

What's News

Business & Finance

U.S. auto-safety regulators are investigating Tesla's advanced driver-assistance system known as Autopilot after a series of crashes at emergency scenes, the latest sign that authorities are beginning to scrutinize such technologies more closely. **A1**

◆ **Fed officials** are nearing agreement to begin scaling back easy-money policies in about three months if the recovery continues, with some pushing to end their asset-purchase program by the middle of next year. **A2**

◆ **China's economy** slowed more than expected in July as extreme weather and the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus swept across the country. **A16**

◆ **Companies** are sitting on a record amount of cash amid lingering uncertainty about Covid-19 disruptions, defying forecasts for spending. **B1**

◆ **Bezos' space company** has escalated its battle to build a moon lander for NASA, suing the federal government over the agency's decision to award a sole contract for that work to Musk's SpaceX. **B1**

◆ **T-Mobile** said it suffered an intrusion into a company database and was investigating the extent of the breach, after personal data on some of its wireless subscribers was found for sale on the web. **B1**

◆ **The S&P 500 and Dow** rose 0.26% and 0.3%, respectively, to close at records. The Nasdaq fell 0.2%. **B11**

◆ **Axel Springer** is in talks to purchase an ownership stake in Washington, D.C. publisher Politico. **B1**

World-Wide

◆ **Kabul's international airport** was in the throes of chaos as desperate Afghans tried to flee on departing U.S. jets, Taliban gunmen roamed the terminals, and U.S. troops killed at least two men, a sign of the disorder in the wake of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. **A1, A4, A6-A8**

◆ **Biden said** he stands "squarely behind" his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from the country, as he drew bipartisan criticism over the swift collapse of the Afghan government and the ensuing bedlam. **A1**

◆ **The Biden administration** is expected to announce that Americans who have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 should receive a booster shot to ensure continued protection. **A1**

◆ **Emergency teams** rushed to the south of Haiti to find and treat survivors trapped under earthquake debris, hours before a major storm was expected to make landfall. **A16**

◆ **The U.S. government** declared the first-ever shortage of water on the Colorado River, triggering cutbacks in several states that will hit farmers particularly hard. **A3**

◆ **The Biden administration** unveiled the largest-ever increase in food-stamp benefits, boosting federal nutrition assistance after hunger surged during the pandemic. **A2**

◆ **Opposition leader** Hichilema was elected president of Zambia. **A16**

◆ **Malaysia's prime minister** resigned amid criticism over his Covid-19 policies. **A16**

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Chaos Engulfs Afghan Withdrawal



Clockwise from above, Afghans swarmed an Air Force cargo plane as it took off from Kabul; a U.S. soldier at the airport where troops have been deployed to try to maintain order as thousands seek to leave; and President Biden addressed the nation.

Biden Calls Exit 'Right Decision'

By SIOBHAN HUGHES AND CATHERINE LUCEY

President Biden said he stands "squarely behind" his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, speaking from the White House on Monday as he drew bipartisan criticism over the swift collapse of the government and the ensuing chaos.

He acknowledged that the Taliban takeover of the country happened more quickly than he expected and that the exit has been "far from perfect," although he took little responsibility for that. He called the images of desperate Afghans at Kabul's international airport, trying to flee their country, "gut-wrenching."

While pledging to get U.S. citizens and allies out of the country safely, Mr. Biden cast much of the blame for the fall of the Afghan government on its U.S.-trained military for failing to take up the fight



with the Taliban. "If anything, the developments in the past week reinforced that ending U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan now was the right decision," said Mr. Biden, a Democrat. "American troops cannot and should not be fighting in a war, and dying in a war that Afghan forces are not willing to fight



for themselves." The president's remarks and the chaotic exit from Afghanistan will become the closing chapters in the U.S.'s longest war, one that began 20 years ago after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, as a hunt to bring justice to those who committed those acts.

Mr. Biden has long said that Washington had accomplished its mission in the region by killing Osama bin Laden in 2011 and depriving al Qaeda of its sanctuary in Afghanistan, and had nothing to gain by perpetuating its military deployments in the country. Mr. Biden's speech focused

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First Day of Taliban Rule Brings Beatings, Fear

On their first day in control of Kabul, Taliban fighters commandeered streets and searched the homes and of-

By Sune Engel Rasmussen, Ehsanullah Amiri and Alistair MacDonald

fices of government officials and media outlets, spreading fear and menace across the Afghan capital.

Armed militants erected

checkpoints throughout the city of six million people, imposed a 9 p.m. curfew and took over army and police posts. Fighters, many grinning in victory, rode through the streets in captured U.S. and Afghan military vehicles flying the Taliban's white flag.

Turban-clad insurgents searched the phones of passersby for evidence of government contacts or compromising material they might deem un-Islamic. Bridal dress advertisements that showed women

with exposed strands of hair were covered in fresh white paint. Stores were shut across the city.

On video footage shared over social media, chuckling Taliban fighters sauntered around the parliament building on the city's outskirts.

Rozina, an Afghan-Canadian woman visiting Kabul with her Afghan husband, said Taliban fighters came to their hotel Monday morning while she was in a back garden. Frightened, she ran upstairs to her

room. Minutes later, Taliban fighters came inside with the hotel manager, who persuaded her to come out of the bathroom where she had hidden.

Three armed militants rummaged through Rozina's purse and luggage, checked her passport and asked questions about her relationship with her husband, she said. They demanded to see their marriage certificate. Her husband

protested, saying that devout Muslims wouldn't invade his wife's privacy. They slapped

him across the face and hit him in the back with their weapons, she said.

Once the fighters left, Rozina and her husband fled the hotel. "I was afraid that they would take my husband or that they were going to take me away," she said.

The Taliban appeared to refrain from immediate mass detentions or violence in Kabul, but their behavior in recent weeks suggests they will seek revenge on at least some of

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Tesla's Autopilot Faces Federal Safety Inquiry

By REBECCA ELLIOTT

U.S. auto safety regulators are investigating Tesla Inc.'s advanced driver-assistance system known as Autopilot after a series of crashes at emergency scenes.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration probe made public Monday is the latest sign that U.S. authorities are beginning to scrutinize driver-assistance technologies more closely after largely giving companies free rein.

NHTSA said it had identified 11 crashes since early 2018 in which a Tesla vehicle that had been using Autopilot struck one or more vehicles involved in an emergency-response situation.

