

Strategies initiated by the US against international terrorism during the presidency of Joe Biden

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Abstract

The paper explores the reforms and strategies that were initiated by U.S. against international terrorism during Biden's presidency. By keeping a laser-like focus on terrorism and working both alone and with allies to disrupt threats globally and weaken ISIS and al-Qaida, President Biden sought to keep Americans safe and secure.

The first part of the article encompasses the general overview about the National Security Memorandum, that was signed By President Joe Biden to Counter International Terrorism, which calls for funding partnerships, promoting civilian-led, nonlethal approaches whenever feasible, focusing on the most pressing threats to the United States, and carrying out the counterterrorism mission in a way that aligns with American values

In the second part of the research, is fully considered about the reforms that were initiated by Biden. These were internationally taken steps that embraced message to as Iraq as to all terrorists who pose a threat to America.

Keywords: Terrorism, Joe Biden, nuclear conflict

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Introduction

There has also long been a tendency to turn away from terrorism and to scale back counterterrorism initiatives. Biden stated early on in his vice-presidential term that he does not view terrorism as an existential threat to the United States, unlike, say, an unintentional nuclear conflict. According to Biden, terrorism can lead to serious issues. It may erode trust. It has a comparatively high death rate. However, he stated prior to the 2016 presidential elections that terrorism is not an existential threat. This view is further supported by the strategy, which views the difficulties brought on by a deteriorating climate crisis as an existential risk to the United States. The new president's national security priorities are centered on addressing climate change and moving toward a clean, resilient, and equitable energy future, with counterterrorism taking a backseat (Baumann, 2021).

In August 2020, the Biden campaign released a Plan for Arab American Partnership. This document highlights significant implications for Biden's future counterterrorism strategy while simultaneously focusing on reestablishing the relationship with Arab Americans in the context of race and discrimination (Baumann, 2021).

The Biden administration first pledges to terminate the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Program, as per the Plan. The prevention program, which was first introduced under the Obama administration as the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program and renamed as TVTP under Trump, has drawn criticism from civil rights activists for unfairly and discriminatorily targeting Muslim communities. In addition to acknowledging the initiative's failure, Biden pledged to carry out a comprehensive analysis of previous initiatives prior to introducing any new prevention initiatives (Baumann, 2021).

Second, Biden promised to review the watch list and no-fly list procedures to make sure they don't negatively affect people or groups based on their race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin. He also promised to improve the procedure for removing names from these lists when appropriate. In addition, watch lists have long been criticized for unfairly singling out

specific racial and religious minorities and for making it very difficult to challenge once a person's name has been added (Baumann, 2021).

Third, the future Biden administration's change in priorities is hinted at in the Plan for Partnership. In contrast to the "foreign threat" that counterterrorism efforts have attempted to address over the past 20 years, the document emphasizes the growing threat posed by "violence from white supremacists and incitement to violence by far-right extremists," which comes from within. Biden pledges to increase funding to combat "white nationalist terrorism" in his campaign plan (Baumann, 2021).

Regarding the relationship with the Muslim American community, a similar plan was published. The Agenda for Muslim-American Communities shares the Plan for Partnership with Arab Americans' primary focus on racial and social issues. There is one section, though, that merits special attention. Biden pledges to give "redemption and rehabilitation" for those who are incarcerated—of whom Muslim Americans are disproportionately represented—priority under the heading "Reduce incarceration and make our communities safer." Although it is not particularly focused on terrorism, it is particularly relevant considering that, according to 2018 data, the average prison term for offenses related to terrorism in the US is thirteen years. and the Office of the Inspector General's 2020 report states that the sentences are becoming shorter. More than 600 terrorist prisoners were released by the US Federal Bureau of Prisons between 2001 and 2020. The need to concentrate efforts on the rehabilitation and reintegration of former terrorists is highlighted by the reduction in sentence length and the aging of convicted individuals (Baumann, 2021).

So, the Biden administration appears to be following in the footsteps of former President Barack Obama in certain areas, as was anticipated. Indeed, he has carried over from the Obama administration many aspects of his fight against terrorism, such as ending the "forever wars" in Iraq and Afghanistan and closing the Guantánamo detention facility. Obama's "counterterrorism plus" strategy, which emphasizes the use of small units of US special forces to combat terrorist networks abroad, is another policy he

supports. Biden, however, takes things a step further by reducing the size of the US counterterrorism presence overseas. Biden has already taken some noteworthy actions in this regard after only two months in office. The new administration subtly tied counterterrorism drone strikes outside of traditional war zones to White House approval earlier last month, adding bureaucratic requirements (Baumann, 2021).

