

Myth vs. Fact

“Willful Blindness: An Assessment of the Biden-Harris Administration’s Withdrawal from Afghanistan”

Myth: The Doha Agreement forced the Biden-Harris administration to withdraw.

- **FACT:** The Doha Agreement was conditions-based. By late 2020, the Taliban were not meeting their obligations under the Doha Agreement. For that reason, President Trump decided to maintain 2,500 U.S. troops in the country until he left office on January 20, 2021. (Report, pg. 42) The U.S.’ withdrawal of troops was contingent upon the Taliban meeting certain obligations (Report, pg. 18), including:
 - Cutting ties with al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations;
 - Ceasing attacks on U.S. and coalition troops;
 - Reducing violence against Afghan forces; and
 - Starting negotiations with the Afghan government.
- **FACT:** President Biden and VP Harris would have withdrawn troops anyway. In an [interview](#) with ABC’s George Stephanopoulos, President Biden admitted he would have withdrawn from Afghanistan with or without the Doha Agreement.
 - [Stephanopoulos](#): “So would you have withdrawn troops like this even if President Trump had not made that deal with the Taliban?”
 - [President Biden](#): “I would’ve tried to figure out how to withdraw those troops, yes.”
- **FACT:** State Department Spokesperson Price admitted Taliban adherence to the Doha Agreement was “immaterial” to the administration’s decision to withdraw. (Report, pg. 51)
- **FACT:** President Biden was presented with three options upon taking office: rip up the Doha Agreement in the same way he revoked other Trump administration agreements, like Remain in Mexico; abide by the Doha Agreement and enforce the conditions; or ignore Doha and unconditionally withdraw. He picked option three. (Report, pg. 55)

Myth: The Biden-Harris administration “planned for every contingency.”

- **FACT:** The State Department did not plan for an evacuation under a Taliban-controlled Kabul, which was the most likely scenario. (Report, pg. 86, 113)
- **FACT:** There were only two interagency rehearsal of concept (ROC) drills were conducted, and the embassy did not fully engage in NEO planning until August 6th — a little more than a week prior to the fall of Kabul. (Report, pg. 22, 81, 113)
- **FACT:** Secretary Blinken and Ambassador Wilson went on vacation as the Taliban swept through Afghanistan. While Ambassador Wilson was on vacation in July, the Defense Department were unable to continue planning as embassy planning ground to a halt. And, as the Taliban entered Kabul, Secretary Blinken was vacationing in East Hampton. (Report, pg. 22, 81, 113)
- **FACT:** Notes from an NSC meeting on August 14th, the day the Taliban surrounded Kabul, reveal the U.S. government still had not determined who would be eligible for evacuation, nor had they identified third countries to serve as transit points for an evacuation. (Report, pg. 116)

- **FACT:** Embassy Kabul did not have a roster of its own personnel. Instead, an employee had to go room to room to clear the compound, finding two embassy staffers not known to even be on the property. (Report, pg. 130)
- **FACT:** There was no plan for how to destroy the 20 years worth of sensitive and classified documents stored at the embassy, which employees testified would have taken weeks. Instead, they were only given hours. As a result, droves of classified information was left behind for the Taliban to find. (Report, pg. 129)
- **FACT:** Ambassador Wilson did not request a NEO until August 15th — **after** Taliban had already overrun Kabul. President Biden ordered the NEO on August 16th. (Report, pg. 127)
- **FACT:** Secretary Blinken and Ambassador Wilson went on vacation as the Taliban swept through Afghanistan. While Ambassador Wilson was on vacation in July, the Defense Department were unable to continue planning as embassy planning ground to a halt. And, as the Taliban entered Kabul, Secretary Blinken was vacationing in East Hampton. (Report, pg. 109, 122)

Myth: This report is political, with Republicans waiting until election time to do this investigation. This investigation wasn't needed because an investigation had already been conducted.

- **FACT:** The Biden-Harris administration obstructed every attempt by Committee Republicans to gain access to critical information, delaying the investigation and the release of the report. Every single document and every single word of testimony we received from administration officials were obtained only after a subpoena being served, or in some instances, a subpoena being served **and** a threat of contempt of Congress. To this day, Secretary Blinken and NSA Sullivan continue to refuse to testify before this committee. (Report, pg. 195-198)
 - **Example:** The committee majority requested the AAR files on January 12, 2023. After over one full year of good-faith requests from the committee, Chairman McCaul was forced to threaten contempt proceedings against Secretary Blinken for the files on February 26, 2024. It was only then that the department produced the materials underlying the AAR, namely the AAR interview notes. (Report, pg. 196-197)
- **FACT:** When Democrats held the majority, they only held a single hearing on Afghanistan, and took no action to hold anyone accountable for the botched withdrawal. They did not request a single transcribed interview with anyone nor did they publicly request a single document. ([Minority Website](#))
- **FACT:** Committee Republicans consistently urged Committee Democrats to abide by their constitutional obligation to conduct oversight when they were in the majority. When they continued to refuse to do so, House Republicans [filed a Resolution of Inquiry](#) that would have forced Democrats to take a stand on whether they think the State Department should turn over the information then-Ranking Member McCaul requested on the withdrawal. Democrats refused to bring this to the House floor for a vote.
- **FACT:** Chairman McCaul and Committee Republicans conducted this investigation with integrity, not drawing conclusion ahead of time but rather looking at the facts and evidence collected. Over the last two years alone, the committee has held seven public hearings or roundtables, conducted 18 transcribed interviews, and successfully subpoenaed over 20,000 pages of documents. The report is simply a recitation of those facts and evidence collected. (Report, pg. 9-14)