Four of the crashes NHTSA is probing happened this year and most took place after dark, the agency said. In one such crash in March, the driver of a Tesla Model Y had Autopilot engaged before

plowing into a police vehicle that had stopped along a Lansing, Mich., area highway to investigate a separate crash, Michigan State Police said. The police vehicle had its emergency lights on, police said.

NHTSA is studying the Autopilot system in some 765,000 Tesla vehicles from the 2014 through 2021 model years. Autopilot is available on vehicles made in late 2014 and later, according to Tesla's website. Such investigations can but don't always lead to recalls.

Advanced driver-assistance systems aren't tightly regulated in the U.S. NHTSA recently began requiring companies to regularly report crashes involving such features to the agency.

Tesla, whose shares were down more than 4% Monday, didn't respond to a request to

Please turn to page A8

◆ **Heard on the Street:** Tesla can't remain on autopilot... **B12**

U.S. Expected To Call for Covid-19 Boosters

By ANDREW RESTUCCIA AND SARRINA SIDDIQUI

WASHINGTON—The Biden administration is expected to announce that Americans who have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 should receive a booster shot to ensure continued protection, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The booster shot would be administered eight months after the second shot of the vaccine was received, the people said.

Senior Biden administration health and medical officials have been discussing the possibility of calling for booster shots for weeks and are nearing agreement on the issue, said the people, who added that a final decision hasn't been made. A formal an-

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A Messi affair Barcelona's object lesson in how not to handle assets — OPINION, PAGE 15

Chaos engulfs Kabul airport amid panic to flee Taliban rule

◆ At least five people reported killed in desperation to escape ◆ Fears for women under literal interpretation of sharia laws ◆ New Islamist leaders call for 'humility' after taking control



Afghans swarm around a US aircraft at Kabul airport

AMY KAZMIN — NEW DELHI
NAJMEH BOZORGMEHR — TEHRAN
KATRINA MANSON — WASHINGTON

Kabul's international airport was overrun yesterday by Afghans desperate to escape Taliban rule, leading to several deaths, after the Islamist militants took over Afghanistan's capital.

US forces at the Hamid Karzai international airport had responded to "hostile threats that resulted in the death of two armed individuals", John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman, said.

A foreign official monitoring evacuation flights from the city said that US marines had fired shots, while some people fell to their deaths after clinging to aircraft as they took off. At least five people were reported to have died. Images from the airport showed US

helicopter gunships buzzing groups on the runway to enable military planes filled with US and foreign nationals to take off.

"There is absolute chaos," the official said. "Only US military planes are taking off and landing. Afghans are clinging on to the tyres of the aircraft that are taking off. US marine helicopters are being used to clear the tarmac fast before the take-off can be executed."

The mayhem reflects the panic among many Afghans as they brace

themselves for life under Taliban rule. The shift came after Joe Biden, US president, ordered the withdrawal of US troops and the Islamist group drove the western-backed government of Ashraf Ghani from power over the weekend.

When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 it enforced a literalist interpretation of Islamic law, carrying out public executions, stoning women accused of adultery and cutting off the hands of accused thieves. It was driven from power by a US-led invasion after the terror attacks of 2001.

The Taliban is seeking to reassure that it has moderated its approach, with Mullah Baradar, a Taliban leader, urging his fighters to show "humility" after their virtually bloodless seizure of the city on Sunday. "We reached a

victory that wasn't expected," he said in a video message from Qatar. "We should show humility in front of Allah. Now, it's about how we serve and secure our people and ensure their future and good life to the best of our ability."

However, many Afghans, particularly women, remain intensely anxious. "The fear just sits inside your chest like a black bird. It opens its wings and you can't breathe," Muska Dastageer, a political-science professor at the American University of Afghanistan, wrote on Twitter.

"The Taliban has not yet clarified what they are going to do and what their policies will be towards women and schools. There is an overwhelming fear," said a Kabul university professor. A foreign official and some Kabul

residents said that Taliban fighters, some with lists of names, were going door to door looking for former government officials and journalists.

Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in an interview with NBC News that it was "heartbreaking" to see what was happening but that the president "had to make the best possible choice he could and he stands by that decision". John Bolton, former national security adviser to Donald Trump, said the image of Afghans struggling to hang on to US planes as they took off would become "the iconic picture of the Trump-Biden withdrawal from Afghanistan".

Additional reporting by Sebastian Payne and Helen Warrell in London, and Lauren Feder and Aimee Williams in Washington.

Briefing

► **Cobham takeover of Ultra sparks UK security fears**
Ultra is to be the latest British engineering specialist to fall into foreign ownership after it backed a £2.6bn takeover from US buyout firm-owned Cobham, fuelling fears over the hollowing-out of Britain's defence sector. — PAGE 5

► **Hichilema wins in Zambia**
Hakalinde Hichilema has been elected president of Zambia, Africa's second-largest copper producer, in a sweeping win over incumbent Edgar Lungu. — PAGE 4

► **BHP eyes oil and gas exit**
BHP is in talks over a merger of its petroleum unit with Australia's Woodside, which would mark the exit of the biggest miner from oil and gas. — PAGE 6; LEX, PAGE 16

► **BlackRock urges rethink**
The investment group's think-tank said that China should not be seen as an emerging market and urged investors to boost exposure by as much as three times. — PAGE 8

► **Glencore backs batteries**
The miner has bought into Britishvolt, a UK start-up behind plans for a battery "gigafactory" aimed at equipping the car sector for an electric future. — PAGE 5

► **Hyatt buys resorts group**
The US hotel group has agreed to buy private equity-backed resorts operator Apple Leisure, which owns the Zoëty and Sunscape resort brands, for \$2.7bn. — PAGE 6

Datawatch

Repatriations to Afghanistan
Total number of Afghan citizens returned, 2008-2020 (0000)



Source: Eurostat, Matteo Villa @ISPI
From 2008 to 2020, EU countries forcibly returned a total of 70,000 Afghan citizens, who had been seeking asylum, after the country was deemed safe. Between 15,000 and 20,000 were women.



Drug locks and patent chiefs drop horns on patents

Three months after the US backed intellectual property rights waivers on Covid-19 jabs to poorer nations, the effect of the move is still contentious. Drugmakers argue that waivers have not led to more doses and that third parties lack the knowhow to produce complex vaccines without help; while advocacy groups say that the US has not confronted those pharma groups that are obstructing global access to life-saving vaccines.

