# Halting supply of munitions, Biden urges Israel to emulate US failures in Afghanistan and Iraq

By Lev Tsitrin

Biden's [CNN interview](#) in which he announced the halt of shipment of munitions to Israel is just studded with gems of logic.

"Civilians have been killed in Gaza as a consequence of those bombs and other ways in which they go after population centers" as if 2,000-pound bombs kill no civilians when the US uses them. Tell it to Afghans Mr. Biden — and you will [hear back that](#) "The United States military in 2017 relaxed its rules of engagement for airstrikes in Afghanistan, which resulted in a massive increase in civilian casualties … About 243,000 people have been killed in the Afghanistan/Pakistan warzone since 2001. More than 70,000 of those killed have been civilians." As [to Iraq](#) "No one knows with certainty how many people have been killed and wounded in Iraq since the 2003 United States invasion. However, we know that between 280,771-315,190 have died from direct war related violence caused by the U.S., its allies, the Iraqi military and police, and opposition forces from the time of the invasion through March 2023. The violent deaths of Iraqi civilians have occurred through aerial bombing, shelling, gunshots, suicide attacks, and fires started by bombing. … Because not all war-related deaths have been recorded accurately by the Iraqi government and the U.S.-led coalition, the numbers are likely much higher. Several estimates based on randomly selected household surveys place the total death count among Iraqis in the hundreds of thousands. Several times as many Iraqi civilians may have died as an indirect result of the war." Talk of the pot calling the kettle black!

And then, this: "We're not walking away from Israel's security [when US stops supplying Israel with munitions]. We're walking away from Israel's ability to wage war in those areas [i.e. Rafah]" — as if the two are not one and the

The US has supplied Israel's air force with F-35s, the most advanced fighter jets ever made

same, as if destruction of Rafah battalions, of Rafah tunnels, and establishing a smuggling-tight buffer zone between Gaza and Egypt is unrelated to Israel's security!

Or how about this: "I said to Bibi, 'Don't make the same mistake we made in America. We wanted to get bin Laden. We'll help you get Sinwar. It made sense to get bin Laden; it made no sense to try and unify Afghanistan. It made no sense in my view to engage in thinking that in Iraq they had a nuclear weapon" — as if Gaza is separated from Israel by as many thousands of miles as US is from Afghanistan, as if Iraq did not build a nuclear reactor that Israel bombed, as if Suddam did not kill tens of thousands of Kurds with chemical weapons, as if "getting Sinwar," rather than eradicating Hamas is all there is to the Gaza war, as if letting thousands of armed terrorists roam Gaza, and shell, rocket, and infiltrate Israel is a reasonable outcome.

But seriously. Afghanistan had the misfortune of being a country whose strategic value was worth far less than the American expenditure in occupying it, so US withdrew, allowing Taliban to rebound. Ariel Sharon's calculus in withdrawing from Gaza in 2005 was exactly the same — as was Israel's withdrawal, in 2000, from South Lebanon. Both were ostensibly sensible, cost-cutting decisions — and both came at a colossal cost of wars that followed, of Hezbullah taking over the Lebanon, of Hamas taking over Gaza, of both arming themselves to the teeth with the help from Iran. Talk of being penny-wise!

And this was exactly the outcome of American withdrawal from

Iraq and Afghanistan. It did not turn Iraq into a friendly ground; on the contrary, Iraq is swarming with Iran-backed militias that hate the US with their guts and threaten what minimal presence American troops still have there. And Afghanistan, of course, reverted to the Taliban rule. Invariably, withdrawals result in anti-American, anti-Western forces filling the vacuum. Invariably, they were a failure — a failure Biden tries to tout as a success, and urges Israel to replicate in Gaza!

If recent history is any guide, the proper paradigm is not withdrawal but occupation — on a straightforward logic that in the longer run the occupation, costly as it is, is much less expensive than a withdrawal. The paradigm should be that of 1945 — the occupation of Germany and Japan without which they would have reverted to the bad old ways. Allied troops prevented that, nipping the bad ideas in the bud, the rising generation looking at the Nazi past with disgust, rather than admiration. This should be the lesson learned from the October 7 horrible disaster, and the model for the future of Gaza.

It is hard to believe that Biden does not understand this — he surely does — but politicians do not like to think long-term; the next election fills their mental horizon. Accordingly, in his CNN interview Biden was not talking as a candid observer of the world scene — but as a candidate for office. And that kind of talk has its own logic; as some wit (reportedly, Alan Dershowitz) observed, Biden's "two-state solution" is about the states of Michigan and Pennsylvania — two swing states in which many democrats hate Israel and which he needs to win — and hence, he needs to accommodate the Israel-haters by throwing Israel under the bus. Hence, his touching concern about American bombs killing civilians — as if he was born yesterday, and not lived through Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

But, needless to say, Biden left this part unsaid in his CNN interview; he hopes that "masses are asses" and we won't notice. And he is right that many won't. Yet, many will — and won't forget it come November.