

Twitter Thread by [Drew Holden](#)



[Drew Holden](#)
[@DrewHolden360](#)



■THREAD■

Today, President Biden announced his intention to end the war in Afghanistan, to great media fanfare.

You may remember, way back in 2019 & 2020, President Trump said the same thing.

Let me know if you can spot the difference in coverage then vs. now■■■

When Trump said we were leaving, [@CNN](#) quoted the NATO Sec Gen with a “stark warning” about how “dangerous” the move would be.

But Biden’s decision? Well, on that one, we just get to hear from his people.



CNN 
@CNN



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg issued a stark warning that any premature withdrawal from Afghanistan could be dangerous, a day after reports that President Trump is eyeing a troop drawdown against the advice of the nation's top military officials.



One of the things I've discussed before is how outlets can frame the narrative they want by focusing on people who support or oppose a certain policy. It's misleading, but also a calling card of @CNN.



CNN 
@CNN



"This is just reckless and it is really risky," says [@BrettBruen](#) of Trump's plan to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and Iraq.

"You're not sharing information with the incoming administration, so the likelihood that something could go wrong is very, very high."



Via Cisco Webex
Alexandria, VA
2:51 PM ET

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
IN THE UNITED STATES
TOTAL CASES
11,266,552
DEATHS
247,696
SOURCE: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

CNN ELECTORAL MAP
BIDEN 306 TRUMP 232
270 NEEDED TO WIN

THE TRANSITION
TRUMP'S SCORCHED-EARTH PLANS CLEARER AS TERM EXPIRES
Brett Bruen | President, Global Situation Room

S&P -6.18
NEWSROOM

Diplomats worry Trump's desire to withdraw US troops risks success of Afghan-Taliban talks

By Kylie Atwood and Jennifer Hansler, CNN

Updated 7:01 AM EDT, Fri September 11, 2020



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Once upon a time, [@nytimes](#) told us that Trump's decision was a capitulation to the Taliban where we would get nothing in return - as if blood not shed and treasure not spent means nothing.

But Biden's call? Well, for some reason these concerns seem to have evaporated.

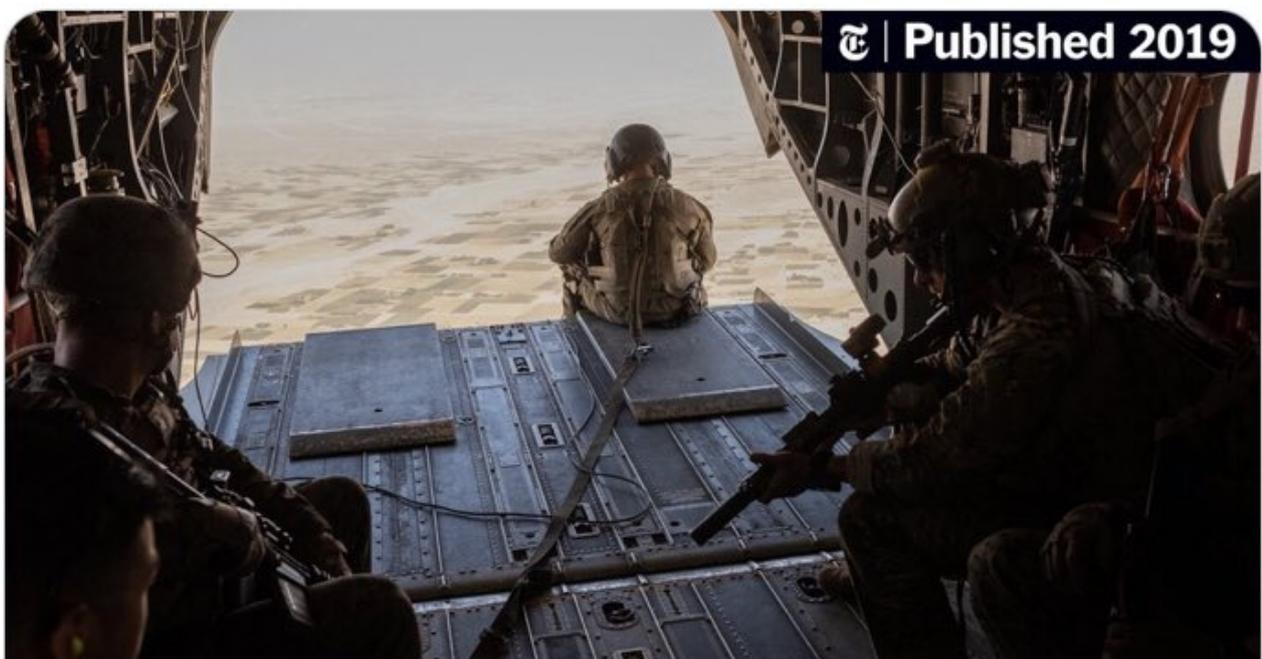


The New York Times 

@nytimes



News Analysis: The Taliban wanted the U.S. to leave Afghanistan, Turkey wanted the U.S. out of Syria and North Korea wanted them to stop military exercises with South Korea. Trump has now to some extent obliged all 3 — but without getting much in return.



For Trump, we hear about the “fears” of Afghan officials from [@nytimes](#).

Biden, on the other hand, gets a sympathetic write up despite being the second most powerful man in the country during the height of US forces. Just incredible memoryholing here.



The New York Times 
@nytimes



President Trump ordered a reduction down to 2,500 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Afghan officials fear the cuts, which will happen before President-elect Joe Biden takes office, will encourage the Taliban to keep fighting.



U.S. Troops Are Packing Up, Ready or Not
[nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)

This one from @TIME might be the most egregious of them all. I mean. Cmon.



