

Joe Biden's Bizarro World of Foreign Policy "Achievements"

By Victor Davis Hanson

Departing President Joe Biden offered a farewell brag this week to his State Department about how his tenure had improved America's stature abroad. In his now accustomed weird mix of whispering and fiery shouting, Biden apparently felt he had to lie or mislead about almost every one of his "achievements."



Yet to the extent that anything improved abroad on his watch—the weakening of Iran or the near destruction of Hamas and Hezbollah—it was due despite, not because of, Biden.

Biden, bowing to election year political pressure, did all he could to restrain and block Israeli retaliations to the October 7 massacres. Only after he was repeatedly proven wrong does he now shamelessly take credit for what Israel ironically achieved by ignoring his own threats directed at Israel.

Biden is correct only that Iran is "weaker than it's been in decades." But Tehran was aided, not hurt, by Biden's nonstop efforts to lift sanctions, to allow Iran to make billions in oil revenues, to pay the theocracy billions of dollars in hostage ransom, and to beg the mullahs to reenter the ill-starred Iran deal. Everything Biden did makes it much harder

for Israel to survive.

So, Iran is now weakened only because Israel ignored Biden's nonstop ankle-biting and finger-shaking not to retaliate to Iranian aggression. Instead, the Netanyahu government systematically destroyed Iranian air defenses after killing most of Iran's foreign terrorist operatives.

Biden referenced the end of the Assad regime in Syria, but it imploded not due to any effort by Biden. It was overwhelmed instead only after the Israeli decimation of Hezbollah and humiliation of Iran—coupled with the election victory of Donald Trump—that encouraged Assad's enemies to attack a now isolated and weakened regime.

Biden is also taking credit for rumors that Hamas might release its hostages, who have been held in a subterranean labyrinth since October 7.

But why, with less than a week left in his tenure, did Biden believe Hamas might begin releasing the hostages when even his own Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, has criticized the administration for spending 16 months pressuring Israel, which only emboldened Hamas's stonewalling?

Much more likely, the election of Donald Trump and his threat to unleash terrible retribution on Hamas (and implicitly on Iran) had prompted the terrorists' tardy willingness to negotiate a release.

Of the horrific scramble from Afghanistan—the greatest humiliation of the US military in a half-century that cost the lives of 13 Marines—Biden boasted: “[I am] the first president in decades who's not leaving a war in Afghanistan to his successor.”

Think of his warped logic: Biden does not leave a war to his successor only because he fled in humiliation and lost it.

Biden also took credit for saving Ukraine from Russia. But he conveniently omitted why Russia invaded in the first place.

Had Biden not destroyed American deterrence by fleeing Kabul and leaving behind billions of dollars in abandoned U.S. military equipment, had he not claimed, prior to the Russian invasion, that his reaction to Putin's likely aggression would hinge on whether it was "a minor incursion," then the Russians might never have invaded at all.

Vladimir Putin grabbed Crimea and the Donbass in 2014 during the Obama-Biden administration. He later sought to swallow the entire country with an attack on Kyiv in 2022 on Biden's watch.

However, Putin stayed within his borders only during one of the last four administrations—Donald Trump's.

Biden crowed that he accomplished all these misadventures without the use of force—"We have not gone to war to make these things happen."

But Biden did more than any other recent president to weaken the U.S. military. Under his tenure, the Pentagon suffered a real reduction in its budget. And it never quite recovered from the Afghanistan debacle.

Annually, the military now comes up 40,000 recruits short due to Biden's draconian vaccination requirements, its new woke mandates, and its constant false accusations of "white rage" and "white privilege" in the ranks—libels that prompted a Pentagon internal investigation that found no such racism.

China was never more bellicose than during Biden's presidency. It serially threatened Taiwan, used cyber warfare to bully the U.S., brazenly expropriated U.S. military technology, and without worry sent a spy balloon to traverse the U.S. with impunity.

Biden's open border saw more than 10 million illegal entries, among them thousands of Chinese nationals. Meanwhile, Chinese investors were freed to systematically buy up thousands of acres of America's farmland adjacent to sensitive US military bases and installations.

Add it all up, and Biden would have done better to have just kept quiet and departed his failed presidency in shame.

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