

My Intervention during the Debate on the situation in Afghanistan

John Redwood Conservative, Wokingham

Does my right hon. Friend agree that President Biden decided unilaterally to withdraw without agreeing and negotiating a plan with either the Afghan Government or the NATO allies, and that the response of the UK Government in the circumstances has been fast, purposeful and extremely well guided to protect the interests of UK citizens?

Theresa May Conservative, Maidenhead

What President Biden has done is to uphold a decision made by President Trump. It was a unilateral decision of President Trump to do a deal with the Taliban that led to this withdrawal.

What we have seen from the scenes in Afghanistan is that it has not been all right on the night. There are many in Afghanistan who not only fear that their lives will be irrevocably changed for the worse, but fear for their lives. Numbered among them will be women—women who embraced freedom and the right to education, to work and to participate in the political process.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was right to make the education of girls a key aim of his Administration, but in Afghanistan that will now be swept away. Those girls who have been educated will have no opportunity to use that education. The Taliban proclaims that women will be allowed to work and girls will be allowed to go to school, but this will be under Islamic law—or rather, under its interpretation of Islamic law, and we have seen before what that means for the lives of women and girls.