Poor nations hurt — PAGE 4

US launches investigation into crashes involving Tesla's Autopilot technology

LAUREN FEDOR — WASHINGTON
RICHARD WATERS — SAN FRANCISCO

The US has launched an investigation into crashes involving Tesla's Autopilot driverless-car technology, after being repeatedly urged to do so by an independent regulator that has accused the electric-car maker of using unproven technology on public roads.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, part of the US Department of Transportation, revealed yesterday that it had started a probe into crashes of Tesla's cars in incidents where first-responder vehicles were present.

The crashes, which led to 17 injuries and one death, all involved vehicles that had either the cars' Autopilot or Traffic Aware Cruise Control modes switched on, and occurred at scenes that had visible driver warning markers, such as

cones, the agency said. The NHTSA said it had identified 11 crashes dating back to 2018 in which Tesla models had "encountered first responder scenes and subsequently struck one or more vehicles involved with those scenes".

The move signals an intensification of the investigations into Tesla's Autopilot software, which have been led by the independent National Transportation Safety Board. Unlike that group, the NHTSA has the power to force vehicle recalls if it finds fault, as well as make regulations for the entire sector.

The probe covers virtually all Tesla vehicles sold in the US in recent years, some 765,000 cars. The group's shares fell more than 4 per cent after the news.

The federal investigation follows fierce criticism of regulators by the NTSB over what it claims has been a "hands-off approach to oversight [that]

poses a potential risk to motorists and other road users".

Robert Sunwalt, NTSB chair, said this year that Tesla had released a "beta version" of its software for testing on public roads with limited oversight.

Elon Musk, Tesla's chief executive, has come under fire for his aggressive marketing of Tesla's software and the decision to name it Autopilot, even though it is only a so-called Level 2 driver-assistance system, far short of the full Level 5, where a car can drive itself.

"NHTSA reminds the public that no commercially available motor vehicles today are capable of driving themselves," the agency said yesterday. "Every available vehicle requires a human driver to be in control at all times."

Tesla did not respond to a request for comment.

World Markets

STOCK MARKETS					CURRENCIES					INTEREST RATES				
	Aug 16	prev	%chg		Aug 16	prev	%chg	Aug 16	prev		price	yield	chg	
S&P 500	4450.89	4468.00	-0.39	\$ per €	1.179	1.179	0.722	0.722		US Gov 10 yr	150.06	1.25	-0.06	
Nasdaq Composite	14688.29	14822.90	-0.91	£ per €	1.386	1.385	£ per €	1.176	1.175	UK Gov 10 yr		0.57	0.00	
Dow Jones Ind	35429.94	35515.38	-0.24	€ per \$	0.851	0.851	¥ per €	128.666	129.564	Ger Gov 10 yr		-0.47	0.00	
FTSEurofirst 300	1824.82	1835.10	-0.56	¥ per \$	109.145	109.885	€ index	82.411	82.422	Japan Gov 10 yr	117.24	0.01	-0.01	
Euro Stoxx 50	4197.97	4229.70	-0.75	\$ per €	151.291	152.298	Sfr per €	1.263	1.260	US Gov 30 yr	116.07	1.90	-0.04	
FTSE 100	7153.36	7216.71	-0.86	Sfr per €	1.074	1.080	€ per \$	0.848	0.842	Ger Gov 2 yr	105.63	-0.75	0.00	
FTSE All-Share	4111.89	4144.47	-0.79							Fed Funds Eff	0.10	0.08	0.02	
CAC 40	6938.77	6998.04	-0.83							US 3m Bill	0.06	0.06	0.00	
Xetra Dax	15925.73	15977.44	-0.32							Euro Liber 3m	-0.56	-0.56	0.00	
Nikkei	27923.19	27977.15	-1.82							UK 3m	0.07	0.07	0.00	
Hang Seng	26181.46	26391.62	-0.80											
MSCI World \$	3125.12	3115.74	0.30	Oil WTI \$	67.66	68.44	-1.14							
FTSE All-Share	1290.86	1290.91	-0.78	Oil Brent \$	69.88	70.59	-1.01							
MSCI ACWI \$	736.02	734.75	0.17	Gold \$	1773.85	1747.40	1.51							

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FACING AFGHAN CHAOS, BIDEN DEFENDS EXIT



Afghans ran alongside a U.S. military plane on Monday. President Biden vowed to rescue thousands who had helped Americans, but the fates of many were uncertain.

VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

He Says U.S. Gave Kabul's Leaders 'Every Tool'

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR
and DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON — President Biden offered a defiant defense on Monday of his decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, blaming the swift collapse of the Afghan government and chaotic scenes at the Kabul airport on the refusal of the country's military to stand and fight in the face of the Taliban advance.

Speaking to the American people from the East Room after returning briefly to the White House from Camp David, Mr. Biden said he had no regrets about his decision to end the longest war in United States history. But he lamented that two decades of support failed to turn the Afghan military into a force capable of securing its own country.

"We gave them every tool they could need. We paid their salaries. Provided for the maintenance of their airplanes," Mr. Biden said. "We gave them every chance to determine their own future. What we could not provide was the will to fight for that future."

Mr. Biden acknowledged that the Taliban victory had come much faster than the United States had expected and that the withdrawal was "hard and messy." As the fourth president to preside over the war in Afghanistan, though, he said that "the buck stops with me."

"I stand squarely behind my decision," he said, adding that he would not "shrink from my share of responsibility for where we are today."

He directed a question to critics of the withdrawal, asking, "How many more generations of America's daughters and sons would you have me send to fight Afghans — Afghanistan's civil war, when Afghan troops will not?"

Mr. Biden spoke after dramatic images showed a frantic scramble to evacuate the American Embassy in Kabul as Taliban fighters advanced, drawing grim comparisons to America's retreat from Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War. Footage of people clinging to a hulking U.S. military transport, even as it left the ground, quickly circulated around the world.

But in his speech, Mr. Biden spent far more time defending his decision to depart from Afghanistan than the chaotic way it was carried out.

The Taliban cemented their control of Afghanistan on Monday, with scenes of handoffs to insurgent fighters playing out across the country and reports that the Taliban were searching for people they considered collaborators of the United States.

Continued on Page A5

Racing to Get Out as Desperation and Fear Set In

By CARLOTTA GALL
and RUHULLAH KHAPALWAK

ISTANBUL — Thousands of desperate Afghans trying to escape the Taliban takeover swarmed Kabul's main international airport on Monday, rushing the boarding gates, mobbing the runways, clambering atop the wings of jets and even trying to cling to the fuselage of departing American military planes.

