

Taliban seizes Afghanistan's prized 'desert of death'

RTE News

August 13, 2021 Friday 8:30 AM GMT

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Section: ARTICLE; newsdocument

Length: 614 words

Byline: Jon Williams

Body

Helmand is a hostile place at the best of times. The largest of **Afghanistan**'s 34 provinces, much of it is an arid wasteland.

In summer, temperatures can reach 46C, while in winter it can be well below freezing. Perched 700 metres above sea level, it's a barren place, just a bit smaller than Ireland, that has earned its local name: the Dasht-e-Margo or the desert of **death**.

But Helmand has long been a prize in **Afghanistan**. For 30 years during the Cold War, the province was the focus of massive American aid designed to combat the influence of the then USSR in **Afghanistan** and "make the desert bloom".

At huge cost, two massive dams and hundreds of kilometres of irrigation canals transformed the arid province into one of the most fertile in **Afghanistan**.

At the centre of the plan was a new provincial capital. Lashkar Gah was built using American designs with broad, tree-lined streets and brick houses with no walls instead of the traditional Afghan "compounds". The locals called it 'Little America'.

But when the Soviet Union invaded **Afghanistan** in 1979, 'Little America' was one of its casualties. The trees came down and walls went up.

Enterprising farmers harnessed America's legacy, using the network of irrigation canals to grow poppy and become the centre of the world's opium production. **Afghanistan** accounts for 90% of the world's heroin - most comes from Helmand.

Throughout the Soviet occupation, the civil war that followed and then under the Taliban, poppy cultivation grew, with Helmand at the centre of production.

Taliban seizes Afghanistan's prized 'desert of death'

And in the 20 years since the US-led invasion, the area of **Afghanistan** under poppy cultivation has only grown further. Last year, the UN estimates there was a 37% increase in opium poppy cultivation, with more than half of it grown in Helmand.

Over a decade, from 2006 to 2016, 'Little America' would become a familiar place to me as Britain moved in to "Helmandshire".

In early 2006, 3,000 British troops were deployed to Helmand. They set up camp in Lashkar Gah, building a giant air base, Camp Bastion, just southwest of the provincial capital.

That summer, the then British Defence Secretary, John Reid, said he would be happy if British troops could leave Helmand "without firing one shot".

In the autumn of 2006, I flew into Helmand with the head of the RAF. I was the Foreign Editor of the BBC - and it would be the first of 13 visits I would make to **Afghanistan** during the following decade.

Camp Bastion was just being stood up - the desert runway meant we had to change planes in Kabul and fly into Helmand on an RAF Hercules, which could land on the makeshift airstrip. Air traffic control was in a portacabin.

But as more and more British troops were sent to **Afghanistan**, Bastion grew and grew, becoming home to 30,000 people - a town the size of Navan with a perimeter stretching 40km, and its own bus service, fire station and police force.

It got a proper runway, capable of handling the giant C17 military transport jet and an air traffic control tower like those you might see at any airport around the world. Just as well - because at one point, Camp Bastion was busier than any UK airport other than London Gatwick or Heathrow.

The British flag was lowered in Lashkar Gah in March 2014. That October, UK troops withdrew from Helmand after an eight-year campaign that cost 454 British lives. Camp Bastion was left to be reclaimed by the desert.

As the union flag was lowered for the final time in Helmand, the most senior British general in **Afghanistan** said he was optimistic and that "the Taliban have been marginalised".

Less than seven years later, it's the Taliban flag that flies over 'Little America'. It is they who control the desert of **death**.

Load-Date: September 2, 2021

WORSE THAN ISIS Inside Taliban's horrifying medieval executions as women are beheaded & stoned to death just for 'chatting to men'

WORSE THAN ISIS Inside Taliban's horrifying medieval executions as women are beheaded & stoned to death just for 'chatting to men'

thesun.co.uk

August 13, 2021 Friday 1:55 PM GMT

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Section: NEWS,WORLD NEWS,TALIBAN; Version:1

Length: 722 words

Byline: Henry Holloway

Body

WITH stonings, beheadings and being shot with assault rifles at point blank range, the women of **Afghanistan** face being left to a horrific fate.

Taliban forces are surging across the country at an alarming rate after Western forces abandoned the nation after 20 years of war and seemingly futile attempts at rebuild.

With the jihadi army now in control of more than half of **Afghanistan** 's cities, tens of thousands of people have been left fleeing for their lives.

And as the Taliban rampages , some of its most brutalised victims have been - and will be - the country's women.

Women were brutally oppressed when then the militant group last controlled **Afghanistan** in the 90s - and this looks set to return.

Already there have been reports of girls as young as 12 being married off to fighters , a woman being shot for wearing "tight clothes" , and women being told they cannot leave home without a male chaperone.

The worst looks still to come as the Taliban will likely roll out the vile executions for offences as trivial as being seen talking to men as they sweep territory on the road to Kabul.

Human rights groups and experts have all sounded the alarm over the fate that awaits the women of **Afghanistan** - but there looks like it may be too late to stop the tide.

Taliban militants in 2016 beheaded a woman for going shopping alone while her husband was away from home in the village on Larri.

Footage from 2012 captured Taliban militants shooting a woman named Najiba, 23, in the back of the head as she sat in a ditch in Qol.

WORSE THAN ISIS Inside Taliban's horrifying medieval executions as women are beheaded & stoned to death just for 'chatting to men'

While another horrific video showed another woman named Rokhshana, 19, being stoned in a shallow grave in Ghor in 2015.

Najiba was accused of adultery, while Rokhshana was accused of having sex with her boyfriend outside of marriage.

Video captured earlier this year showed an unnamed woman screaming as she was whipped by a Taliban fighter accused of talking to a man on the phone.

And in one of the most infamous pictures ever captured of Taliban brutality, a woman named Zarmina, a mum-of-five, was executed at the middle of a football stadium in Kabul in 1999.

Zarmina's **death** was watched by 30,000 spectators as she cowered beneath her veil - showing the terrifying normalisation of violence against women under the Taliban.

She was accused of murdering her husband - who she had been wedded to at 16 in an enforced coupling and had been beaten by every night throughout their marriage.

Her children were also placed in prison alongside her - and two of them were reportedly sold into sexual slavery by her Taliban fighter brother-in-law.

Zarmina died alone as tens of thousands watched - and her story continues to show the brutality meted out by the Taliban.

