

Biden's rosy statements on Afghanistan, COVID have come back to haunt him

First Read is your briefing from "Meet the Press" and the NBC Political Unit on the day's most important political stories and why they matter.



President Joe Biden speaks at the White House on Aug. 12, 2021. Mandel Ngan / AFP - Getty Images

WASHINGTON — Last month, in the span of five days, President Joe Biden made two different statements that have come back to haunt him.

The first: that the United States was closer than ever to declaring its independence from the coronavirus.

“Today, we’re closer than ever to declaring our independence from a deadly

virus,” Biden said on July 4. “That’s not to say the battle against COVID-19 is over. We’ve got a lot more work to do.”

The second: that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan wouldn’t result in chaos or the Taliban controlling the entire country.

“There’s going to be no circumstance where you see people being lifted off the roof of a embassy in the — of the United States from Afghanistan. It is not at all comparable [to Vietnam],” the president said on July 8.

He added, “The likelihood there’s going to be the Taliban overrunning everything and owning the whole country is highly unlikely.”

Ooof.

Yes, you can legitimately argue that Biden isn’t to blame for the latest surge in coronavirus cases coming mainly from unvaccinated Americans, or for an Afghanistan withdrawal timeline negotiated by his predecessor.

But in each case, he spiked the football before he got into the end zone with his messages.

And he wasn’t honest with the American public about what could go wrong.

Afghanistan falls to Taliban

“Afghanistan’s president fled the country Sunday as the Taliban and its fighters in Kabul reached the brink of taking political power,” per NBC News.

“President Ashraf Ghani’s departure — and the hurried evacuation of all personnel from the U.S. Embassy — followed a lightning-fast Taliban offensive across the country that brought an embarrassing end to the U.S. military presence after two decades.”

On “Meet the Press” yesterday, Biden Secretary of State Tony Blinken said the United States has been focused on “making sure that we can get our people to a safe and secure place.”

And Blinken blamed the Afghan government’s security forces for the Taliban’s ease in seizing control of the country. “I have to tell you that the inability of

Afghan security forces to defend their country has played a very powerful role in what we've seen over the last few weeks."

Biden's been MIA so far

Secretary of State Blinken hit the Sunday shows. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan was on "Today."

But President Biden hasn't spoken with the American public since Afghanistan fell to the Taliban.

NBC's Monica Alba and Peter Alexander report that the White House is evaluating how and when Biden should address the nation on Afghanistan. It could come in form of a speech from the White House early this week, cutting short a longer planned stay at Camp David, they add.

The situation remains fluid, however.

Source:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/meet-the-press/biden-s-rosy-statements-afghanistan-covid-have-come-back-haunt-n1276895>

[Disclaimer]