Biden is weighing the possibility of bringing the number of US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq down to zero by the start of May. As of January, the number of troops in both countries has dropped to a historic low of 2,500. Prior to the withdrawal date, the administration is also advocating for the resumption of multilateral peace negotiations. Additionally, the new president has stated that he is considering repealing and replacing the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), a law that authorizes war. Although the original purpose of the A.U.M.F. was to legalize war against the 9/11 perpetrators, its meaning has expanded significantly over the years (Baumann, 2021).

National Security Memorandum

President Biden signed the National Security Memorandum to Counter International Terrorism Threats, which calls for funding partnerships, promoting civilian-led, nonlethal approaches whenever feasible, focusing on the most pressing threats to the United States, and carrying out the counterterrorism mission in a way that aligns with American values (House, 2015). The subject of the Memorandum is - Imposing Maximum Pressure on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Denying Iran All Paths to a nuclear weapon, and Countering Iran's Malign Influence. According to Memorandum, ensuring the safety and security of the United States and its citizens is the president's top priority. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has stated its animosity toward the United States and its allies and partners since it was established as a revolutionary theocracy in 1979. Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis, the Taliban, al-Qaida, and other terrorist organizations have received support from Iran, which continues to be the world's top state sponsor of terrorism. One such Foreign Terrorist

Organization is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). (House, 2025)

Agents and cyber-enabled tools are being used by the Iranian government, including the IRGC, to target American citizens residing in the US and other nations for assault, kidnapping, and homicide. In order to support this terrorist activity, Iran has also instructed its proxy organizations, such as Hezbollah's Islamic Jihad Organization, to plant sleeper cells throughout the country (House, 2025).

Iran is accountable for the horrifying massacres carried out by Hamas on October 7, 2023, as well as for the ongoing Houthi attacks against the US Navy, its allies, and global commercial shipping in the Red Sea. The regime has twice indicated that it is prepared to attack the State of Israel with ballistic and cruise missiles since April 2024 (House, 2025).

Iran abuses human rights severely and arbitrarily detains foreigners, including Americans, without following the proper legal procedures and on false pretenses. The Iranian women who are subjected to daily abuse by the regime have the support of the United States (House, 2025).

Iran's nuclear program, which includes missiles with nuclear capabilities and capabilities related to enrichment and reprocessing, is an existential threat to the United States and all of civilization. Such a radical regime should never be permitted to obtain or develop nuclear weapons, nor should it be permitted to threaten the United States or its allies with the possibility of acquiring, developing, or using nuclear weapons. As mandated by its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran is currently in violation of its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by hiding undeclared nuclear sites and material. Iran has prevented the IAEA from interviewing nuclear weapons scientists who are still working for the Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, or SPND, and from visiting its military installations or locations connected to SPND. There is immediate concern over public reports suggesting that Iran may now be involved in computer modeling for the development of nuclear weapons. We must stop the regime's nuclear extortion scheme and deny Iran any route to a nuclear weapon (House, 2025).

Fight against the leaders of ISIS and al-Qaida

The United States' national interest is at risk due to Iran's actions. Therefore, the country should exert as much pressure as possible on the Iranian regime to reduce its ballistic missile program, eliminate its nuclear threat, and cease supporting terrorist organizations (House, 2025).

President Biden ordered the United States to remove important ISIS and al-Qaida leaders from combat, including ISIS leader Hajji Abdullah and al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, who assisted in planning the 9/11 attacks. President Biden approved an operation in northern Somalia in January 2023 that killed Bilal al-Sudani, a crucial member and facilitator of ISIS's global network, along with several other ISIS members. We are dedicated to identifying and eliminating terrorist threats to the United States and the American people wherever they may be hiding, no matter how far away they may be. These successful missions sent a strong message to all terrorists who pose a threat to America (House, The Biden-Harris administration, 2015).

The Biden-Harris Administration collaborated with France and other partners to ensure that athletes and spectators from around the world could attend the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris safely, and it worked closely with Five Eyes and European partners to prevent and disrupt threats in the West (House, The Biden-Harris administration, 2015).