During the group's five year rule throughout the 90s women were left housebound, only being able to leave with a male chaperone and while wearing a full burqa.

"The face of a woman is a source of corruption", according to the Taliban.

Women are banned from working, banned from education over the age of 8, restricted from seeing doctors and face the constant threat of flogging or execution for any breaches of "moral" laws.

Bibi Aisha had her nose and ears cut off by the Taliban when she tried to flee after being married off at 14.

She was left to die and only rescued by aid workers - moving to the US and getting facial reconstruction surgery after appearing on the cover of TIME.

"The Taliban will regress freedom at all levels and that is what we are fighting against," an Afghan government spokesperson said.

"Women and children are suffering the most and our forces are trying to save democracy.

"The world should understand and help us."

It is feared the Taliban may now just been weeks - if not days - from launching an assault on Kabul.

The pace at which they have surged as stunned the retreating West, with US President Joe Biden facing major criticism as he is accused of abandoning the people of **Afghanistan**.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said **Afghanistan** was spiralling into a failed state that will revert to being a safe haven for terrorists.

"Of course Al Qaeda will probably come back," he said.

"Failed states around the world lead to instability, lead to a security threat to us and our interests.

WORSE THAN ISIS Inside Taliban's horrifying medieval executions as women are beheaded & stoned to death
just for 'chatting to men'

"For 20 years we effectively bought a peace on our streets because our Al-Qaeda was unable to launch plots from **Afghanistan**."

Load-Date: August 14, 2021

End of Document

More U.S. Troops To Afghanistan As Taliban Sees Gains; Former U.S. Military Base Now Under Taliban Control; Death Toll Climbing After Earthquake Struck Haiti; O....

More U.S. Troops To Afghanistan As Taliban Sees Gains; Former U.S. Military Base Now Under Taliban Control; Death Toll Climbing After Earthquake Struck Haiti; One Person Stabbed At COVID Protest Outside L.A. City Hall; Airline Travel Slows As Concern Over Delta Variant Rises; Afghan Civilians Forced To Flee As Taliban Advance. Aired 9-10p ET

CNN CNN NEWSROOM 9:00 PM EST

August 14, 2021 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Domestic

Length: 6504 words

Byline: Pamela Brown, Arlette Saenz, Barbara Starr, Clarissa Ward, Max Boot, Gene Norman, Paul Vercammen, Pete Muntean, Michael Holmes

Guests: Mark Kimmitt

Highlight: President Biden deploys up to 5,000 troops to **Afghanistan** as the U.S. scrambles to ensure safe withdrawal of embassy personnel and allies who worked with the U.S. military as Taliban gained ground. At least 304 are dead after 7.2 magnitude earthquake devastated Haiti, and now a tropical storm looking to make the situation worse. Clash between pro-mask and anti-mask in Los Angeles led to one man being stabbed in the chest.

Body

[21:00:09]

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

PAMELA BROWN, CNN HOST (voice-over): **Afghanistan** in chaos as Taliban control tightens and the U.S. scrambles to rescue its allies.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: These are people we relied on, we promised that we wouldn't leave them behind.

BROWN: American troops rushing to get U.S. staff out of the U.S. embassy in Kabul.

REAR ADM. JOHN KIRBY, PENTAGON PRESS SECRETARY: I expect that by the end of the weekend the bulk of the 3,000 will be in place.

BROWN: Deaths and devastation after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hits Haiti.

PATRICK OPPMANN, CNN CORRESPONDENT: We see new harrowing images, new accounts of dead being pulled from rubble, people being treated in the open air.

BROWN: Haiti's prime minister declaring a state of emergency as the U.S. Geological Survey warns of rising casualties and widespread destruction.

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Hospitals overwhelmed by seriously ill patients as the Delta variant tears across the country.

MAYOR LATOYA CANTRE, NEW ORLEANS: The situation is dire, and we are simply out of time.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We have zero ICU beds left for children.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BROWN: I'm Pamela Brown in Washington. You are in the CNN NEWSROOM. Thank you for joining me for CNN's special breaking news coverage of the crisis in Afghanistan. The country's security, the Afghan people's safety are deteriorating with alarming speed. The Taliban have now taken over 22 of 34 regional capitals as the militant group moves closer to the nation's capital of Kabul. In fact, just the two major cities Kabul and Jalalabad are under the control of the Afghan government.

This timeline shows just how fast the Taliban nominated since mid- April when the president announced the U.S. withdrawal. Tonight President Biden is sending in another 1,000 troops there, a total of 5,000 now assigned to help U.S. personnel escape.

As America scrambles to get its allies out of Kabul, many include Afghan interpreters and friends of current and former U.S. military who say their hearts are breaking that those who helped the U.S. are now stranded as targets of the Taliban.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SGT. GERALD KEEN (RET), U.S. ARMY TRYING TO GET AFGHAN INTERPRETER TO U.S.: Now we got to send soldiers back in in harm's way to help evacuate the embassies and these interpreters who fought side by side with us every day and we left there.

LYNNETTE KEEN, TRYING TO GET AFGHAN INTERPRETER TO U.S.: Yes.

G. KEEN: And the world is watching. The world is watching us, every move, as this thing -- this situation compounds hourly. It changes hourly.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

BROWN: CNN White House correspondent Arlette Saenz joins me now.

Arlette, what led President Biden to increase the number of troops to Afghanistan?

ARLETTE SAENZ, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Well, Pamela, President's decision comes as he and top officials have watched the alarming speed with which the Taliban has seized control of portions of the country, and now so much of the U.S. focus is trying to ensure the safety of the American personnel there and those allies, including Afghans who helped the military over this decades-long war in Afghanistan.

Now earlier today President Biden was in Camp David, currently still is in Camp David, and he convened a secure video conference with top U.S. officials including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Tony Blinken. And after that meeting was when the president announced that he would be sending an additional thousand American troops into Afghanistan to help with what he's described as an orderly and safe drawdown.

That brings the total amount of U.S. troops there to 5,000 as they are trying to prepare for this evacuation of American personnel. In a statement, the president also said that they've issued a warning to the Taliban that any on the ground action that they take that puts American personnel at risk will be met with a, quote, "swift and strong military response."

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Now, the president really broke his silence after not speaking about **Afghanistan** since Tuesday. And in his statement he issued a defense of his ultimate decision to pursue that withdrawal of American troops from **Afghanistan** by the end of the month.

