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We Are Going To Leave Behind Thousands Of Americans In Afghanistan

John Daniel Davidson

5-7 minutes

President Joe Biden finally took a few questions from a handful of reporters Friday after delivering remarks on the unfolding disaster in Afghanistan.

What he had to say did not inspire confidence, and in fact seriously calls into question Biden's connection to reality right now.

For example, the president is either lying or [completely misinformed](#) when he says that any American who wants to leave Afghanistan will be able to leave, or that any American who wants to get to the airport can get there.

Americans trapped in Kabul right now are [saying the opposite](#). A deluge of news reports coming in from Afghanistan indicate it's almost impossible to get into the Kabul airport, even for Americans and Afghan with Special Immigrant Visas, for SIVs. There have even been reports, for days now, that [some Americans have been beaten at Taliban checkpoints](#), and that contrary to Biden's claims, showing a U.S. passport doesn't guarantee anyone passage to the airport.

Even those who can get to the airport can't get past the gates because the entire area is in chaos. David Fox, an American man trapped in Kabul with his Afghan wife and son, [told ABC News](#) that when he arrived at the airport perimeter, there were perhaps a thousand people, mostly Afghans, trying to get in. U.S. Marines were firing warning shots into the air and throwing flash-bang grenades to keep the crowd at bay.

When he managed to make eye contact with a Marine, Fox said, the soldier shouted at him to leave the area, that it wasn't safe. "The airport is very dangerous," Fox told ABC News. "The Americans do not have control of the northern gates." He added that British troops, "for some reason are not allowing American passport-holders to come in" at the south gate they control.

Asked whether he would authorize U.S. troops to go out into Kabul to get Americans who are unable to get to the airport or who are trapped behind Taliban checkpoints, Biden said, "We know of no circumstance where American citizens have not been able to get to the airport," and claimed that U.S. officials are in "close contact" with the Taliban, and that, essentially everything is going swimmingly.

But we all know that isn't true — and we also know that other countries are sending troops out into Kabul to rescue their stranded citizens and bring them to the airport. The United Kingdom this week [deployed 900 elite paratroopers into Kabul](#) to rescue some 4,000 U.K. nationals in the city. The soldiers were reportedly told to expect combat with Taliban fighters.

Inside the airport perimeter, conditions are deteriorating. CNN's Clarissa Ward, who has been reporting from the airport, said

yesterday that in an eight-hour span, [not a single U.S. evacuation flight had left](#). The situation she describes is harrowing. Thousands of people, Afghans and Americans and dozens of other nationalities, have gotten into the airport compound, but there is no process or system in place to get people on flights or provide basic necessities for the people who are waiting. What she describes is utter chaos:

Moreover, so many people are fleeing the country, there is nowhere to process them once they leave. News came Friday that [U.S. flights out of Kabul had been halted](#) because the processing center in Doha, Qatar, was overwhelmed.

People inside the U.S. airbase that's been receiving evacuation flights from Afghanistan described the situation to CBS News as, "pretty much a full-blown humanitarian disaster."

Biden told reporters he sees "no reason" U.S. troops can't complete the evacuation of all Americans as well as tens of thousands of Afghans who worked with the U.S. in the next couple of weeks.

Ward, however, said that from [what she's seeing at the airport](#), that timeline is impossible: "The scale of this mission is now enormous — beyond the scale of any military but even beyond the capacity of the U.S. military and the six or eight thousands troops who are now here... How on earth are you going to evacuate 50,000 people in the next two weeks? It just can't happen."

Meanwhile, there seems to be no real plan in place to ensure that Americans can get out. Fox, the American, told ABC News that the State Department emailed Americans in Afghanistan a generic visa document they could use to get to the Kabul airport.

The problem is, the document has no name or serial numbers on it, and was also emailed to thousands of Afghan citizens eligible for special immigrant visa, or SIVs. This generic visa document is now being copied and printed off by the thousands, sold to Afghans trying to get to the airport, essentially rendering it worthless.

“Even the Taliban can’t control two or three thousand people at the Camp Sullivan gate when you have tens of thousands of Afghans who now have this kind of ridiculous, bogus document that the State Department created,” Fox said. “I don’t know how to explain something like this, an idea like this, except for brain worms. I mean it’s absurd. What were they thinking?”

For his part, Biden remains defiant and strangely out of touch. “This is about America leading the world,” he said at the press conference.

No, this is about America blundering on the world stage. If the situation on the ground in Afghanistan remains as it is, we are almost certainly going to leave Americans behind — and not hundreds, but thousands.

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