



[President Biden Unveils the Plans to Withdraw All U.S. Troops from Afghanistan by September 11th of 2021](#)

During the past week, President Biden outlined the plans to withdraw all American troops from Afghanistan by the milestone date of September 11th, 2021. In his announcement of the move, Biden expressed the importance of putting an end to the “forever war” in Afghanistan and stressed that the United States cannot continue the cycle of extending its presence there in the hopes of creating the ideal conditions for its withdrawal. Instead, the administration pledged a commitment towards a responsible pullout of forces which would be undertaken in full coordination with local allies and be mindful of fears regarding potential political regression. As such, the United States intends to remain closely involved diplomatically in the Afghan peace process while also still providing humanitarian and assistive services to its government. President Biden’s troop withdrawal plan was expectedly met with mixed reactions, with some arguing that it could further destabilize Afghanistan. Others however, including former President Obama, praised it as long overdue and the right foreign policy move, commenting that “it is time to recognize that we have accomplished all that we can militarily” in the country.

President Biden’s unease about the United States’ military presence in Afghanistan predates his current position, and goes back to when he served as vice president between 2009 and 2017. In that role under the then Obama administration, Biden was one of only a few officials to advise the president to shift towards a smaller counterterrorism role in the country as opposed to others who were calling for a troop buildup in order to fight gains made by the Taliban. Furthermore, in unveiling his plans for a September 11th withdrawal, President Biden has acknowledged that Afghanistan “was never meant to be a multi-generational undertaking” and that there are ways to keep supporting the government and security forces there without a direct presence of armed forces. Ultimately, he and other advocates of the troop withdrawal rightly point out that the United States’ continued political, economic, and humanitarian engagement will help to offset the military deficit and ensure that Afghanistan does not suffer a major setback to its ongoing peacekeeping efforts.

For their part, government officials in Afghanistan have also voiced support for the decision to withdraw U.S. troops by the designated date of September 11th, 2021. President Ashraf Ghani expressed gratitude for the sacrifice that American forces had made over the years fighting side-by-side with Afghan troops. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of preserving the critical gains that had been made during the last 20 years, most notably in protecting gender equity and building a strong civil society. Ghani met with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken late last week, with Blinken emphasizing the United States’ commitment to aiding with this in the aftermath of the planned September full troop withdrawal.

Most reasonable observers view President Biden’s decision as a positive development in helping close the chapter on a nearly two-decade “endless” war in Afghanistan that has cost the United States thousands of service member lives and trillions of dollars. The war effort has also had a devastating effect on the local population, with at least 100,000 Afghan civilians reported to have been killed or injured. While there are pros and cons to both a full troop withdrawal and maintaining a military presence, the Biden administration ultimately determined that the United States can continue its support of the Afghan peace process through other means which enable its citizens to forge their own country’s future.