I want to read you what the president said. He said, "One more year or five more years of U.S. Military presence would not have made a difference if the Afghan military cannot or will not hold its open country." He added, "And an endless American presence in the middle of another country's conflict was not acceptable to me."

The president also argued that he was hamstrung by decisions made by his predecessor, former President Trump whose administration had negotiated a deal with the Taliban that would have removed American presence from **Afghanistan** by May of this year.

[21:05:00]

But ultimately, what we are seeing take place currently on the ground in **Afghanistan** comes under President Biden's watch. And in the coming days and weeks there will be many questions about how we arrived at the situation. It was just over a month ago that President Biden said it was highly unlikely that the Taliban would seize control of **Afghanistan**. But right now they look on course to do just that. There will be many questions for this president going forward.

BROWN: Most certainly. Arlette Saenz, live for us from the White House on this Saturday night. Thank you, Arlette.

And as **Afghanistan** falls under the strengthening grip of the Taliban, President Biden has authorized a total of 5,000 U.S. troops to assist with an orderly and safe drawdown -- that is a quote from the president's statement today -- of American and allied personnel, along with Afghans who helped the U.S.

CNN Pentagon correspondent Barbara Starr joins me with the very latest.

Barbara, this includes troops already in country. How many are already there and how many more will be sent in?

BARBARA STARR, CNN PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT (via phone): Well, good evening, Pamela. What we know now at this hour, there were about 3,000 troops at the Pentagon announced this past week would be flowing into **Afghanistan** mainly to the airport in Kabul, plus another thousand that were already there. That brings it to 4,000. Today the president decided to move an additional 1,000 from the 82nd Airborne Division that were going to go to Kuwait on standby if needed, and they needed now.

So we now have a package of 5,000 heavily armed U.S. forces mainly Army, Marine, the Air Force which is flying them in. Nobody is saying Special Forces are there but the likelihood is that they are. You know, the Marines and the 82nd Airborne don't go anywhere into a war zone where they are not heavily armed. So this is very significant. Their duty, their job is to perform a security mission to get the Americans out as fast as possible.

But clearly they are prepared to be challenged by the Taliban, prepared to respond, if it comes to that. One of the issues right now for the Pentagon, for the State Department and the White House, is the intelligence about what is happening, because things are moving so fast on the ground. And now the U.S. has very few intelligence assets left there and if things move, they are trying to keep up with events as they unfold.

The big question on this Saturday night really is, how close are the Taliban to Kabul, are they already in Kabul? One of their plans for Kabul, that is the key for the U.S. to try and understand that as they try and move all these Americans and Afghan allies out as fast as they can, and we should take another moment to remember it is the people of **Afghanistan** really who may be suffering the most in all of this -- Pamela.

BROWN: They are scared, they are feeling desperation. It is just a horrible situation and thousands of Afghan allies who have applied for that specialty immigrant visa waiting to be evacuated from Afghan.

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Barbara Starr, I know you have been working the phones all night with your sources as this situation unfolds. It really changes minute by minute. Thank you so much. And I'll know you'll keep us posted on any new developments.

STARR: Thank you.

BROWN: CNN's chief international correspondent Clarissa Ward is right now in Afghanistan, and she got a chilling look at a former U.S. base there that is now the home of Taliban fighters. Here's her exclusive report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CLARISSA WARD, CNN CHIEF INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): This is what remains of the U.S. presence in much of Afghanistan, the hollowed-out skeletons of sprawling military bases now under the control of the Taliban.

Once there were hundreds of U.S. and NATO troops at FOB Andar in Ghazni Province. The last Americans left a couple of years ago but their memories still lurk, ghostlike.

(On-camera): It's just so strange to see this, you know.

(Voice-over): The Taliban granted access to CNN, along with award-winning Afghan filmmaker, Najibullah Quraishi, keen to show off the spoils of war.

(On-camera): So we're just arriving at another U.S. base and already I can see a large number of military vehicles over there.

(Voice-over): According to the Taliban, Afghan forces here surrendered three weeks ago when their food ran out, leaving weapons and ammunition and more. (On-camera): When the Americans were here, were you and your men attacking this base a lot?

MUHAMMED ARIF MUSTAFA, TALIBAN COMMANDER (through translator): Yes, many times we attacked this base when America was here. We did operations. We were using IEDs. The Americans had their helicopters, weapons and tanks on the ground. We Mujahideen resisted very well.

[21:10:01]

WARD (voice-over): Now they roam through what's left of the tactical operation center. Anything of value will be stripped down and sold.

(On-camera): Walking through what's left of these American bases, you have to ask yourself, what was it all for?

(Voice-over): America's great experiment with nation building now vanished into dust.

MUSTAFA (through translator): It's our belief that one day Mujahideen will have victory and Islamic law will come not to just Afghanistan but all over the world. We are not in a hurry. We believe it will come one day. Jihad will not end until the last day.

WARD (voice-over): It's a chilling admission from a group that claims it wants peace, despite continuing a bloody offensive.

Since the U.S. began its withdrawal in May, the militants have advanced across the country at an alarming rate on the back of American pickup trucks. On the Ghazni Highway, we pass base after base, all flying the militants' flag.

At the Andar bazaar, it's a similar sight. The days of underground insurgency are over and the Taliban is poised to reestablish the very emirate America once came to destroy. But Taliban governor Mawlawey Kamil insists the group has changed since then.

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MAWLAVEY KAMIL, TALIBAN GOVERNOR, ANDAR DISTRICT (through translator): The difference between that Taliban and this Taliban is that the Taliban of 2001 were new. And now, this Taliban has experience, disciplined. Our activities are going well. We are obeying our leaders.

WARD (on-camera): A lot of people are concerned that if the Taliban takes power again, women's rights will move backwards. How can you guarantee that women's rights will be protected?

KAMIL (through translator): We assure this to people all over the world, especially the people of Afghanistan. Islam has given rights to everyone equally. Women have their own rights. How much Islam has given rights to women, we will give them that much.

WARD (voice-over): That is clearly open for interpretation. Next to the mosque, we find a classroom of young girls. But their teacher says they will only receive religious education and will not attend regular school. At night, I am separated from my male colleagues and sleep in the woman's part of the house with the children.

(On-camera): I've been talking to some of the women in this room and I promised that I wouldn't show any of their faces. But it's interesting because, you know, the Taliban talks a lot about how it's changed and girls can go to school now. But I asked if any of these girls will be going to school and I was told, "Absolutely not. Girls don't go to school." And when I said why don't girls go to school, they said, "Taliban says it's bad."

