

# Withdrawal of United States troops from Afghanistan (2020-2021) / Withdrawal was poorly executed

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## Position: Withdrawal was poorly executed

*This position addresses the topic Withdrawal of United States troops from Afghanistan (2020-2021).*

For this position

“ Since the first U.S. troops landed in Afghanistan, we’ve operated under a simple premise: We can fight radical Islamist terrorists over there, or we can fight them here. Two decades without a mass-casualty terrorist event on our soil proved the strategy was working. At the mission’s conclusion, we had just 2,500 troops in country and were spending about 1% of the Defense budget on operations. We hadn’t lost a soldier in over a year. The lid was on. ”

From Pathetic retreat from Afghanistan shows shrinking Biden isn't up to the task of president, by Scott Jennings (*The Courier-Journal*, September 2, 2021) ([view](#))

“ Certainly, it is good to know that the Americans didn’t leave a ground-to-air missile system at the airport so the Taliban could shoot down the last American plane as it left Kabul airport. But aside from that, it is hard to see the success here. For instance, there is no word on whether the US managed, in their hasty withdrawal, to disable the 350,000 assault rifles they left behind. Or the 126,000 pistols, 1,000 armored vehicles, 64,000 machine-guns, 22,000 Humvees or 42,000 pick-up trucks and SUVs. We’ll be seeing the fallout from that for a long time to come. And we’ll be lucky if that equipment only remains in Afghanistan. ”

From We have armed the Taliban to cause destruction in Afghanistan and elsewhere for generations, by Douglas Murray (*New York Post*, September 2, 2021) ([view](#))

“ There was no good reason — absolutely none — to end our military engagement in the haphazard, irresponsible manner that Biden chose to. There were countless other options at his disposal besides rushing an operation he promised would be “safe and orderly,” then proved anything but. All that has happened — the immediate collapse of the Afghan government, the emboldening of ISIS-K, a mad crush of Afghans and Americans desperate to leave the Taliban-controlled failed state, and even the needless deaths of U.S. service members to terrorist attacks — was predictable. ”

From How Biden got it so wrong: What explains the president's epic Afghanistan miscalculation, by S. E. Cupp (*New York Daily News*, September 1, 2021) (view)

“ And whether we were out to rid the world of Osama bin Laden or help Afghanistan secure a stable and secure government, our withdrawal is already having negative effects. First, there's the way the U.S. left Afghanistan's Bagram Airfield after nearly 20 years by shutting off the electricity and slipping away without notifying the base's new Afghan commander, who discovered the Americans' departure more than two hours after they left, according to the Associated Press. ”

From As U.S. leaves Afghanistan, Taliban on the rise, by Boston Herald editorial board (*Boston Herald*, July 7, 2021) (view)

“ As security worsened in the wake of a horrific terrorist attack at the airport last Thursday, and as U.S. troops prepared for their own departure on Monday, time and space ran out for these people. This is a moral disaster, one attributable not to the actions of military and diplomatic personnel in Kabul — who have been courageous and professional, in the face of deadly dangers — but to mistakes, strategic and tactical, by Mr. Biden and his administration. ”

From America is leaving thousands of people behind in Afghanistan. This is a moral disaster., by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, August 30, 2021) (view)

“ The administration's reputation for competence has taken a serious hit, and that affects its ability to exert influence. Allies who feel misused will be more cautious about supporting U.S. efforts. The president's agenda is likely to be harder to carry out than before. ”

From 'America is back?' Not quite — especially after Biden's disaster in Afghanistan, by Doyle McManus (*The Miami Herald*, August 30, 2021) (view)

“ Is there a greater terrorist threat today than Afghanistan? The UN says thousands of "foreign fighters" have poured into Afghanistan in the past months, energized by the Taliban's victories, to join jihadist groups such as al Qaeda. Just when you think that Biden's unforced error of unilaterally and incompetently withdrawing from Afghanistan couldn't get any worse, it does. ”

From Why Biden's views on the Afghan terror attack make no sense, by Peter Bergen (*CNN*, August 28, 2021) (view)