- **FACT:** Ranking Member Meeks and/or minority staff were on every email sent to the administration requesting information, had access to all the documents produced, were afforded equal time to ask questions in every transcribed interview, and had the ability to participate in every public hearing or roundtable. Congressional Democrats and the Biden-Harris administration also received a copy of the report before it was released to the public.
- **FACT:** This investigation has been about finding out what happened so we can ensure it never happens again. That includes determining who was responsible for this catastrophe so we can, after three long years of Democrats stonewalling, hold those people accountable. ([Majority Website](#))

Myth: Vice President Harris was not involved in the administration's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan.

- **FACT:** Vice President Harris publicly admitted she was the last person in the room when President Biden made the decision to unconditionally withdraw from Afghanistan. (Report, pg. 57)
- **FACT:** Vice President Harris's staff [described](#) her as being "100% all in" for the withdrawal.
- **FACT:** On the three-year anniversary of the Abbey Gate attack, Vice President Harris touted the withdrawal as a success, calling the decision "courageous and right." (Report, pg. 192)
- **FACT:** Vice President Harris [promised](#) to protect Afghan women. They currently live bleak, oppressive lives where they are not allowed to work, study, speak in public, travel, or even leave the house without a male escort. Child marriages are skyrocketing, with young girls being sold into slavery so their family can afford to eat. (Report, pg. 215)

Myth: No one advised President Biden to keep troops in Afghanistan.

- **FACT:** Despite President Biden's public assertions to the contrary, our investigation has revealed the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), the Secretary of State, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and the Commander of NATO's Resolute Support Mission and United States Forces – Afghanistan all advised against withdrawing all U.S. troops from the country — both during and after the interagency review. (Report, pg. 19)

Myth: "No one" anticipated that Kabul would fall as quickly as it did.

- **FACT:** General McKenzie testified he was unequivocal in his advice to the president, warning him a rapid collapse of the Afghan government and military would follow if the United States went to zero. General Miller assessed at the time that a go-to-zero order would result in a rapid collapse of the Afghan government and military. General Milley, Secretary Austin, SIGAR Sopko, and others issued similar warnings. (Report, pg. 109)

Myth: NATO allies agreed that it was time to withdraw from Afghanistan.

- **FACT:** NATO allies argued against a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan and were not pleased with President Biden's unilateral decision to withdraw. (Report, pg. 41, 42)

Myth: Americans are safer because of the Biden-Harris administration's withdrawal.

- **FACT:** August 26, 2021 was the deadliest day for U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan since 2012. To this day, President Biden and Vice President Harris have still not said the names of the 13 U.S. servicemembers outloud.
 - **FACT:** President Biden checked his watch multiple times during the dignified transfer ceremony for 11 of the 13 servicemembers killed at Abbey Gate. The administration has continued to lie about this, even after photographic evidence was released.
- **FACT:** The Biden-Harris administration's botched withdrawal allowed terrorism to flourish and left Americans more vulnerable to attack. FBI Director Wray pointed specifically to the withdrawal from Afghanistan as impeding the intelligence community's ability to vet and watch-list potential threats. (Report, pg. 229)
- **FACT:** Current CENTCOM Commander General Kurilla testified Afghanistan is a hotbed for terrorism and the U.S. has limited insights into Afghanistan due to the withdrawal. (Report, pg. 225)
- **FACT:** Taliban has established 6,836 madrassas for men and 380 madrassas for women as of April 2024, with a selection of the designated as "jihadi madrassas." (Report, pg. 227)
- **FACT:** The Biden-Harris administration's open-border policies have collided with their biggest foreign policy disaster. Because ISIS-K now has governing space, they can more easily plan external operations against U.S. interests at home and abroad. In June 2024, the Department of Homeland Security identified over 400 persons of interest from Central Asia who had illegally crossed the U.S. southern border with the help of an ISIS-related smuggling network. Reportedly, the U.S. arrested over 150 of these individuals, while many remain at large. That same month, the FBI arrested eight individuals with ties to ISIS-K, who entered through our southern border. (Report, pg. 230)