(Voice-over): Here, what the Taliban says goes. This is now what Afghanistan's future looks like, far from what the U.S. once envisioned and what so many Afghans dreamed of, as the Taliban pushes on towards an all but certain victory.

Clarissa Ward, CNN, Ghazni Province, Afghanistan.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BROWN: Afghanistan is known as the graveyard of empires. And while President Biden inherited the war there, did he also inherit a withdrawal plan doomed to fail?

We're going to discuss with our military and foreign policy experts next.

[21:17:46]

BROWN: As we watch the breaking news tonight from Afghanistan, we are seeing in real time what may be the greatest test of President Biden's foreign policy agenda. What happens in these coming hours and days could define his presidency.

Earlier tonight I spoke with Democratic Congressman Jason Crow from Colorado. He's a former Army Ranger who served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and is now on the Armed Services Committee. While he says he is heartbroken by what's happening he's not ready to criticize the commander-in-chief.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. JASON CROW (D-CO): You know, we are not without risk in Afghanistan. There's no doubt about that. We're seeing the consequence of this. And, you know, I'm going to reserve my judgment on the manner in which this withdrawal happened until we can actually look at this with some separation and perspective and actually have the information we need to have a discussion about it. But the bottom line is, there are threats everywhere.

Everywhere around the world. China, Russia, Iran, South America, Central America, terrorism, narco-terrorism, cyberattacks, ransomware attacks. We face threats that we have never even imagined that we would have faced just five or 10 years ago. And the president has to make decisions about how we spend our blood, our sweat, our treasure, and our limited resources, to address those threats. And that's a hard thing to do. And yes, I am heartbroken about what's happening here. But there are tradeoffs to be had.

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(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

BROWN: With us now, Max Boot, senior fellow for the Council on Foreign Relations and a "Washington Post" columnist. Also former deputy assistant secretary of Defense for the Middle East and South Asia, retired Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt.

Welcome both. Thank you for spending a part of your Saturday night with us as we follow these rapidly developing - what's rapidly developing in Afghanistan right now.

General, I'm going to start with you. Of these 5,000 U.S. troops now authorized, 1,000 are on the ground already, 3,000 are on their way, and today the president added a thousand more that are being diverted from Kuwait. Does that suggest to you the president was ready for this or got blindsided?

BRIG. GEN. MARK KIMMITT (RET), FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA: Well, to the extent that the withdrawal of American diplomats and contractors is now going to have happen much quicker than we had anticipated. That's probably the reason why he had to put the additional troops on the ground to provide protection from the embassy, down the airport road, into the Hamid Karzai Airport.

[21:20:11]

And they need to protect other countries as well, so I think had this not been as hasty a withdrawal and a hasty offensive as the Taliban have shown, it could have been done in a more methodical orderly manner and probably would not have required the number of troops we're seeing going in now.

BROWN: That's really the question here. You know, President Biden had sent out the statement today, he broke his silence after Tuesday talking about the situation on the ground in Afghanistan. And he really talked about the decision, he really had no choice here but to withdraw. But then there's also the question of execution.

Max, what do you say about the execution of this withdrawal so far?

MAX BOOT, SENIOR FELLOW, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: I think the execution has been awful and you're seeing the results of that in this rapid collapse of the Afghan military largely because they spent the last 20 years learning how to operate with the U.S. forces, learning to rely on U.S. airpower, U.S. intelligence and other enablers, and to have all of that yanked away from them very, very quickly within the space of a couple of months has led to the disintegration of the Afghan forces.

I think this is a grave blunder on President Biden's part. That will be a stain on his legacy. He was not required to do this. He has repudiated many other mistakes that President Trump has made. The Taliban have not kept up their end of the bargain that they struck with the Trump administration.

So President Biden could have easily maintained 2500, 3500 U.S. advisers in Afghanistan to prevent this catastrophe. And by pulling them out so quickly I think he is assuming responsibility for what is happening right now in Afghanistan, and it's just awful.

BROWN: General, can Kabul be saved or is it now just a matter of time before it falls at this point?

KIMMITT: Well, first of all, you made a comment that this was forced upon President Biden. It was not forced on him. He made this decision. This could have been at the time of his choosing. But in terms of your specific question about Kabul, my guess is that Kabul will not fall the way that Berlin fell in 1945. I would expect that the most likely scenario is for the government to step down, capitulate, and then there will be some formation of a national unity government so the Taliban effectively get Kabul without a shot.

I'd like to see that because we've got a lot of good people that we worked with for years and years inside of Kabul and there's really no reason for -- to turn Kabul into rubble.

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BROWN: And I just want to be clear. I was paraphrasing what Biden himself said. And I'm glad that you added your perspective. But Biden himself in the statement he released today said -- was essentially conveying that this was the deal that was set by my predecessor and I'm just carrying this out. But I want to talk about the Taliban because our Clarissa Ward spoke to the Taliban. They said they were more disciplined now than back in 2001.

So, General. is the Taliban more empowered now after 20 years?

KIMMITT: Well, first of all, under your comment regarding President Biden, his predecessor saw no reason to uphold the decisions made and the deals made by his predecessor. President Biden had no reason to uphold the deals made by President Trump.

I think what's better in the Taliban's case is not their training and their discipline, but I think it's their public relations. They have demonstrated a strategic communications capability that is very, very cities indicated, not only to the world as they've been trying to show Taliban 2.0 in their friendly face, but also the propaganda put out which is really in many ways contributed to the collapse of the Afghan army.

BROWN: Max, let's bring you in on this discussion. The president wanted to be the one to get what George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump couldn't or wouldn't, a clean break. Do you see the U.S. getting back out of Afghanistan soon or are we basically back to war? What's going on? What should we be thinking right now?

BOOT: Well, in some sense we are back to war. I mean, it's kind of ironic that President Biden said he was going to pull all the U.S. forces out by the beginning of September and right now we're actually going to have more U.S. forces there, about 5,000, simply to evacuate diplomats and Afghan personnel. What comes down the road, we don't know, but of course, the president here is what happened in Iraq after President Obama pulled out in 2011 and, of course, by 2014 following the rise of Islamic State, U.S. troops were back in Iraq.

And that's a pretty clear indication of what a big mistake it is to leave one of these countries with an insurgency on the horizon. And unfortunately President Biden has not learned from the mistake of President Obama.

