

The Future of Joe Biden Depends on the Goodwill of the Taliban. Can You Say “Crazy”

Joe Biden won his party's nomination because he wasn't Bernie Sanders and he won the presidency because he wasn't Donald Trump. And if that sounds simple it's because it is.

Mr. Biden didn't win because he convinced a majority of voters he was a man of great vision or wisdom. They voted for him because they were tired of the chaos and deception they got from his predecessor, Donald Trump.

So what did they get in Joe Biden? They got the chaos and the deception they thought they had rejected. They got the fiasco in Afghanistan. They got a man who so far has denied any hint of failure, has refused to acknowledge any mistakes, claims the chaotic mess we witnessed on television was inevitable, and whenever he can, blames Donald Trump for the whole thing.

They got “a diminished man living in a world of delusion,” as Bill O'Reilly put it in his most recent column.

And they got something else they didn't bargain for: Not “middle class Joe” – a guy not that different from the rest of us “ordinary” Americans. Instead they got a deeply political man whose main interest, like that of so many politicians, is looking out for Number One.

When he went on national television ABC News correspondent George Stephanopoulos said, “We've got like 10 to 15,000 Americans in the country right now. Right? And are you committed to making sure that the troops stay until every American who wants to be out is out?”

“Yes,” Biden replied.

But that was one more thing that wasn't true. When the Taliban took control of Kabul, President Biden needed to make sure not only that there would be no U.S. casualties – but also that his own standing in the polls wouldn't take a hit. So he broke his promise. He wanted us out by August 31 – even we had to leave some Americans and our Afghan allies behind.

This is not only cynical. It's dishonorable.

Like a vast majority of Americans, I thought 20 years in that God forsaken mess of a country was long enough. But I'm not naïve. I know our absence may cause all sorts of very serious problems.

President Biden must know that too. But I suspect he's counting on the short memory of the American people. If things go smoothly from here on out, maybe they won't remember – or maybe won't care all that much about the fall of Afghanistan to a violent, fundamentalist tribe like the Taliban. Maybe they'll only see him as the man who ended our longest war.

But that may be wishful thinking.

Biden desperately wanted to avoid any images that might be politically damaging, so instead of using however many U.S. troops we needed to smooth the way for our departure, he instead depended on the Taliban to allow safe passage to Americans and our allies who wanted to catch a plane out of the country. He depended on the Taliban to make sure our final days in Afghanistan were not marred by chaos. That didn't turn out as planned. A suicide bomber that somehow got past Taliban security blew himself up and killed 13 U.S. service men and women – along with scores of others.

And now Biden is counting on the same Taliban to act civilized, to let the Americans and our allies who couldn't get out by August 31 leave safely, sooner rather than later –

if at all. He's counting on the Taliban not to seek revenge on anyone and everyone they saw as the enemy.

So it comes down to this for Joe Biden, a man who is looking out for his reputation and his place in history: His future –and the future of his political party – depends on the good will of the Taliban. Did he think of that?

But if they don't behave I'm sure Joe Biden will issue a strong statement expressing his disappointment and disapproval. And there's a good chance that after they stop laughing, the Taliban will wonder how the American people ever elected such a man in the first place.