At least half a dozen Afghans were killed in the chaos, some falling from the skies as they lost their grasp, and at least two were shot by American soldiers trying to contain the surging crowds.

The images evoked America's frantic departure from Vietnam, encapsulating Afghanistan's breathtaking collapse in the wake of American abandonment.

As American troops sought to manage the exodus, seizing air traffic control to prioritize military flights evacuating Western citizens and flying Apache helicopters low over the crowds to clear the runway, Taliban fighters capped a swift and devastating lunge for power, posing for an iconic photo behind the ornate presidential desk in the presidential palace hours after President Ashraf Ghani had fled the country.

In a video broadcast on Al Jazeera, the head of the Afghan



WAKIL KOHISAR/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

An American soldier ordering an Afghan man to move at Hamid Karzai International Airport, where hundreds lined the runway.

presidential guard shook hands with a Taliban commander. "I say welcome to them, and I congratulate them," the official said.

Taliban fighters spread out across the streets of the capital on Monday, riding motorbikes and driving police vehicles and Humvees seized from the government security forces. Armed fighters occupied the Parliament, some visited the homes of govern-

ment officials, confiscating possessions and vehicles, while others made a show of directing traffic.

Taliban officials promised safety to civilians and urged them to stay, but the mobs at the Hamid Karzai International Airport revealed the depths of panic and despair of Afghans who feared reprisal killings and a return to the Taliban.

Continued on Page A6

A Soviet Echo As Forces Flee Over a Bridge

By ANDREW E. KRAMER

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan — The bridge has an eerily Orwellian name — the Friendship Bridge — and a storied history in Afghanistan's wars.

And again this week, the bridge, which spans the Amu Darya River between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, provided a backdrop for a watershed moment in the fighting. In a chaotic retreat from the city of Mazar-i-Sharif, pro-government soldiers streamed onto the crossing, seeking safety on the opposite bank.

The scene on Thursday mirrored an iconic moment 32 years ago at the end of the failed Soviet war in Afghanistan, when the bridge provided the final exit route out of the country for the defeated Soviet Army.

Then, red flags fixed to the armored vehicles flapped in a winter wind as the departing Soviet troops drove and marched across the bridge on Feb. 15, 1989. That was meant to signal an organized, dignified exit for the superpower's army after a decade of occupation.

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For Veterans, Pain, Anguish And Sorrows

By DAVE PHILLIPS

On Javier Mackey's second deployment to Afghanistan, one of his friends was shot in an ambush and bled to death in his arms. He saw high-ranking Afghan officers selling off equipment for personal gain and Afghan troops running away during firefights. And he started wondering what the United States could really achieve by sending thousands of troops to a distant land that seemed to have never known peace. That was in 2008.

Mr. Mackey, an Army Special Forces soldier, deployed there five more times, was shot twice, and, he said, grew more cynical on each trip, until he decided the only sensible thing for the United States to do was cut its losses and leave.

Even so, seeing the swift and chaotic collapse of the Afghan government in recent days hit him with the intensity of a bomb blast. "It's pain — pain I thought I had gotten used to," said Mr. Mackey, who retired as a sergeant first class in 2018 and now lives in Florida. "I sacrificed a lot, I saw death

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A Longtime Lifeline in Haiti Now Lies in Ruins

By MARIA ABI-HABIB
and ANDRE PAULTRE

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The houses collapsed, the hospitals were damaged, the roads buckled or turned impassable. But it was the earthquake's destruction of churches across Haiti's southern peninsula that may prove the biggest gut punch to the roughly 1.5 million people affected.

For many Haitians, their only source of aid throughout their lives, in the absence of strong government institutions, has been the church, a part of Haiti's landscape since the era of European colonialism and slavery.

Many churches lay in ruins after the 7.2 magnitude earthquake on Saturday morning, which wrecked thousands of buildings

Gut Punch to Ravaged Nation as Churches Fall to Quake

and left entire towns and at least one city without a church left standing. On Monday, as heavy rains threatened floods and mudslides in the region, civil defense officials raised the death toll to more than 1,400 and said nearly 7,000 people had been injured.

In the city of Les Cayes, which was particularly devastated by the quake, clerics despaired even as they sought to project hope and resolve to rebuild.

"We are the only thing here," said the Rev. Yves Joel Jacqueline, 44, who works at the cathedral in

Les Cayes with Haiti's cardinal, Bishop Chibly Langlois, who was hurt in the quake. "There is no support from the government."

The heavy concrete rooftops and domes of churches across the southern peninsula are now caved in, tabernacles crooked or buried under rubble, walls marbled with deep cracks.

Every church seen by reporters from The New York Times in a 15-mile drive in and around Les Cayes on Sunday was completely destroyed or severely damaged. The cathedral in the city of Jeremie, an architectural landmark built more than a century ago, was left in ruins.

The quake could not have come at a worse time for Haiti. The Caribbean nation is still traumatized over the unsolved July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

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ADRIANA ZEHRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Marouchka Saint-Cyr in her home near a cathedral in Haiti that was destroyed by a 2010 quake.

NATIONAL A12-15

Sign of Dry Future in West

A Colorado River reservoir has its first water shortage, forcing supply cuts and previewing challenges ahead. PAGE A13

Becoming the Un-Cuomo

Kathy Hochul, who is preparing to lead New York, is seen as mild-mannered, disarming and untested. PAGE A14



BUSINESS B1-5

Autopilot's Flaws

U.S. auto safety regulators are opening an investigation into a famous Tesla feature after a series of crashes involving parked vehicles. PAGE B1

Vaccines Exit Area in Need

Johnson & Johnson is exporting doses bottled in South Africa, where shots are scarce, to Europe. PAGE B1

INTERNATIONAL A4-11

5 Losses, Then the Presidency

Hakaide Hichilema, a businessman who had repeatedly vied for Zambia's presidency, scored a solid win. PAGE A11

SPORTS B6-8

Golfers Opt to Stroll, Not Roll

Recreational players are shunning carts and enjoying the health benefits of walking the course. "It's a beautiful setting if you let it be," one said. PAGE B6

OBITUARIES A16-17

Thorn in a Gilded Paw

Michael Thomas's place in the moneyed elite informed his financial thrillers, which often savaged the rich and powerful. He was 85. PAGE A17