[21:25:03]

He's made the exact same mistake. We don't know what's going to happen. We don't know if U.S. troops will be coming back to Afghanistan. It's certainly possible. But there is no question that what we are seeing now is a humanitarian and a strategic catastrophe, and I want to stress this. This was not necessary. As General Kimmitt said, this was not mandated by the Trump-Taliban accord and this was certainly an unwise decision. This is on President Biden's shoulders.

BROWN: All right. General, let me play what Fareed Zakaria has to say about the Afghan army and then I'm going to get your view on the other side of this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

FAREED ZAKARIA, CNN ANCHOR, FAREED ZAKARIA GPS: There is no real Afghan army that is able to defend its country. And what you're seeing in many of these Afghan towns, the most telltale sign is the Taliban is taking them over without much of a fight.

The Afghan troops just melt away. Now if we'd stayed there, could you have kept us all together for another few years? If we stayed in large numbers? Probably, but isn't that telling 20 years at trillion dollars and an army of 300,000 just melts away in town after town?

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

BROWN: So, General, would delaying the full withdrawal just delayed the inevitable with the Afghan army so powerless?

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KIMMITT: Well, first of all, we've got to look at a little bit of history. And Max is a historian. He understands this. In 1940, a small group of German units went through the most powerful army on the continent when they broke national line and the French Army crumbled. The same thing happened in 2013 when the Islamic State went against Mosul and the Iraqi army crumbled.

We're seeing the same thing happen here. What is important to remember about the military is -- Fareed is half right. We had all the capability in the world. We had the weapons. They have the helicopters. They have the aircraft, but if an army doesn't have the will to fight, they're going to crumble in front of a small force.

And why did they crumble? Because they didn't think that the Americans had their back. If this had been done in a better manner, in a better process, at a slower pace, this would not have happened. And this is really an unforced error because Obama and his team did this in 2013- 2014, had to go back in.

But it's the same people in the National Security team. Tony Blinken, Jake Sullivan, Lloyd Austin was the last commander on the ground in Iraq, and Colin Kahl, the undersecretary of defense for policy was National Security adviser for President Biden -- Vice President Biden. They did this in 2014. Had to eat crow. And I suspect they're going to have to eat crow and put people back into Afghanistan as well.

BROWN: All right. General Mark Kimmitt, Max Boot, thank you both.

KIMMITT: Thank you.

BROWN: Coming up, Haiti in a state of emergency right now after a massive earthquake. The death toll is high. It is rising, and another disaster we can see coming is literally just hours away. Details next.

[21:32:20]

BROWN: In Haiti, quote, "The streets are filled with screaming." That heart-wrenching description coming from a church arch deacon who spoke to the "New York Times." Haiti has declared a state of emergency after this morning's devastating earthquake, a 7.2 magnitude. Details are trickling out of the western hemisphere's poorest nation. The official death toll so far is 304 people with every expectation it will climb much higher. More than 1800 people are injured.

Earlier tonight I spoke with Garry Pierre-Pierre. He was a reporter for the "New York Times" and is a publisher and founder of the "Haitian Times."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GARRY PIERRE-PIERRE, FOUNDER AND PUBLISHER, THE HAITIAN TIMES: When I got the news, the only thing that came to my mind was this old blues song that I love so much that says if it wasn't for bad luck I wouldn't have any luck at all. And this is the only thing I could think about my beloved homeland, where I was born that, you know, not again, we just went through so much last month with the assassination of the president and today here we are again.

But the situation is perilous, and it's getting worse by the moment. As you said in your intro, thousands are expected dead. Unfortunately, it needs lots of help. I mean, I'm heartened to hear that the USAID, U.S. Agency for International Development director Samantha Powers said that they are on the ground assessing the situation, but so far, based on our reporting on the ground, I haven't seen anybody on location yet from U.S. government. So we're hoping that they can get there as soon as possible because thousands of people are trapped under the rubbles.

And if they don't get them out as soon as possible, you know, we may have really another repeat of 2010 and that was really bad. BROWN: We do not want that. More than 200,000 people died after that 2010 earthquake. I was there on the ground. I saw just the aftermath and how devastating it was, all the heartbreak. But also I saw the

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incredible resilience of the Haitian people. Given what you just laid out, the hardship after hardship, how do they keep going in the face of all of this?

PIERRE-PIERRE: Well, you know, you just have to live, if you love, and you just have to believe, you have to trust that, hey, something -- one day you're going to catch a break and hopefully that's, you know, ahead of us. But above all I think it really important, part of that bad luck is also bad planning on the part of the administrators and the leaders of the country. I mean, for instance, we knew -- scientists have warned that this was inevitable, but yet 11 years we did very little to prevent this thing from repeating itself.

[21:35:00]

We know that earthquakes are coming. There's several fault lines, by the way, Pamela, and scientists have been warning about the rift. And we've done very little in terms of shoring up our building code to make sure that, you know, if we do or when we do have these earthquakes that we could mitigate the damage, we could save lives.

And I think that's the conversation we should be having, you know, during the 11 years, you know, the government did very little to prevent this strategy that we're living alive.

BROWN: And I remember the government did very little after the 2010 earthquake in terms of rebuilding in Port-au-Prince. I went there a couple of months after the earthquake and it was really the Haitian people themselves doing the work of rebuilding. And so, you know, you just -- you think about Haiti right now, the storm coming its way, all the devastation it's going through already. What does the U.S. need to do for Haiti right now in your view?

PIERRE-PIERRE: Well, provide aid. I mean, the U.S. has work to do. You know, if USAID is on the ground they know what to do, they know how to do search and rescue mission.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

BROWN: And that was Garry Pierre-Pierre, a reporter for "The New York Times" and the publisher and founder of the "Haitian Times."

Well, countries in Latin America are getting ready to send humanitarian aid to Haiti. But now there's another challenge you heard me mentioned to Garry a moment ago. A powerful tropical storm.

CNN's Gene Norman has the details. Gene, you are tracking two storms. When and where are they expected to make landfall?

GENE NORMAN, CNN METEOROLOGIST: Well, Pamela, we're tracking Fred which was a tropical storm and is now into the Gulf of Mexico, but we'll start with Grace because Grace really has the biggest impact in Haiti. The last thing that a recovery effort needs is wind and rain but unfortunately that is what Grace threatens to bring.

