

Rerunning Biden's Blunderland, "I'm Running for Reelection"

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Global Research, May 03, 2023

Region: [USA](#)
Theme: [History](#)

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President Joseph Biden has done what many from his own party dreaded but dare not say. Last month, via a painful [video](#) (watch below), the aged Democrat declared his candidacy for a second term in the White House, branding himself a defender of US democracy. For a politician lacking the mettle of competence, awareness, and, at certain points, basic clarity of the world he inhabits, this was astonishing. The doddering are in; the young, or younger, are frowned upon as incapable of taking the mantle.

The result is a candidate being kept, like the Mikado, close at hand, let out on occasion to see some sunlight, but otherwise shut off from the world. Even when Biden is allowed out for his walk and scripted speech, his handlers only do so with a sense of dread: when will he slip or, as Hilary Clinton liked to call it, succumb to "misstatement"?

The *New York Times* was [careful on the lead-up](#). "Behind the scenes, advisers, and allies are weighing how soon the president should set in motion a re-election operation – an announcement that will surprise no one but will signal the start of a challenging new phase of his presidency."

What an understatement. Most Democrat voters do not want a second Biden presidency. A vote cast his way will be done grudgingly, especially if the rival GOP candidate is Donald Trump. The machinery of the party is already getting ready to deny oxygen to fresher faces.

Biden does command a following, of sorts, though the thinking behind it is shallow. Ezra Klein, for instance, [has decided](#) that age is not quite the problem some claim it to be. The aging figure "proved – and keeps proving – doubters like me wrong. He won the Democratic primary, even though voters had no shortage of fresher faces to choose from. He won the general election handily, despite Donald Trump's vaunted talents as an insult comic and a social media force." Klein goes on, with almost delusory conviction: "Voters seemed perfectly happy with Biden as a communicator."

One who could not disagree more with the idea of Biden 2.0 is Julian Epstein, who served as Chief Counsel to the US House Judiciary Committee and was Staff Director to the House Oversight Committee Democrats. While accepting that Trump gave the Democrats ample subject matter to draw upon, a seemingly endless well of bile to feed on – the refusal of Republicans to detach themselves from the orange ogre; his treatment of the pandemic; his heavily flirtatious dabbling with extremists – the Democrats had their own problems.

Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Epstein [declared](#) that his fellow Democrats had “shown their own kind of cowardice by refusing to say that President Biden shouldn’t run for re-election.” The Democratic elites had decided “that any dissent from party leadership or independent thinking – even in the name of the obvious truth – is dangerous to their job security.”

Attacking Biden, or dismissing him as woefully unbelievable, has become “tricky”. To regard the president as blithering, vague, and barely present, is to run the risk of being labelled an ageist, or even sadist. But on the policy front, Biden’s policy legacy, Epstein argues, is questionable, domestically bleeding the blue-collar vote, while baffling the foreign policy establishment with spectacular moments of foggy-headed utterances.

Over Taiwan, he has been nothing short of abysmal, fumbling, gaffing (to the truth, perhaps?) over US policy towards the island entity. In May 2022, he bamboozled commentators and the press corps on whether the US would go to war over the island were it to be attacked by China, thereby holing the policy of “strategic ambiguity” in place since 1979. “Yes,” came his reply to the question. “That’s the commitment we made.”

At the time, White House correspondent for Agence France-Presse, Sebastian Smith, [was stunned](#). “Biden’s affirmation that ‘yes’ the US would defend Taiwan really raised adrenaline levels in that palace briefing room right now. Next, we all get to try and explain what it all actually means.”

The efforts to explain did not stop there. By September 2022, Biden had mangled strategic ambiguity no less than four times. Zack Cooper, Senior Fellow for the American Enterprise Institution, [observed](#) bluntly that, whatever Biden’s strategists might claim about the unchanged nature of US-Taiwan policy, “the strategy for achieving this objective has changed. Biden is choosing to be less ambiguous about US intentions in case of an unprovoked attack on Taiwan.” His advisers should, accordingly, “acknowledge this inescapable reality.”

On his trip to Ireland in April this year, Biden’s blunders were also monumental, though largely laughed off (“delicious,” [declared](#) the *Irish Times*) as the product of an entertainingly addled mind. During a speech at the Windsor pub in Dundalk, County Louth, [he confused](#) the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team with the odious Black and Tans, infamous for their bloodletting during the 1919-1921 Irish War of Independence.

Biden’s distant cousin, former Irish rugby player Rob Kearney, played a role in Ireland’s first victory over the often invincible All Blacks in 2016. “He was a hell of a player,” remarked the president, “and he beat the hell out of the Black and Tans.” Staff at the White House promptly went to work airbrushing this error from history; those in Ireland were left [“in stitches”](#).

On a more serious note, another Biden administration, flavoured by the bouquet garni of

error, is likely to make more wars, not fewer, likely. In the Indo-Pacific, a containment strategy of China is being pursued with militaristic glee, with a bewitched Australia supplying the strategic real estate in a policy of forward defence. In Ukraine, a proxy war with Russia continues to be waged, drawing NATO and the US into ever closer conflict. Biden's Blunderland does not promise to be pretty, let alone an entertaining place.

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