Iraq back in 2003, when there was little evidence Saddam had weapons of mass destruction or presented a threat to the U.S., our homeland or our allies. Biden then opposed the 2007 troop surge that stabilized Iraq—only to see U.S. forces leave under the Obama administration, an action that led to the rise of ISIS.

Biden's national security blunders are not limited to the Middle East. The president loves to brag about how he has spent more time with Chinese president Xi Jinping than with any other world leader, before the latter assumed power. Yet did any of Biden's knowledge lead to a robust China policy during the Obama-Biden years, when Beijing built a world-class military that can

now directly challenge America's position in the Indo-Pacific? What about when China built artificial islands in the South China Sea, a move that could allow Beijing to declare that body of water, worth trillions of dollars in trade and natural resources, off limits?

Then there is North Korea. Obama and Biden's policy on how to deal with North Korea amounted to what can only be described as "watch and wait." The consequences were disastrous. They watched while the Kim regime built more sophisticated nuclear weapons that could be miniaturized and placed on long-range missiles capable of reaching the U.S. homeland. They then waited for North Korea to make a step towards denuclearization, expecting they would be rewarded with talks on how Pyongyang would surrender its nuclear program. This so-called strategic patience policy was clearly a failure, and in 2017 led the U.S. and North Korea to the brink of armed conflict. And it's the same policy Joe Biden has adopted towards Pyongyang today, clearly having learned nothing from his past experience in the White House, all but guaranteeing North Korea builds more nuclear weapons.

In one of the greatest unforced errors in U.S. foreign policy history, President Biden has not only put in doubt his own national security instincts, but now gives America's enemies a green light to probe for weakness and exploit his horrendous decision-making skills on the world stage. But it was something we all should have seen coming.

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