Hurricane hunters went out today, found that the winds were a little bit less than yesterday and I think they may reposition the center of the storm when they next go out. It looks a little disorganized but it still is packing 40-mile-an-hour winds, still bringing some squally weather to places like St. Vincent and also to Guadalup and it's going to eventually bring that kind of weather to Puerto Rico, the British and U.S. Virgin Islands tomorrow, and now a tropical storm warning for those areas has been extended to the eastern part of the Dominican Republic highlighted in blue.

Now in yellow, in the northern part of the Dominican Republic, in the southern part, that's where a tropical storm watch is in effect. Still no watches for Haiti. Anticipate that will happen overnight or first thing tomorrow morning. Now when the storm arrives it could pack 60- mile-an-hour winds. So that should be pretty strong as it moves over Hispaniola. And then it'll take nearly the same track as Fred did and end up in the Gulf of Mexico. But unlike Fred, Grace may not fall apart.

Now when will the strongest winds begin to arrive? Perhaps as early as Monday morning in the Dominican Republic and then Monday afternoon and evening in sections of Haiti that were seriously impacted by the earthquake. And

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as far as rain, well, this is not a good situation about four inches near La Kai, which is around the epicenter. But take a look at the Dominican Republic and take a look at Puerto Rico. It could be seeing anywhere from six to eight inches of flooding rains and that could also produce mudslides.

Now let's turn our attention to Fred. Now again it was a tropical storm. Now it's just a red, this is an area of low pressure. Hurricane Center can't find an organized center of circulation, but it's spreading some rain across sections of Southern Florida this afternoon and this evening. And that's going to continue.

And by tomorrow Hurricane Center expects that Fred will become a tropical storm again and perhaps head toward the Mississippi-Alabama border with perhaps 50-mile-an-hour winds by Monday and that could introduce the threat for tornadoes where it makes a landfall, but more importantly, heavy rain. Notice it's all to the right of the center. That's what we expect when we see a landfalling system.

Pamela, not good news as hurricane season rolls on.

BROWN: No. It is not good news at all. Gene Norman, thank so much.

And for more information about how you can help those affected by the earthquake in Haiti, go to CNN.com/impact.

And still ahead on this Saturday night, a fight breaks out at a protest over vaccines in Los Angeles with one person stabbed. We are live from the scene up next.

[21:43:29] BROWN: Tonight in Los Angeles, a protest over vaccine mandates turned violent with one person getting stabbed. It happened a short time ago right outside city hall.

CNN's Paul Vercammen joins us live at the scene. And Paul, earlier you heard from one very passionate protester. What else are you hearing?

PAUL VERCAMMEN, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Well, we're hearing from the police about what happened and what led to this melee, Pam. And let me just get right to what started here as a protest across at city hall. A medical freedom protest. These are people who don't believe that anybody in America should be mandated to get the vaccine. Well, it turned violent when counter protesters showed up and the two sides squared off. And from what we understand, somebody was indeed stabbed in that melee. I'll let a police lieutenant pick up from there.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LT. RAUL JOBEL, LOS ANGELES POLICE: But at some point there's about 20, 30 people fighting, fist-fighting, where there were some reports of some pepper spray or bear spray being used, perhaps some personal equipment like skateboards and helmets. When the police got there, we were called to help assist. They found a male that had been stabbed at least one in the chest.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

VERCAMMEN: And another officer told me they believe that that person was with the medical freedom group. Now contentious times here in Southern California, in Orange County where they've had a spike in COVID cases, one of the supervisors there is leading a drive to get more people vaccinated.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KATRINA FOLEY, ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA SUPERVISOR: We still have about a million people in Orange County that are not vaccinated yet.

[21:45:01]

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And we really need to make sure for those that we can reach, the fence sitters, the people that are waiting for the FDA approval, well, you don't have to wait. The people that are just not quite sure, but want to get vaccinated. It's time. Let's go. Get your vaccination. You'll be better for it and you won't regret it.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

VERCAMMEN: Some hospitals in Orange County now reporting that they are having to divert patients to other hospitals or take diverted patients. So situation there where the case level and hospitalizations are rising.

Reporting from Los Angeles, I'm Paul Vercammen. Back to you -- Pam.

BROWN: Paul Vercammen, thank you so much. Well, Americans eager to start traveling again are now thinking twice as this new wave of COVID cases spreads through the country.

CNN's Pete Muntean reports.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

PETE MUNTEAN, CNN AVIATION CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Long lines persist at airports across the country, but new data shows that travelers have new doubts because of the Delta variant. Tuesday was the slowest day for air travel since mid-June with the TSA screening a half million fewer people than the pandemic record set only 10 days before.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: People are concerned. For good reason.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's all over the news and I think it scares people, but as long as I stay six feet away from people and I have a mask on I feel like I'm OK.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Just going to make me more aware of my surroundings and just be careful.

MUNTEAN: With infections surging in all 50 states, Southwest Airlines says it has seen a decrease in bookings and an increase in passengers canceling trips, making it difficult for the company to be profitable. Even top destination Disney says its plan to keep reopening theme parks could be changed because of the unpredictable nature of the virus.

BRETT SNYDER, CRANKYFLIER.COM: I think there's no question the Delta variant is having an impact on travel.

MUNTEAN: Airlines are making some changes that convince passengers that flying is safe. United Airlines is requiring that all 67,000 workers in the U.S. get vaccinated by October 25th or face getting fired. The move has been matched by Amtrak but so far United is the only major airline to institute such a mandate.

SCOTT KIRBY, UNITED AIRLINES CEO: I hope it's not a competitive advantage for us, because it's far more important for safety that everyone get vaccinated.

MUNTEAN: The transportation wide mask mandate remains in place, including inside airport through at least September 13th. For now, millions of passengers remain undaunted still taking off as the virus does, too.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We considered postponing this, too, but we're going to give it a try.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

MUNTEAN: There is a silver lining for those who are still travelling. Travel management site Trip Actions says ticket prices have fallen about \$76 since they peaked in June -- Pamela. BROWN: Pete Muntean, thank you.

You're in the CNN NEWSROOM. Our top story tonight, the Taliban advance across Afghanistan at warp speed, sending civilians running for their lives. More on that ahead.

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[21:52:02]

BROWN: It's CNN's breaking news tonight, in Afghanistan the lightning offensive of the Taliban that is forcing the Biden White House to take drastic action. The president announcing today another direct deployment of U.S. troops, that will make a total of 5,000 to help with the evacuation of Americans and allies. Just in the last day five more major cities have fallen into the hands of the Taliban, which now control almost all the country's provincial capitals.