President Biden instructed his team to collaborate with Congress to renew and reform Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, one of the most important intelligence gathering instruments in the United States, so that the government has the resources it needs to combat terrorist threats. This tool offers crucial authority to comprehend and stop a variety of harmful threats to Americans while preserving civil liberties and privacy (House, The Biden-Harris administration, 2015).

To stop and neutralize this immediate threat to the national security of the United States, the Biden-Harris Administration put into effect the first-ever

National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism. Through this work, the Administration doubled its investigations into domestic terrorism and extremism, improved its understanding of the domestic terrorism threat, enhanced information sharing with state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement and international partners, and increased its capacity to disrupt and prosecute such acts while protecting civil liberties, civil rights, and privacy (House, The Biden-Harris administration, 2015).

In order to secure the release of Americans who were held hostage or wrongfully detained overseas and allow them to be reunited with their families, President Biden and his team engaged in intense diplomacy around the clock. More than 75 Americans, including Brittney Griner, Paul Whelan, Evan Gershkovich, and David Lin, who were held hostage or wrongfully detained in Afghanistan, Burma, Gaza, Haiti, Iran, Russia, Rwanda, and Venezuela, were brought home by President Biden (House, The Biden-Harris administration, 2015).

Biden supported the use of airstrikes to combat ISIS and other terrorist organizations, as well as the retention of small special operations forces in Syria and other locations. This decision demonstrates Biden's commitment to supporting allies on the ground while reducing military operations when unnecessary. Biden referred to President Trump's betrayal of the Kurds as "shameful" and harshly denounced Turkey's invasion of Syria. Additionally, he supports closing Guantanamo Bay and reiterates President Obama's ban on torture (Speckhard, 2021).

Conclusion

The Biden Administration has made combating international terrorism a goal of its legislation and policy in addition to combating domestic terrorism (Graziani, 2024).

This threat never goes away, according to the Department for Homeland Security's (DHS) 2024 Homeland Threat Assessment. This is especially true in light of recent reports of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State attempting to rebuild overseas while retaining

global networks of supporters, including in the United States and the West (Graziani, 2024).

In order to combat international terrorism, President Biden took certain actions that appeared to bring back the "Obama era" in the first two years of his term. One such action was the application of guarantees for the use of drones. During that period, he had validated some conventional methods on other matters, which were common among his predecessors. One example is the frequent use of the state secrets privilege in court to defend actions taken during some contentious counterterrorism operations, particularly those that have historically led to incarceration in so-called black sites. He then adopted new tactics that set him apart from earlier presidents in other areas, such as the Guantánamo detention facility and the use of digital data and its transnational exchange to support national security policies (Graziani, 2024).

Joe Biden has made similar strides in some of these areas over the past two years, but he appears to have slowed down in others. Furthermore, he was compelled to intervene on somewhat new fronts that were not predictable a few years ago due to recent significant events in the geopolitical scenario, specifically the Israeli-Hamas conflict (Graziani, 2024).

Turning now to international terrorism, the Biden Administration's policies have regressed significantly on several important fronts. Among these, we have cited the de facto cessation of the transfer of Guantánamo detainees following October 7, 2023, which marks the beginning of the present Israeli-Hamas conflict. Biden's policy was slowed down by this incident, which also ignored the need to address Guantánamo, a "legal black hole" in the US legal system that has existed for nearly 24 years (Graziani, 2024).

The declassification of the PPM (Presidential Policy Memorandum) was another area where there was a step back, actually following a step forward. As previously mentioned, we should applaud the courts for their decision to make the memorandum public. Joe Biden adopted a stance that was marked by a lack of transparency regarding certain other facets of the war on international terrorism. This position is demonstrated, among other things, by the

Administration's decision to continue using state secret privilege in court proceedings, without exception, both by citing other types of confidentiality as the Glomar response and by using the Reynolds doctrine. The Administration's decision to withhold information about its true relationship to the Israeli drone policy, whose disclosure would be crucial to maintaining a relationship of trust between the public and public authorities, is in fact another concerning indication of a lack of transparency (Graziani, 2024).

Finally, the fact that there have been some discrepancies between domestic and foreign policies regarding specific issues is mentioned in the note on international terrorism. In this regard, the Biden Administration promised higher privacy standards in the 2022 executive order, demonstrating privacy compliance with the EU. However, the 2022 executive order was clearly a means of obtaining an adequacy decision rather than a tool intended to genuinely adopt a new perspective on privacy rights, as the President did not hesitate to reauthorize Section 701 FISA in 2024 (Graziani, 2024).

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