

Removing Cuba from the “Terrorist List” Is Awkward for President Biden?

By [Arnold August](#)

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Zakaria acts as the informal Democratic Party CNN “spokesperson,” especially on international issues. The following may possibly provide us with an idea of what Biden is thinking. Aired January 17, 2021.

Guest: CNN Global Affairs Analyst and New Yorker staff writer Susan Glasser.

From the full extract of the official CNN Transcript dealing mainly with Cuba:

ZAKARIA: Secretary Pompeo spent the better part of the week making big pronouncements and bigger moves on the world stage. He said that al-Qaeda’s new home base is in Iran. He labeled Cuba a state sponsor of terror and the Houthis in Yemen a foreign terrorist organization.

GLASSER: And so you have it as an example, I think, of how the U.S. has, sort of, abdicated leadership in the region. And, you know, there’s real costs to this. He’s also seeking to impose political costs, of course, on the incoming Biden administration if they seek to reverse this, if they reverse the Cuba designation, that they are somehow going to be in league with terrorists. You can just imagine, you know, the campaign commercials that—that Mike Pompeo is cutting in his mind.

ZAKARIA: Right. So—and if you look at the Cuba and the Iran ones, they seem both entirely of that—of that nature. You know, he’s designating Cuba as a state sponsor of terror. You know, it falls on the Biden administration to **awkwardly** have to, you know, undo that designation.

But both of them are—would be **very awkward, politically, to undo, right?**

GLASSER: **Well, that’s exactly it, or they think that they will.**

ZAKARIA: Unfortunately, Susan—I’m so sorry, but I’ve got to—I’ve got to let you go. We will—we will come back to this and to you because it’s always a pleasure.

GLASSER: [Thank you, Fareed.”](#)

Both Zakaria and Glasser go on to predict that, should Biden try to undo these designations, Pompeo and Trump will have a perfect excuse to attack the new administration. Yet, if they were at all honest, both would argue against this excuse rather than allowing it to hang in the air as a reasonable alibi for the State Department’s parting shot.

Compare this CNN transcript to the statement by eight US Senators. Furthermore, why did

the CNN not cite this?

“Klobuchar, Leahy, and Colleagues Demand Answers from The State Department About Move to Designate Cuba a State Sponsor of Terrorism

WASHINGTON – On Friday January 8, 2021, U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Jack Reed (D-RI), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), and Tina Smith (D-MN) sent a letter to Secretary of State Michael Pompeo expressing concern over reports that the Trump Administration would designate Cuba a state sponsor of terrorism without formal consultation and review by Congress. The Senators also asked the State Department to commit to conducting a formal review before designating any nation a state sponsor of terrorism or removing any such designation. Without consulting Congress, today the State Department announced its intent to redesignate Cuba a [state sponsor of terrorism.](#)”

We note that Pompeo placed Cuba on the list without a formal review by the Congress. However, if Pompeo could do this so easily, then Biden, far from feeling “awkward,” could remove Cuba from the list on January 20.

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