OPINION A18-19

Thomas L. Friedman

PAGE A19

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Saving the Owens Pupfish

The species can swim under ice or in waters warmer than 90 degrees, but can it survive a warming Earth? PAGE D1

Eulogizing Barry the Owl

Michiko Kakutani says goodbye to an occupant of Central Park who had a people-friendly personality. PAGE D8



ARTS C1-6

Art Appreciation's the Goal

When the English Premier League kicked off last weekend, fans of Tottenham Hotspur had a new attraction to visit: a gallery dedicated to works inspired by the game of soccer. PAGE C5

A Back Story in Doubt

Christopher Massimine, who has been a theater executive in New York and Utah, faces questions about errors on his resumé and a phony award. PAGE C1





PEOPLE surround or climb atop a plane Monday at the international airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, after the stunningly swift end to a 20-year war included thousands of desperate Afghans flooding the tarmac.

Hoping to drive a boom in clean energy

California is test case for Biden's efforts, but his push carries risks.

BY SAMMY ROTH AND CHRIS MEOERIAN

KETTLEMAN CITY, Calif. — The steel beams cut across the brown dirt like scaffolding basking under the Central Valley sun when the workers pulled up.

One maneuvered a tractor towing a trailer stacked with solar panels, while another handed down the panels to eight other laborers. They carefully arranged the gleaming photovoltaics and tilted them toward the sun. Two more workers fastened the panels to steel beams with pneumatic guns.

The crew was one of many spread across former farmland on a recent afternoon in Kings County, where Westlands Solar Park is shaping up to be one of the world's largest renewable-energy facilities.

If President Biden successfully pushes his climate change plans through Congress, he's hoping for a lot more jobs like these — good-paying, blue-collar union jobs. But it's not a sure bet, and the transition away from fossil fuels could cause upheaval for some workers even as it produces new opportunity for others.

That's because solar fields and wind turbines require fewer people to operate than natural gas plants and oil refineries. Not as many employees are needed to help electric cars roll down an assembly line. And when new clean-energy jobs are created, some could be in less-lucrative lines of work, such as installing rooftop solar panels or weatherizing homes to increase energy efficiency.

"When the labor market does this thing, we produce tremendous wage inequality and tremendous growth in low-wage jobs," said Carol Zabin, who directs the Green Economy Program at UC Berkeley's Labor Center.

Biden administration of [See Energy, A9]



A U.S. SOLDIER points his gun at an Afghan man who was among the throngs at the airport who were attempting to flee the country after the Taliban takeover.

Long waits on first day at LAUSD

Screening is slow, but some are thrilled just to be back

BY HOWARD BLUME, MELISSA GOMEZ AND COLLEEN SHALBY

Hundreds of thousands of Los Angeles-area students started school Monday, a massive return to in-person education that was marked by pandemic-driven anxiety, a sense of excitement and early-morning frustration over the failure of the district's health screening system, which caused long waits to enter campuses.

The scenes from the nation's second-largest school district included the familiar: Yellow buses hit the street on 1,500 routes; the youngest children and their parents exchanged tearful hugs and goodbyes; friends and teachers felt the jitters of standing before students after the long absence.

The morning also revealed signs of the times: masked students, weekly coronavirus testing, backpacks filled with hand wipes and sanitizer — and an on-line daily health screening that collapsed at the moment it was needed most.

Lines of anxious students and parents formed down sidewalks and around corners as they waited up to an hour to access campuses after the Daily Pass health screening system failed to [See School, A7]



STUDENTS AND PARENTS wait Monday to enter Normont Elementary School as a computerized health screening system collapsed under high volume.

Delta surge may be slowing

Experts are optimistic over new numbers

BY LUKE MONEY AND RONG-GONG LIN II

California enters a critical phase in its battle against the Delta variant this week — the reopening of schools — with some hopeful signs: The number of people being infected and falling seriously

ill with COVID-19 is no longer accelerating at dramatic rates and even beginning to flatten in some areas.

Many experts are optimistic over the progress, but some officials stressed it's too early to know definitively whether the surge caused by the highly contagious strain is peaking.

Biden defends pullout from Afghanistan

President says there was no good time to leave, but he blames leaders 'who gave up and fled the country.'

BY ELI STOKOLS

WASHINGTON — President Biden, facing the biggest political crisis of his term, defended the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan amid the rapid collapse of the country's government, taking responsibility for ending the 20-year war but deflecting blame for the "hard and messy" events of recent days.

"I am president of the United States of America, and the buck stops with me," Biden said in a speech from the White House on Monday afternoon. "I'm deeply saddened by the facts we now face. But I do not regret my decision to end America's war ... in Afghanistan."

While Biden claimed he had "planned for every contingency," he acknowledged that the Taliban's march into Kabul "did unfold more quickly than we anticipated." The insurgent group's success in taking over Afghanistan in just a few weeks, he argued, validated his decision to end America's two-decade presence in the country. "American troops cannot

In U.S., fear for those left behind

Pentagon says it plans to evacuate 22,000 at risk in Afghanistan, but details remain murky. WORLD, A5

— and should not — be fighting a war, and dying in a war, that the Afghans are not willing to fight for themselves," Biden said. "We gave them every chance to determine their own future. What we could not provide them was the will to fight for that future."

Biden was far more forceful in explaining his rationale for bringing U.S. troops home than in addressing the poorly executed departure, blaming Afghanistan's political leaders who "gave up and fled the country."

The president, determined to restore America's values-based leadership on the world stage, asserted that "human rights must be the center" of U.S. foreign [See Afghanistan, A4]

Clinging to a U.S. plane, trying to escape

Deadly chaos ensues at Kabul's airport as desperate hordes struggle to get away from the Taliban.

BY MARCUS YAM AND LAURA KING

KABUL, Afghanistan — Wrenching scenes unfolded Monday at Kabul's airport as thousands of Afghans desperate to flee their Taliban-conquered homeland clambered over barriers and thronged the tarmac, with some even clinging to the side of a U.S. military transport plane before falling away. At least seven people were reported to have died in the chaos.

The American military has taken control of the evacuation of diplomats, staff and allies, which has turned into a harrowing capstone on the two-decade U.S. military mission. But the deadly tumult, less the aircraft effort in crisis. All flights, civilian and military, had been suspended until the runway was secured, but Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said later that airport operations had resumed.