“ Biden's hasty and unilateral decision to abandon NATO's Afghanistan mission has done more damage to that alliance than the strains of 45 Cold War years did. Worldwide, nations are recalibrating their security policies, weighing reliance on a wobbly, impulsive United States against accommodation with a China that is on a different trajectory. Biden's immediate task is to reassess his reliance on the intelligence, military and policymaking officials who gave him assessments and assurances that have been shredded by events. ”

From Biden's Afghanistan policy shows the world a wobbly, impulsive U.S., by George F. Will (*The Washington Post*, August 27, 2021) (view)

“ The right way to withdraw was to keep a sufficient military force in place to keep the Taliban at bay until all of those in these categories who wanted to leave had the chance to do so. The military should have been the last to leave, not the first. Bush made his mistake in the way he stayed in. Biden made his in the way he got out. ”

From George W. Bush made the bigger mistake in Afghanistan, by Robert Robb (*The Arizona Republic*, August 22, 2021) (view)

“ Every president from George W. Bush forward failed to get the U.S. out of Afghanistan, the longest war in U.S. history. Biden did get us out, but at great cost to our international reputation and national honor. He can, with some justification, blame others for the bad hand he was dealt, but the disgrace happened on his watch. It is his responsibility. ”

From A disgraceful exit from Afghanistan, by Tulsa World editorial board (*Tulsa World*, August 20, 2021) (view)

“ Biden's miscalculations - on Afghan soldiers' ability and will to fight without American support, on timing the withdrawal in the height of fighting season, on the amount of time, planning and military support needed to evacuate diplomats, aid workers and Afghan allies - are catastrophic. America can't undo the damage that's been done. We can only control how much worse it gets. ”

From America lost more than a war in Afghanistan. We lost our conscience., by Houston Chronicle editorial board (*Houston Chronicle*, August 20, 2021) (view)

“ It didn't have to be this way. The U.S. government could have decided to do only what was militarily achievable — destroy the enemy wherever he hid — including in Pakistan — and we could have de-escalated our involvement years ago. After thousands of precious warriors' lives were lost, we should have at least maintained a very small presence there, like the U.S. military presence at the end of Trump's term, to keep order, conduct airstrikes, and to back the ANSF. ”

From U.S. departure from Afghanistan was a fiasco — and President Biden owns it, by Rebeccah L. Heinrichs (*The Miami Herald*, August 19, 2021) (view)

“ Put simply, when Mr. Biden began pulling out U.S. advisers to the Afghan army, he also removed U.S. military flight crews and aircraft that flew the missions that had kept the Taliban at bay. He pulled out the maintenance contractors who kept the tiny Afghan Air Force aloft. And he did so at the height of the summer fighting season in Afghanistan. An Afghan army trained to operate with American air support was suddenly without its major weapon. ”

From The Afghanistan disaster, by The Post and Courier editorial board (*The Post and Courier*, August 17, 2021) (view)

“ A highly decorated British soldier named James Glancy returned to Afghanistan in February. He was helped on that trip by four Afghan interpreters. Yesterday he announced that all four were murdered last Thursday outside their homes in Kandahar. The dark days of Afghanistan are back and Biden has blood on his hands. ”

From Biden's Disastrous Afghanistan Withdrawal, by Nigel Farage (*Newsweek*, August 17, 2021) (view)

“ More time for the Afghans didn't have to entail combat troops, just a core American presence for training, air support and intelligence. More time for us might have retained American intelligence and counterterrorism assets on the ground to protect our allies and our homeland from the reemergence of a terrorist haven. More time might have preserved our sophisticated Bagram air base in the middle of a dangerous region that includes Pakistan and borders the most dangerous country in the Middle East — Iran. ”

From The Afghan people didn't choose the Taliban. They fought and died alongside us., by Condoleezza Rice (*The Washington Post*, August 17, 2021) (view)

“ The U.S. security establishment dithered for 20 years, unwilling to confront Islamabad effectively or to recognize that failure and change its Afghan policy to accommodate its consequences. As it is, Pakistan—a nuclear power with a record of promoting proliferation and deep ties both to China and to the most hate-filled and murderous jihadist groups—has faced down America and achieved its long-term goal of reinstalling a friendly regime to its north. Whether Pakistan will be happy with its radical neighbor in the long term remains to be seen, but for now Pakistani hard-liners are celebrating the greatest single win in their history. ”

