



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on June 10, 2022

## Biden's "Reckless Riffs" Hurting America's Standing: Ex-Obama Official

President Joe Biden "needs to rest" because his "offhanded comments" and "outdated" perception of foreign affairs undermine both his presidency and U.S. "standing" on the global stage, believes a former Obama administration official who offered a couple of "strategies" to Biden's handlers on how to minimize the immediate damage.

In an article published in [USA Today](#) on Tuesday titled "Biden's careless comments are hurting his presidency and diplomacy. He needs a reset," Brett Bruen, who served as director of global engagement for the Obama White House from 2013 to 2015, harshly criticized the 79-year-old, gaffe-prone Biden.



AP Images

Bruen opened the article by saying that back in the days when he served the Obama administration, he used to "cringe when Vice President Biden took to the podium."

"Despite all the preparation that went into an event and his remarks, as a staffer on the National Security Council, you never quite knew what he might say," Bruen wrote.

"At times, his offhanded comments could spice up what otherwise would be a pretty boring policy address. Yet, there were other times, too many times, when it could veer into dangerous terrain," he continued.

As president, Biden continues to deliver "reckless riffs," "especially when discussing diplomacy." Bruen recalled the most outrageous remarks that hurt U.S. foreign policy:

There were his careless comments last year on the [inevitability of Kabul's fall to the Taliban](#) in Afghanistan. In January, he seemed to give Russian President Vladimir Putin a [tacit green light](#) to take at least some Ukrainian territory. Then in March during a [high-profile speech in Poland](#), Biden inexplicably insisted that the kleptocratic occupant of the Kremlin should be removed from power....

The latest example was his [clear commitment of American forces](#) to the defense of Taiwan, a major departure from our long-standing policy of "[strategic ambiguity](#)" on the question of whether or not we would directly confront a Chinese invasion.

The official offered his explanation on why such "ill-considered improvisation" and "careless careening into crisis territory" keeps happening.

While briefly admitting that the lion's share of responsibility lies on the president himself, his national security team does a terrible job at handling the president:



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They are all too aware that he has this troublesome tendency to go off script. It does not appear that in most of these instances his National Security Council adequately prepared him for what ought to be obvious questions.

For example, Bruen suggests that the president's handlers should more rigorously explain to him that when he travels to Asia, he needs to polish his answers on Taiwan.

Another "strategy" that the handlers could use is preparing clarifications for Biden's off-script improvisations in advance:

Instead of enduring this constant scramble to clean up his comments, which often involves hours and even days of uncomfortable silence or inadequate clarifications, they could have responses at the ready.

Bruen criticized the handlers' exercises in "rhetorical gymnastics" by twisting the president's words into something opposite from what he originally stated. That undermines voters' trust in the president's words even further, as suggested in an [NBC News report](#) published in late May.

Finally, Bruen chastised Biden for his "pretty rigid perceptions and policy positions" and "outdated notions" about modern international relations. According to Bruen, the president "stick[s] to his guns," which resulted in many situations on the global stage that put the country at a disadvantage and undermined its positions.

Among such mistakes were the "botched pullout of American forces from Afghanistan," "[lack of preparedness](#) to defend Ukraine," and "disastrous rollout of the [submarine deal with Australia](#), which endangered our alliance with France at an extraordinarily fragile point."

The ex-official concluded that a current lack of "a strong and consistent level of diplomatic discipline" could "unnecessarily" lead the United States into a conflict, "whether with China, Iran, Russia or North Korea."

Bruen suggests that to avoid such a conflict, the president needs to get rid of his current security advisors — specifically National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan — and get better handlers, or "more experienced leaders who can speak truth to power and implement our foreign policy without so many fumbles."

The piece was published on the same day as an [NBC opinion column](#) that defended Biden from his own handlers, arguing that his staff correcting his gaffes and walking back his off-the-cuff statements ruins his "authenticity."

Author Joshua Spivak argued that the president should be "skeptical" of his handlers and trust "his own instincts" when shaping the message that he wants the people to hear. That is, "changing the conversation" from the "relentless inflation, the prospect of losing both houses of Congress in November's midterm elections and consistently poor polling numbers."

Spivak even went so far as to call the president's gaffes a special "skill," implying that Democratic strategists should "let Biden Be Biden" in order to strengthen the party's chances in the mid-term elections.

Biden's long history of bizarre gaffes and wacky behaviors prompted his Republican critics, such as



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former White House physician Representative Ronny Jackson (R-Texas), to insist that he undergo a cognitive test.

“The president has some obvious cognitive issues right now,” [the congressman told](#) *The New American* in late February. Those issues are on display for the whole world to see, and this is a major contributing factor to the numerous failures of America at home and on the world stage, he argued.



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