Seven people were killed in the airport vicinity, the Associated Press reported, and Kirby confirmed that two "armed Afghans" were killed by U.S. forces. The Taliban controls all land crossings out of the country, and for now, the capital's airport is the only evacuation route.

The horrific airport images — videos of men running alongside the taxiing C-17 Air Force plane and scrambling to grab its exterior, and subsequently at least two falling bodies visible as the craft was airborne — drew shock and dismay from around the world. President Biden called the images "gut-wrenching" but said he stood by his decision to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan.

The U.S. failure to leave in place a stable government and a dependable Afghan military was evident a day after the Taliban assumed control of the capital and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country. Most people in the capital covered in their homes, staying out of sight. In the early morning, normally traffic-choked streets were eerily empty as Taliban fighters, many clad in san- [See Airport, A4]

U.S. declares shortage of water at Colorado River

Levels have fallen to record lows at Lake Mead, the river's largest reservoir. It could trigger cuts for some Arizona farmers. NATION, A6

Recall candidates vow to roll back COVID rules

Republicans hoping to replace Gov. Gavin Newsom say they would rescind his vaccination and mask mandates. CALIFORNIA, B1

Bauer's accuser testifies on alleged sexual assault

Woman seeking restraining order says, "I felt like my soul left my body," as Dodgers pitcher punched her while having sex. SPORTS, B10

Weather

Low clouds and fog.

L.A. Basin: 85/69. B6



The Washington Post

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Haiti braces for storm on heels of earthquake

Heavy rain could cause floods, threatening victims and aid workers

BY INGRID ARNESEN, MARY BETH SHERIDAN AND WIDLORE MERANCOURT

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI — Rescue workers and doctors with little equipment worked feverishly Monday to save victims of the massive earthquake in southwestern Haiti as a powerful storm threatened to unleash flooding and further snarl aid efforts.

Heavy rains started dousing the country on Monday afternoon, creating yet another crisis for exhausted, newly homeless people who needed shelter. Officials estimated that Tropical Depression Grace would dump five to 10 inches of rain on the region by Tuesday. The U.S. National Hurricane Center warned that Grace, while downgraded from a tropical storm, could still cause flash flooding and mudslides in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

"We're pleading for help," Marie-Helene L'Esperance, mayor of the harbor town of Pestel, told Haiti's Pacific Radio. "Every house was destroyed, there's nowhere to live, we need shelters, medical help and especially water. We've had nothing for three days, and injured victims are starting to die."

She said the prospect of heavy rain had "spread fear through residents who had nothing left but to pray."

The 7.2-magnitude earthquake SEE HAITI ON A6

Shortages upend plans for returning to classrooms

BY ABHA BHATTARAI

Bus drivers are in such short supply that EastSide Charter School in Wilmington, Del., is offering parents \$700 to drop off and pick up their children for the school year. Pittsburgh Public Schools, which needs more than 400 drivers, is delaying the return to classrooms by two weeks.

And in Montgomery County, Maryland's largest district, Montgomery County Public Schools is being walloped on both ends: by delayed deliveries of new buses because of a lack of computer chips for the buses' air-conditioning systems and a shortage of people to drive the buses.

For months, the economy has been rattled by labor shortages and supply chain shocks slowing the delivery of goods around the world. As schools reopen under the shadow of a worsening coronavirus pandemic, they are being squeezed by both — facing short-

SEE SCHOOLS ON A4

Desperate Afghans try to flee



ABOVE: Hundreds of people run alongside a U.S. Air Force transport plane as it prepares to take off at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. Some climbed onto the side of the jet and tried to hang on as it became airborne. BELOW: Women and children make their way to the airport, hoping to leave the country. The Taliban stayed away from the airport, where U.S. troops were in charge.

Chaos undercuts president's vows of a steady hand

BY MATT VISER

Joe Biden presented voters with a core argument why he, more than anyone else, was the best choice to replace the wildly unorthodox Donald Trump: He would bring competence.

Biden said that as president he would restore calm order to the vast federal bureaucracy. He vowed to reaffirm America's place in the world. He touted how he knew world leaders, how his deep foreign policy expertise would lend itself well to the world stage, making things right and helping to correct past wrongs.

But over the past few days, the images from Afghanistan have put on vivid display an inability to plan, an underestimation of a foreign adversary, an ineffective effort to scramble and make up for it — and, as Biden demonstrated in a brief address Monday, an attempt to deflect full responsibility.

Biden conceded that his administration was caught off guard by the Taliban's rapid takeover of Afghanistan and the ensuing chaos, and he declared that "the buck stops with me," yet he used his remarks to cast blame in multiple directions for the bungled U.S. withdrawal.

He claimed that he had to abide by agreements made by Trump. He said Afghan President Ashraf Ghani failed to live up to several commitments he made in July. He blamed Afghan forces for not fighting harder against the Taliban, recounting how much money

SEE BIDEN ON A19



In final days, snapshots of a failure decades in the making

BY GREG JAFFE AND GREG MILLER

Two indelible, humiliating images are certain to endure from the final days of the Afghan war.

The first came in the White House on July 8 when President Biden was asked if the U.S. departure from Afghanistan carried echoes of Vietnam. "None whatsoever. Zero," he replied, testily. "There's going to be no circumstance where you see people being lifted off the roof of an embassy."

The other is an image just as searing as those from the fall of

Saigon: Desperate Afghans clinging to the wheel wells of a C-17 U.S. Air Force cargo jet as it taxis for takeoff at Kabul's international airport.

Together, the two moments embody a malady that has infected the war from its earliest days and helps to explain the catastrophic collapse of the Afghan government and its military. Senior U.S. officials in Washington and Kabul have continually failed to appreciate how difficult the mission would be, how badly it was going and how little they had achieved.

SEE COLLAPSE ON A16

Military's long-held doubts U.S. officers suspected Afghan forces couldn't stand on their own. A15

Agonizing decisions U.S. and other nations face stark choices in evacuation rush. A17

Biden addresses the nation President stands by withdrawal, despite swift collapse. A18

'This has broken everyone' D.C.'s Afghan community fears for safety of stranded relatives. B1

Flawed parallel of Kabul, Saigon Images are similar yet disparate, Philip Kennicott writes. C1

KABUL IS TENSE AS TALIBAN PATROLS

Facing criticism, Biden forcefully defends exit

BY KAREN DEYOUNG, DAN LAMOTHE AND SUSANNAH GEORGE

Horrifying scenes of desperate Afghans, lunging for the wheels of a U.S. military aircraft as it taxied for takeoff from Kabul airport Monday, were juxtaposed with an eerie tension in much of the rest of Afghanistan's capital, where many huddled behind closed doors as Taliban militants patrolled the streets.