This timelapse from the "Long War Journal" shows how swiftly the Taliban took over territory in Afghanistan and the vacuum left by withdrawing U.S. and other Western forces. See the red spread. It started in mid-April after the president announced the American pullout.

It's not just cities and lines on a map being taken over by the Taliban. Thousands of families in Afghanistan are caught up in the violent takeover of their country and they're on the run this weekend.

CNN's Michael Holmes with more.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

MICHAEL HOLMES, CNN INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Families sleep on the hard ground outside this school in Afghanistan. It may not look like the most comfortable place to rest, but at least for now, it is safe, away from the trail of violence left behind by the Taliban's advance.

Many bombs were dropped on our village, one woman says. The Taliban came and destroyed everything. We were helpless and had to leave our houses.

One Afghan official in Kunar Province where the school is located says there are thousands of displaced families in his province alone, trying to escape the fighting but for some it is too late.

The Taliban were firing guns next to our house, one man says. Many bullets came our way, in the end my wife was killed.

A hospital filled with wounded civilians shows just how pitch the battle is. One patient says, I was on the side of the street, I was hit by a mortar and one of my legs was injured.

Some people taking refuge in the country's capital Kabul thinking it is one of the safest bets with the Taliban on the move. This man left the besieged city of Lashkar Gah two weeks ago, but hopes to return one day.

If you ask most people in Afghanistan, 99 percent of the people will say the fighting is not the solution, he says. The only way is peace and the Afghan people want peace. A peace that seems more elusive as more civilians are forced from their homes.

Michael Holmes, CNN.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BROWN: A quick programming note. On this week's "JERUSALEM: CITY OF FAITH AND FURY," we look at Jerusalem during World War II. Here's a preview.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Complicating this story is that the British mandate is also closely allied to many Arab leaders at the time. Like Abdullah of Trans Jordan.

[21:55:06]

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UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Abdullah is the son of Ali Shareef from Mecca. He considers himself and is considered by many in the Muslim world to be a descendant of the prophet.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Abdullah rises as this kind of magical wizard. A brilliant political, very shrewd mind, even smarter than those who came before him.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: The British liked him. He liked them. He saw himself as a moderate man who could make an arrangement with the British.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Trans Jordan was part of the British mandate. Abdullah wanted to be the king of this Arab land, and possibly by being an ally of the British in the war he might get handsomely rewarded.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

BROWN: "JERUSALEM, CITY OF FAITH AND FURY" airs tomorrow night at 10:00 right here on CNN.

Don't forget you can tweet me, @pamelabrownCNN. You can follow me on Instagram.

Thank you for joining me this morning. I'm Pamela Brown. I'll see you again tomorrow night starting at 6:00 Eastern.

Load-Date: August 15, 2021

Syrian properties in Ankara attacked after youth killed

Postmedia Breaking News

August 12, 2021 Thursday

Web Edition

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Section: PMN CRIME

Length: 341 words

Body

ANKARA - A crowd of Turks attacked shops and homes belonging to Syrians in the Turkish capital Ankara overnight in the wake of a street fight that led to a Turkish youth being fatally stabbed, a witness and media reports said.

The windows of Syrians' shops and homes were smashed and a vehicle was overturned and set on fire during the unrest in the Altindag district of Ankara. Police fired into the air at one point in an attempt to halt the violence, the witness said.

The trouble occurred after a fight between Turkish and Syrian youths on Tuesday. Broadcaster CNN Turk said one Turkish youth had died and one was wounded.

Two foreigners have been charged and remanded in custody over the death of the youth, state-owned Anadolu news agency reported.

Ankara police said they had detained 76 people for involvement in the unrest or for making misleading posts on social media in order to provoke Turkish citizens after the fight in Altindag on Tuesday.

They said 38 of those detained had criminal records, including for looting, violence and burglary.

Turkish Red Crescent head Kerem Kinik shared a video on Twitter showing projectiles being thrown at houses.

"Which of our traditions involves stoning people's houses at night? Many refugees contacted us and said they were worried for their children's lives," he said.

He shared a photo of a young child, their face covered with blood after being injured by a stone thrown through a window, who he said had been brought to hospital for treatment.

"Let us cool this fire. It is of no benefit to anybody."

The Ankara governor's office said on Twitter overnight that "protests and incidents" which occurred on Wednesday evening had ended.

Turkey hosts some 3.7 million Syrian refugees and the latest unrest comes amid concerns about growing numbers of Afghan refugees arriving in eastern Turkey from Iran amid the conflict in Afghanistan. (Additional reporting by

Syrian properties in Ankara attacked after youth killed

Ece Toksabai; Writing by Daren Butler; Editing by Giles Elgood and Kevin Liffey) !@COPYRIGHT=© 2021 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

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U.S. Speeds Up Kabul Withdrawal As Taliban Advances; Pediatric Hospitalizations Increase Amid Delta Surge; CDC Recommends Extra Vaccine Dose For Immunocompromised; History of Afghanistan War Through Four Presidential Administrations Examined; Man Accused of Killing Chicago Police Officer Ella French was Reportedly on Probation

Fox News Network FOX SPECIAL REPORT WITH BRET BAIER 6:00 PM EST

August 13, 2021 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Domestic

Length: 7136 words

Byline: Trace Gallagher, Peter Doocy, Jonathan Serrie, Jonathan Hunt, Lucas Tomlinson, Bret Baier, Garrett Tenney, Marianne Rafferty

Guests: Brett Giroir, Craig Whitlock, Mollie Hemingway, Steve Hayes, Charles Lane

Body

TRACE GALLAGHER, FOX NEWS HOST: And good evening, I'm Trace Gallagher in for Bret Baier.

Breaking tonight, the desperate rush to get Americans out of Kabul, the capital of **Afghanistan** and the next target of the rampaging Taliban. Thousands of American troops are headed to the region to try to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel. There is even a report that the Biden administration is asking the Taliban to spare the American Embassy in Kabul.

There are also reports of heavy fighting near the capital city and speculation that its collapse could be just hours, maybe days away.

We begin tonight with White House Correspondent Peter Doocy. Peter, Good evening.

PETER DOOCY, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Trace. The Taliban is trying to isolate Kabul so officials of the U.S. Embassy there are destroying sensitive materials and documents. As the first of 3,000 American troops hit the ground on a mission, the Pentagon admits is potentially dangerous.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOHN KIRBY, PRESS SECRETARY, PENTAGON: The movement of forces to Kabul has begun.

