

**Biden Addresses Immigration, Voting Rights and More in His First Formal News Conference >**

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# U.S. troops to withdraw from Afghanistan within a year, Biden suggests.



By David E. Sanger

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President Biden said on Thursday that he was unlikely to withdraw all American troops from Afghanistan by May 1, the deadline agreed to by his predecessor, but added that he could not imagine troops still there a year from now.

His statement, at his first formal news conference since his inauguration just over two months ago, marked the first time that he had put a time frame on the American withdrawal. He had previously said that he was unlikely to meet the May 1 deadline for withdrawal that was part of an agreement made a year ago between the Trump administration and the Taliban.

“We’ve been meeting with our allies,” Mr. Biden said, particularly those who still have troops in Afghanistan, “and if we leave we are going to do so in a safe and orderly way.”

But moment later, when pressed, he moved away from the “if,” saying “It is not my intention to stay there for a long time.”

Mr. Biden’s statement appeared to make clear that he plans to pull out the 2,500 American troops remaining in the country, nearly 20 years after President George W. Bush ordered the invasion of the country to eliminate Al Qaeda’s base there, from which the September 11, 2001 terror attacks were launched.

But Pentagon officials have long warned that the troops are necessary to maintain a minimum force to collect intelligence and conduct counterterrorism operations. And Mr. Biden has not yet explained how, once the troops are gone, those functions will be carried out from afar.

In the same news conference, Mr. Biden said that North Korea's decision to launch two short-range ballistic missiles on Thursday violated United Nations resolutions. "There will be responses if they choose to escalate," he said. "We will respond accordingly."

But he also opened the door to negotiations, "conditioned on the end result of denuclearization." That condition may be a nonstarter for any meaningful negotiation: North Korean officials have previously said that they would never agree to unilateral denuclearization.

During the first summit meeting in 2018 between President Donald J. Trump and Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, the country appeared to commit to eventual denuclearization. But its stockpile of nuclear material ultimately soared during the Trump years.