In Washington, President Biden called the scenes "gut-wrenching." Human remains were discovered in the wheel well of one of the military planes after it landed in a third country, according to several people familiar with the situation, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter.

Speaking in an address from the White House, Biden defended in forceful tones his order in April to begin a full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

"I stand squarely behind my decision," Biden declared, saying that after 20 years of combat in Afghanistan, "I've learned the hard way that there was never a good time to withdraw U.S. forces." The result, he said, would have been the same

SEE AFGHANISTAN ON A12

Scenes of deadly tumult unfold at airport in capital

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE, ADAM TAYLOR, DAN LAMOTHE AND JENNIFER HASSAN

KABUL — The first full day of Taliban rule in Kabul on Monday saw a mad rush by thousands of Afghans on the city's international airport, in a frantic, last-ditch effort to flee the country.

Hundreds of people ran alongside the wheels of a U.S. military aircraft as it attempted to take off Monday. Others climbed up the sides of the plane as it edged forward, engines roaring.

Some kept hold of the undercarriage even as the aircraft rose, and at least one person appeared to fall from a height. One local Afghan news agency published images of a body that apparently landed on a Kabul rooftop.

At least seven people at the airport were confirmed dead, the Associated Press reported.

The dire scenes illustrated the level of fear sweeping some parts of Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover on the heels of the U.S. military withdrawal, a policy decision critics described as the hasty abandonment of a country to which American officials once pledged unflinching commitment.

"What has happened to us? Here we turned into animals," said one man at the airport as he watched people elbow and kick one another on a narrow staircase trying to get a seat on a plane that would take them abroad.

Like others in this report, the SEE AIRPORT ON A13

IN THE NEWS



TONE L. SANDOZ/THE WASHINGTON POST

Japan's taxpayers gulp With an Olympics tab of \$15.4 billion, but no tourists or a revenue surge, citizens will bear most of the cost. A5

D.C. mother mourns A third son is the victim of gun violence as weekend shootings left two dead in Anacostia, adding to a rising toll. B1

THE NATION Federal officials have declared a first-ever water shortage on the Colorado River, triggering cuts next year for some in Western states. A2

A lack of paid sick leave is playing a role in deterring low-wage workers from taking time off to get vaccinated, according to surveys and policy experts. A3

THE WORLD Many Brazilians have tuned out their president's coronavirus vaccination stance and pursued the shots. A7

With pressures from

the pandemic and worsening U.S.-China relations, many Chinese students are choosing not to receive a U.S. education despite preparing for years to do so. A8

In Peru, another political meltdown looms as the presidency of Pedro Castillo gets off to a chaotic start. A8

THE ECONOMY Nearly 1 in 3 U.S. workers under 40 have thought about changing their occupation or field of work during the pandemic, a Washington Post-Schar School survey found. A9

U.S. safety regulators are investigating Tesla's driver-assistance system after crashes involving parked emergency vehicles while Autopilot was engaged. A10

THE REGION Health-care workers in D.C. must receive at least their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine by Sept. 30, officials announced. B1

D.C. is divided on what to do about the increasing number of chronically homeless people living in tents. B1

D.C. Public Schools probably tested just 4 percent of students in its random asymptomatic testing program in the

spring, short of city and federal suggestions, a city audit found. B1

A former manager at the law firm Morrison & Foerster was sentenced to three years in prison after spending \$425,000 of the firm's money to buy designer clothing, electronics and scented candles. B3

The Washington Monument is expected to remain closed Tuesday after a weekend lightning strike damaged the electrical system. B4

Body-camera video from a D.C. police officer who was seen repeatedly punching a man in the face during an arrest will be released, officials said. B5

INSIDE



HEALTH & SCIENCE

Youthful advice Parents offer their perspectives on raising a child with cystic fibrosis and talking to the young about death. Plus a look at food allergies and heading off to college. E1

STYLE Happy at home For some summer interns, not being in an office is also a perk. C1

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Fleteros insisten en que se trate la ley que regula el transporte de cargas

Empresarios exigen acción policial y fiscal para despejar las rutas

Tras comunicado se tomaron acciones en Minga Guazú y Villarrica y detuvieron a 24 personas. Diputado Jorge Brítez fue demorado en Alto Paraná. Unos 4.500 camiones están varados en Foz.

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La ley se convirtió en letra muerta
Gobernadores tampoco respetan la legislación que prohíbe nepotismo

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Debe reunir USD 250.000
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CON ESTA EDICIÓN	COMPRA OPCIONAL
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REUTERS

Pánico entre mujeres afganas ante retorno de los talibanes al poder

Temor. El fundamentalismo islámico vuelve a imponer su régimen tras caer Kabul. Las mujeres son las principales víctimas de las restricciones que aplican

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Reconvierten UTI a polivalentes y reinician cirugías
Las cifras Covid bajaron a niveles similares a junio del año pasado

PÁGINAS 2 y 3

Corredor Vial Botánico quedó habilitado para el tránsito vehicular

PÁGINA 14



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Michel Goya **PAGE 19**

FIGARO OUI
FIGARO NON

Réponses
à la question de lundi:
Électricité, gaz: faut-il
interdire le démarchage
à domicile?

NON 5% **OUI** 95%
TOTAL DE VOTANTS: 102522

Votez aujourd'hui
sur **lefigaro.fr**
La France doit-elle
accueillir les ressortissants
afghans qui l'ont aidée
pendant la guerre?

