

U.S. Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan, 2021

The United States Armed Forces completed their withdrawal from Afghanistan on August 30th 2021, marking the end of a 20-year war. In February 2020, the Trump administration and the Taliban signed a deal in Doha, Qatar, which provided for the withdrawal of all NATO forces from Afghanistan by May 1st 2021. However, under the Biden administration, the withdrawal was delayed until August.

At the start of the Biden administration (January 2021), there were 2,500 US soldiers remaining in Afghanistan and by early August, only 650. The US soldiers' final task in Afghanistan was to protect Kabul International Airport and the US Embassy. With so few US troops left in the country, the security situation deteriorated rapidly.

After the withdrawal of the majority of the US troops, it was decided to evacuate all American diplomatic and security personnel remaining in the country, as well as all Afghan translators and selected citizens who had provided the US troops with intelligence, because they were considered to be at risk from Taliban reprisals.

Between May and August, 2021, the ANSF (Afghan National Security Forces) started to collapse, and the Taliban took over Kabul on August 15th. Following many Taliban victories across Afghanistan, the Biden administration announced that 3,000 US troops would be deployed to Kabul Airport to assist in the evacuation process. However, with the rapid advance of the Taliban in the provinces, the US increased the troops to 5,000. With the fall of Kabul, another 1,000 troops were deployed, and a day later, another 1,000, bringing the total number to 7,000.

What should have been an orderly, organized, evacuation process, turned out to be extremely chaotic and violent. Following the disastrous evacuation attempt, thousands of Afghan sympathizers, many holding valid US visas, were not able to be evacuated. They were simply abandoned and left to hide from the Taliban. Many of them are in fear of being discovered, even until today. If discovered, they face certain death.

The last US military plane left Kabul airport at midnight on August 30th 2021.

The HBO documentary, "Escape from Kabul", made in 2022, graphically shows the complicated and disastrous evacuation attempt.