TIME ✓
@TIME



Can Donald Trump accept a defeat in Afghanistan?



Can Donald Trump Accept a Defeat in Afghanistan?
time.com

9:45 AM · 2/1/18 · [SocialFlow](#)

Also, what even is this, @TIME?



TIME 
@TIME



Trevor Noah says Donald Trump's Afghanistan war strategy is like his position on Nazis: "It's unclear"



Trevor Noah Slams Donald Trump's Afghanistan War Strategy
time.com

11:25 AM · 8/23/17 · [SocialFlow](#)

These tweets are mere months apart from [@MSNBC](#). Stunningly, they found people to say the exact opposite things about the decision to pull out.



MSNBC 
@MSNBC



Fmr. Special Presidential Envoy Brett McGurk on President Trump pulling troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan: "Not only does it sabotage [the Biden admin.], it also puts our troops at greater risk."



Brett McGurk: 'There's no reason' for Trump's move to pull troops from Afghanistan
[msnbc.com](https://www.msnbc.com)

So much of today's coverage reads as if nothing had ever been said to the contrary by anyone on [@MSNBC](#)



MSNBC 
@MSNBC



Mayor Buttigieg, who served in Afghanistan, says Trump makes foreign policy decisions "impulsively, erratically, emotionally."



Mayor Pete: Trump's foreign policy erratic, impulsive, & troubling
[msnbc.com](https://www.msnbc.com)

2:08 AM · 6/12/19 · [SocialFlow](#)

Its interesting that [@maddow/@MaddowBlog](#) no longer seem to see the invisible hand of Russia calling the shots now that it is Biden pulling troops out of Afghanistan. Instead, it's a great thing.



Maddow Blog ✓
@MaddowBlog



Within hours of Vladimir Putin's pivot to mention the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, the Wall Street Journal had news of Donald Trump ordering a reduction in U.S. troops in Afghanistan.



110K views

10:14 PM · 12/20/18 · [Wildmoka](#)



The Washington Post 
@washingtonpost



Trump administration to cut troop levels in Afghanistan despite Pentagon warnings



Trump administration to cut troop levels in Afghanistan and Iraq in sprint to deliver on pr...
[washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)

Some places, like @NPR, don't even seem to be trying at this rate.

Were no military leaders worried when Biden made the decision to do the same thing?



NPR 
@NPR



The Trump administration says it will pull thousands of troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan by Jan. 15 and aims to have the remaining forces out by Spring 2021 — a drawdown that has military leaders worried.



Trump Administration Wants All U.S. Troops
Out Of Iraq And Afghanistan By Spring

[npr.org](https://www.npr.org)

For PBS [@NewsHour](#), Trump's decisions were instantly refracted through the lens of those who oppose him.

For Biden, we just hear from him directly on the benefits of his plans.



PBS NewsHour 
@NewsHour



"Pure politics so he can brag."
That's how [@nytdavidbrooks](#)
explains President Trump's
Afghanistan strategy.



4,081 views

6:43 PM · 11/20/20 · [Grabyo](#)

When it was Trump making the decisions, @ABC rushed to tell us about how the decision would “undermine his administration’s agreement with the Taliban.”

It didn’t. And now that Biden is calling the shots, we’ve got nothing but pomp, circumstance and PR pull quotes.



ABC News 
@ABC



Pres. Trump said "it is time" for all U.S. service members to exit Afghanistan, undermining his administration's agreement with the Taliban.



Trump says 'it is time' for US troops to exit Afghanistan, undermining agreement with Ta...
abcnews.go.com

3:53 AM · 5/28/20 · [SocialFlow](#)

I've got a separate thread on this but let this be your reminder that there isn't any evidence of the existence of the Russian bounties story. And yet it also found its way into @ABC's coverage for Trump. @nytimes too.

US tries to push forward Taliban deal amid bounty reports, Trump's moves to withdraw from Afghanistan

Secretary of State Pompeo urged the group's leaders to not attack Americans.

By **Conor Finnegan**

June 30, 2020, 7:16 PM ET • 8 min read



Previous thread on bounties: <https://t.co/YkdaQxJwcd>

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We need fact checks. But it\u2019s a problem when wrong or unverified claims aren\u2019t checked from one side of the aisle.

Case in point: the \u201cRussian bounties\u201d theory that was recently dashed. MANY people were pushing this allegation.

So will we get a followup [@MaddowBlog?](#) <pic.twitter.com/qHVIKt8eWy>

— Drew Holden (@DrewHolden360) [September 16, 2020](#)

And [@JRubinBlogger](#) is so, so close to getting it.



Jennifer 'pro-voting' Rubin 

@JRubinBlogger



More to the point, why is Trump handing off chunks of the world — Syria, Afghanistan, the Sea of Azov — to America's greatest international foe? Where does it stop-- the Baltics? Berlin?



Opinion | After two years Trump is more ignorant on foreign policy

I've got to hand it to him, though. He may be wrong, but @MaxBoot is consistent in his urging that America be invested in building democracy or what have you despite the overwhelming evidence opposing the wisdom of doing so.



Max Boot 

@MaxBoot



Trump is not ending the war in Afghanistan, but he is ending America's involvement and thereby making more likely a victory for terrorists who slaughter mothers and babies.

In [@PostOpinions](#):



Opinion | How can Trump look past the slaughter of mothers and babies in Afghanist...

This situation has given us one of the clearest examples of framing for materially similar actions by different presidents.

Would anyone look at these side by sides and think they were impartial and balanced?

It should go without saying, but this is really, really bad.

The narrative shift is striking even though the goal of each policy is the same.

It isn't sustainable to have information twisted and crammed into narratives this way.