• If the effort succeeds, take a victory lap, soak up the credit for ending a conflict and satisfying a war weary nation.

When television screens filled with horrific images of desperate Afghanis storming the airport, climbing aboard airplanes and clinging to handholds only to fall to their deaths, the administration appeared befuddled and indecisive.

The "blame Trump" narrative was quickly undercut when critics pointed out that in the early weeks of the administration, Biden had repealed dozens of his predecessors' executive orders and mandates and could easily have exercised the same authority to delay or negate the departure agreement.

The Biden administration next turned to a "we always knew this would happen" rationale, a stunningly callous explanation that calls into question why they failed to anticipate, strategize and react decisively. No one, the administration argued, foreyac s