ADOBESTOCK-NICOLAS BOVE/AFP-
ECLAIR MONDIAL/SIPA

Les talibans imposent l'ordre islamiste à Kaboul

Tandis que les nouveaux maîtres de l'Afghanistan ont pris en charge la «sécurité», le chaos à l'aéroport de la capitale a entraîné la suspension des évacuations. **PAGES 2 À 5, 19 ET L'ÉDITORIAL**



Macron promet de lutter contre les flux migratoires clandestins

Dans une allocution télévisée, le chef de l'État a tenu lundi soir à clarifier la position de la France après l'arrivée des talibans à Kaboul. Il a rappelé le devoir d'assistan-

ce de Paris en faveur des auxiliaires afghans de l'armée française. Il a aussi tenu à rassurer les Français contre de possibles «flux migratoires irréguliers». **PAGE 4**

Dans les provinces, les exactions ont repris

Les dirigeants talibans disent avoir évolué. Ils promettent que les jeunes filles pourront étudier et les femmes travailler sous condition. Mais les Afghans anticipent la ri-

gueur islamiste. Des témoins font état de violations des droits de l'homme loin des caméras internationales et des garanties politiques données de l'étranger. **PAGES 2 ET 3**

Les réfugiés afghans affluent vers la Turquie

À la frontière turco-iranienne, on compte depuis le début de l'année entre 500 et 2000 arrivées par jour de réfugiés afghans. Ankara a beau ériger un mur et renforcer ses con-

trôles, les candidats à l'exil continuent d'être poussés par le désespoir et leur peur des talibans. Notre envoyée spéciale a recueilli leurs témoignages. **PAGES 4 ET 5**

ÉDITORIAL par Philippe Gélie pgelie@lefigaro.fr

Capitulation

Admettons que Joe Biden ait raison : il se peut bien que la guerre d'Afghanistan ait été impossible à gagner. Que « rester un an ou cinq ans de plus » dans ce pays « fossoyeur d'empires » n'eût au final rien changé. Que l'Amérique n'ait pas vocation à soutenir indéfiniment un État incapable de se prendre en main. Qu'un départ plus ou moins sans gloire ait toujours été inscrit au bout de l'aventure, dès lors que G. W. Bush n'avait pas voulu se contenter d'une expédition punitive contre les protecteurs de Ben Laden... Il n'empêche : vingt ans après le cataclysme du 11 Septembre, le président des États-Unis va devoir assumer l'image dévastatrice du drapeau taliban jetant son ombre sur l'ambassade américaine au cœur de Kaboul. À ce symbole de capitulation s'ajoutent déjà les scènes d'un « Saigon sous stérilisation » - évacuation chaotique, documents brûlés à la hâte, armes saisies par l'ennemi -, « la pire humiliation » depuis la chute de la capitale sud-vietnamienne en 1975.

Cette débâcle était parfaitement évitable. Elle ne scelle pas la fin d'une occupation brutale contre laquelle le peuple afghan se serait sou-

levé. Une grande partie de la population a plus peur des « libérateurs » que des envahisseurs, comme en témoignent ceux qui s'accrochent à la carlingue des avions au décollage. Joe Biden aurait pu baliser le retrait de conditions politiques et de préparatifs logistiques. Il a présumé de sa puissance en décrétant la fin de la guerre : la guerre continue, il s'en lave les mains.

La débâcle de Kaboul était parfaitement évitable

si leurs chefs ont compris, comme ils le prétendent, qu'il y a des limites au martyre que peut supporter un peuple et au mépris dans lequel on peut tenir le reste du monde. Les Occidentaux sont en première ligne : désastre humanitaire, exode de réfugiés, sanctuaire pour les terroristes islamistes... Que le pire se réalise ou pas, la fuite d'Afghanistan laissera une tache indélébile sur le bilan de Joe Biden longtemps après sa présidence. ■



PASSEZ L'ESPOIR
ET SAUVEZ LA VIE D'UN ENFANT

Les enfants ont tous le même langage pour dire « l'espoir ».

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Sandra Bernhard on Madonna, sexism and comedy

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Biden defends US withdrawal amid chaotic scenes in Kabul

● Seven die as desperate
civilians converge on
airport, seeking freedom

● Afghans who helped
the west remain trapped
amid fear of reprisals

● Biden under pressure
as scenes raise spectre
of escape from Saigon

Julian Borger
Washington

Joe Biden has said that US troops in Kabul would stay long enough to evacuate American citizens and eligible Afghan allies and warned the Taliban there would be a "devastating" response to any attempt to attack or disrupt the operation.

The US president made a televised address from the White House after a day of chaos at Kabul airport following the fall of the Afghan capital to the Taliban, in which seven people were killed during the rush towards the sole remaining exit route out of the country.

As insurgents took control of the city, declaring victory after 20 years of war, tens of thousands of Afghans who had been promised resettlement in the west because of their past work with or for the US, Britain and their allies remained trapped in the country and in fear for their lives, amid reports of reprisal killings.

Biden admitted his administration had been caught by surprise by the speed of the Taliban victory, which he attributed to lack of leadership from Ashraf Ghani's ousted government and a lack of will to fight in the Afghan armed forces.

"We gave them every chance to determine their own future. What we couldn't provide them was the will to fight for that future," he said. Biden said the US had made



Crowds of Afghans raced alongside a US transporter plane in Kabul yesterday, desperate to climb aboard

Inside

Cabinet splits emerge over the handling of evacuations from Afghanistan [Page 4 ➔](#)

Shops shut and women vanish from streets of Kabul as fighters celebrate victory [Page 6 ➔](#)

Who are the Taliban figures and what will they do with the power they now wield? [Page 9 ➔](#)

Angry veterans of the bloody 20-year conflict ask: was it all worth it? [Page 11 ➔](#)

contingency plans for such a dire outcome, and he has ordered 5,000 marine and army reinforcements to Kabul to secure the airport for an evacuation of thousands of US citizens still in Afghanistan, and Afghans who worked with Americans and are eligible for special visas.

"American troops are performing this mission as professionally and as effectively as they always do, but it is not without risks," he said. "As we carry out this departure, we have made it clear to the Taliban that if they attack our personnel, the US response will be swift and forceful. We will defend our people with devastating force if necessary."

In his address, Biden said the

troops would stay as long as it took to carry out the evacuation, leaving open the possibility that it might stretch beyond the current 31 August deadline for the final US withdrawal.

"Our current military mission is

'We are extremely concerned. Time and again, the Taliban has broken its promises'

Ghulam Isaczai
Afghan UN ambassador

limited in scope and focused on its objectives: get our people and our allies to safety as quickly as possible," Biden said. "And once we have completed this mission, we will conclude our military withdrawal, and end America's longest war."

In Kabul and cities across the country, Taliban forces asserted control ahead of an expected announcement of an Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in the coming days.

With Kabul airport seemingly close to being overrun, flights were grounded and seven people died in the scramble to find a flight out. The Pentagon said US troops shot two unidentified gunmen who had fired into the crowd. Two