



[President Trump Makes a Surprise Visit to Afghanistan for Thanksgiving](#)

On Thanksgiving eve, President Trump departed from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida and flew to Bagram Air Field for a surprise Thanksgiving Day visit – his first to the country of Afghanistan. For security purposes, the trip was kept hidden and involved decoy planes as well as a false announcement from the White House regarding Trump’s whereabouts. The President spent approximately three hours in Afghanistan, where he made a speech, ate turkey with U.S. troops, and met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. Reporters who accompanied the President on the trip were not allowed to report on the visit until minutes before boarding Air Force One to return to the United States.

Last Wednesday morning, on the day before Thanksgiving, President Trump played a round of golf at Mar-a-Lago. Following this, the White House announced that he would be spending the night there in Florida. However, around 7pm that evening, he secretly boarded Air Force One with over a dozen journalists and just a handful of top aides. Trump’s departure was even concealed from White House staff and military personnel who were at Mar-a-Lago to set up a video conference call with troops for the afternoon on Thanksgiving. They were allowed to proceed with this to avoid raising any suspicion that the President was anywhere but at Mar-a-Lago. The passengers aboard the plane with President Trump were stripped of their cell phones and electronic devices before takeoff, and the reporters who accompanied the Commander-In-Chief did not find out where the plane was heading until about two hours before landing in Afghanistan.

Planning for the trip began a few weeks ago, however only a small number of White House officials were aware of the Thanksgiving Day visit, and the Trump administration took multiple steps to avoid raising suspicion. For example, several tweets and retweets posted on the President’s account late Wednesday and early Thursday were in fact scheduled ahead of time to ensure that the account remained active while Trump was offline and in transit to Afghanistan. Also, the President’s blue-and-white 747 was left outside at Palm Beach International Airport to act as a decoy while he was taken away on another plane.

Once on the ground in Afghanistan, President Trump made a speech to the troops stationed there at Bagram Air Field, served turkey, and met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. In his remarks to the U.S. troops, he discussed the American victories over Al Qaeda and ISIS, and told the crowd that he wanted to reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan from about 13,000 to 8,600. While meeting with his Afghani counterpart Ghani, Trump discussed the re-opening of peace talks with the Taliban, stating “The Taliban wants to make a deal, and we’re meeting with them and we’re saying it has to be a ceasefire.” Ghani complimented his American counterpart for taking out leadership of the region’s major terrorist groups and thanked Trump for making the trip.

Around midnight local time, after spending around three hours in Afghanistan, Trump boarded Air Force One to head back to Florida and the President was back at Mar-a-Lago by early Friday morning.