From Biden's Chamberlain Moment in Afghanistan, by Walter Russell Mead (*The Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2021) (view)

“ It was a choice with disastrous consequences. Any incentive for the Taliban to negotiate peace was gone. A security umbrella of U.S. air cover that had staved off battlefield defeats for Afghan troops evaporated. (A small Afghan air force with pilots overworked and targeted for assassination has not been up to the task.) And crucially, the morale disintegrated among frontline Afghan troops already poorly fed, denied pay and deprived of bullets and fuel. ”

From Biden's Afghanistan horror: A well-intentioned miscalculation with disastrous, predictable results, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, August 16, 2021) (view)

“ Mr. Trump's withdrawal deadline was a mistake, but Mr. Biden could have maneuvered around it. He knows this because his Administration conducted an internal policy review that provided him with options. The Taliban had already violated its pledges under the deal. Mr. Biden could have maintained the modest presence his military and foreign-policy advisers suggested. He could have decided to withdraw but done so based on conditions on the ground while preparing the Afghans with a plan for transition and air support. ”

From Biden's Afghanistan Surrender, by The Wall Street Journal editorial board (*The Wall Street Journal*, August 15, 2021) (view)

“ But is there any reason we should care more about the fate of Afghans than we do of desperate people elsewhere? Yes, because our inability to help everyone, everywhere doesn't relieve us of the obligation to help someone, somewhere — and because America's power and reputation in the world are also functions of being a beacon of confidence and hope. ”

From Biden owns the moment. He'll also own the consequences., by Bret Stephens (*The New York Times*, August 15, 2021) (view)

“ It has long been clear that an American withdrawal, however or whenever conducted, would leave the Taliban poised to seize control of Afghanistan once again. The war needed to end. But the Biden administration could and should have taken more care to protect those who risked everything in pursuit of a different future, however illusory those dreams proved to be. ”

From The Tragedy of Afghanistan, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, August 15, 2021) (view)

“ We didn’t disagree with Biden’s move to remove the last US ground forces, just as Donald Trump promised as well when he was in office. That’s plainly what most Americans wanted, too. Afghanistan had become an endless war. But any pullout had to have a plan. Not an utterly disastrous cut-and-run, with virtually no provision for the Afghans who worked with us all these years. ”

From This Afghan rout is entirely on Joe Biden, by New York Post editorial board (*New York Post*, August 12, 2021) (view)

## Against this position

“ The evacuation started off badly but turned out to be masterful. The administration and the military adapted quickly. The airlift is one of the biggest in U.S. military history; about 114,400 people had been evacuated as of Sunday. ”

From There's chaos and risk in Afghanistan exit, but Biden critics are getting it mostly wrong, by David Rothkopf (*USA Today*, August 29, 2021) (view)

“ The administration has acknowledged that the Afghan government collapsed far faster than intelligence analysts and most military and diplomatic experts had anticipated. Fair enough. But the truth is that the Afghan government had itself urged against a mass evacuation, fearing that the sight of thousands of Afghans leaving on planes would undermine the already shaky confidence in the government of President Ashraf Ghani and his Western-backed forces. Moreover, as Biden reiterated Thursday, no war ends with a completely smooth, bloodless withdrawal of all troops and allied civilians. ”

From The latest tragedy in Kabul, by Sewell Chan (*Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 2021) (view)

“ The disaster unfolding today is the product of years of mismanagement and strategic neglect in Afghanistan across four presidencies, Democratic and Republican, by both military and civilian leaders alike. Both Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump pledged to end the U.S. war in Afghanistan. Only Biden had the courage to do so. The situation unfolding in Afghanistan is heartbreaking, but the alternative would have been worse: continuing to throw away American lives in an unwinnable war. ”

From US waited too long to withdraw from Afghanistan, by Paul Scharre (*USA Today*, August 17, 2021) (view)

## Mixed on this position

*No results*

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