

Biden admin: How could we possibly have known how badly the Afghan withdrawal would go?

[Jazz Shaw](#) May 25, 2022 8:53 AM ET



AP Photo/Gulabuddin Amiri

With everything else that's been dominating the news lately, it's easy to forget that it's still been less than a year since America's disastrous exit from Afghanistan and the return of the Taliban to power in that country. But despite many questions having been raised by the public and some members of Congress, the Biden administration has remained frustratingly secretive about that debacle. Many questions remain unanswered about the lead-up to the withdrawal and the aftermath. Now a foreign policy group [has brought a lawsuit in a Washington district court](#) to press for answers. They

claim that the White House has been withholding information from the public related to the planning of the withdrawal (or the lack thereof) and efforts made to identify and protect Americans, allies, and Afghan helpers in the country, many of whom were left behind. But they will have a fight on their hands when taking on the least transparent administration ever. (Free Beacon)

The Biden administration is illegally withholding information about its bungled withdrawal from Afghanistan, including information that could show senior U.S. officials knew prior to the withdrawal that the Taliban would quickly rise to power and trap scores of Americans, according to a nonpartisan advocacy group focused on U.S. national security issues.

The Center to Advance Security in America (CASA) is petitioning a district court in Washington, D.C., to force the State Department to release communications records related to the 2021 Afghanistan evacuation. This would include information “related [to the] vetting of Afghan refugees, and the number of U.S. citizens and lawful residents that were or were not evacuated from Afghanistan,” according to a copy of the lawsuit obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

The Biden administration has yet to provide the American public with a full accounting of those who were left behind in Afghanistan once the Taliban took over and American troops left the country, including the exact number of U.S. citizens and Afghans who aided the American government during the 20-year war.

CASA is seeking to break through the Biden administration’s stonewalling of requests for information. They’re demanding answers regarding reports that Pentagon officials knew or at least strongly suspected that the Afghanistan armed forces would collapse the moment the United States pulled out. They

also claim that we failed to gather information on the identity and location of all of the people who would need to be evacuated.

The group is also raising questions about if and how the Afghan refugees who did manage to escape are being vetted before simply being turned loose in the United States. That process has appeared to be nearly as chaotic as the withdrawal itself. While most of the refugees are likely grateful to have gotten out of the country alive, it's impossible to rule out the possibility that some terrorists may have snuck into America during the mad rush for the exits. What is being done to prevent that from happening?

CASA filed multiple Freedom of Information Act requests for all documents relating to these questions. Thus far, the White House and the Pentagon have refused all such requests and not entered into litigation when the denials were appealed. They have reportedly just ignored the FOIA process entirely and remained silent in violation of the FOIA laws.

"The criminal and terrorist networks in Afghanistan are real and they are extensive," CASA said in a statement about its lawsuit. "Americans have a right to know the people being brought to our country are not tied to them. Yet the U.S. government continues to hide the records surrounding the vetting process of refugees from the country who were admitted to the United States. Nor is State willing to reveal the real number of Americans left behind or if legitimate warnings were brushed aside."

Some members of the Senate, including Josh Hawley, have previously indicated that internal documents exist showing that our military attempted to warn the Biden administration that the Taliban would be able to seize control in a matter of days and had been planning to do so all along. If this is true, but Joe Biden chose to ignore the advice of his own senior military personnel and proceed with the withdrawal anyway, that would be a criminal

case of reckless incompetence at a minimum. We also deserve to know who made the decision to abandon Bagram Air Base before the main allied installations around the capital were secure. The number of things that went catastrophically wrong during that withdrawal are staggering and it's difficult to believe that our military leaders signed off on all of those decisions without objection.