DOOCY (voice over): And the world is watching.

ANTONIO GUTERRES, UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL: **Afghanistan** is spinning out of control.

DOOCY: As reports flood in of executions and forced marriages.

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NED PRICE, STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN: We are gravely concerned by what we're hearing. And we are doing everything in our power to try to put an end to this violence and give some semblance of hope, security, stability to the people of Afghanistan.

DOOCY: President Biden argued that now's the time for the Afghan military to stand up to the Taliban three days ago.

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: They've got to want to fight. They have outnumbered the Taliban. And I'm getting daily briefings.

DOOCY: That was Tuesday. By today, half of Afghans provincial capitals have fallen to the Taliban, and that's raising eyebrows at the Pentagon.

KIRBY: We are certainly concerned by the speed with which the Taliban has been moving.

DOOCY: Critics blame the speed of the Biden withdrawal.

GEN. JACK KEANE (RET.), FOX NEWS NATIONAL SECURITY ANALYST: What we're seeing is an ill-conceived hasty withdrawal, that's turned into an embarrassing retreat.

DOOCY: Afghanistan shares a border with China. And once the U.S. drawdown is complete, the Taliban are said to want to get even closer.

KT MCFARLAND, FORMER DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER: The Chinese are standing by ready to acknowledge and to legitimize the Taliban governed Afghanistan, you know, within a couple of days. And so, there will be no Afghanistan government that we can trust.

DOOCY: The Biden administration disputes that.

PRICE: China and Russia have said publicly, including in recent days, they will not recognize any government that takes power in Afghanistan by force.

DOOCY: A spokeswoman for the president says, you heard him earlier this week, he does not regret his decision.

BIDEN: I do not regret my decision.

DOOCY: Republican Senator Lindsey Graham argues if President Biden truly has no regrets about his decision to withdraw, then he is disconnected from reality when it comes to Afghanistan. But the Biden administration claims, despite evidence to the contrary, the Afghan military has the upper hand on the Taliban.

KIRBY: They have the material, the physical, the tangible advantages. It's time now to use those advantages.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DOOCY: A senior administration official tells me tonight the president will be getting regular briefings about this in coming days. He remains away from cameras at Camp David, has not said a word about Afghanistan since giving the order as commander-in-chief to send in the troops.

And on the way out here, we found out he is going to remain at Camp David until at least Wednesday, Trace.

GALLAGHER: Peter Doocy live for us in the White House. Peter, thank you. More with this on the -- with the panel.

Their meantime is growing concern tonight about how young people are being affected by the coronavirus resurgence as they head back to school. One study tells us hospitalizations for pediatric patients have more than doubled recently. Correspondent Jonathan Serrie has the latest tonight from Atlanta.

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(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JONATHAN SERRIE, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Children once considered relatively safe from COVID-19 are being hospitalized with severe cases in increasing numbers, occupying as many as one in five beds in some Texas pediatric hospitals.

DR. ROCHELLE WALENSKY, DIRECTOR, CDC: Where we have higher rates of infection among children as where we have lower rates of vaccination in general.

SERRIE: Pediatric patients now represent 3.5 percent of all hospitalizations in the U.S. more than twice the figure earlier in the pandemic according to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

In the past week, COVID hospitalizations for all ages increased nearly 37 percent with more than 62,000 Americans occupying increasingly precious beds.

In Mississippi, which has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country, the federal government is staffing a 50-bed field hospital to relieve some of the pressure on crowded medical facilities.

DR. LOUANN WOODWARD, UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI: Our ICUs today are full. Our patient beds are full. So, you know, we continue to be in that situation where the bed -- the bed capacity is extremely tight.

SERRIE: The FDA authorized and the CDC recommended a third dose of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for people with weak immune systems. Boosters for healthy individuals may come later if the Delta variant shows more resistance to the standard two dose regimen.

In one study awaiting peer review, Mayo Clinic researchers estimate that by July, the Moderna vaccines effectiveness against COVID infection had declined to 76 percent and the Pfizer vaccine to 42 percent.

However, both vaccines continued robust protection against severe illness and death.

DR. WILLIAM SCHAFFNER, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY: With Delta, people -- even though we're vaccinated, and we have good immune systems, this virus can cause mild infections. Akin to a common cold or it might even put you in bed for a day or two, but you don't have to go into the hospital.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SERRIE: And Trace, today, Chicago Public Schools announced that all employees must be fully vaccinated by October 15. Those who qualify for religious or medical exemptions must undergo routine testing throughout the year, Trace.

GALLAGHER: Jonathan Serrie live for us tonight in Atlanta, home to the CDC. Jonathan, thank you.

Let's bring in Former Assistant Health Secretary Admiral Brett Giroir. Admiral, thank you so much for coming on. We very much appreciate it.

There's been a lot of confusion about a statement of conversation that was had on this show last night between Bret Baier and the Director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Francis Collins. Here's what he said, and I'll get your response on the other side.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BRET BAIER, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Can you definitively say to somebody that the vaccine provides better protection than the antibodies that you get from actually having had COVID-19?

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DR. FRANCIS COLLINS, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH: Yes, Bret, I can say that. There was a study published by CDC, just 10 days ago in Kentucky. And they looked specifically at people who had had natural infection and people who've been vaccinated and then ended up getting infected again.

So, what was the protection level? It was more than two-fold better from the people who had the vaccine in terms of protection, then people who'd had the natural infection.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: Admiral, you say Dr. Collins' statement is incorrect. Why?

GIROIR: So, thanks for having me on. And I have enormous respect for Dr. Collins as an accomplished scientist, but it's factually incorrect.

It has not been shown that natural immunity, the immunity you have after infection is any inferior to the immunity you have after vaccination.

And in fact, there's growing evidence that natural immunity lasts a long time and is highly protective against infection and hospitalization. This is a pandemic now, not of the non-infected or non-vaccinated but of the non-immune.

Second point is the the study that Dr. Collins quoted did not have anything to do with people who had been vaccinated or who had natural immunity. What it proved that if you were previously infected, your chance of getting COVID in the middle of Delta in Kentucky was about one in a thousand to get COVID again. If you got vaccinated, that dropped it to one in 2,500. So that's a reduction but still your risks were very, very low.

GALLAGHER: I just want to quote this from the CDC study because it sounds like they included both. "This report details the findings of a case- control evaluation of the association between vaccination and SARS-CoV-2 reinfection in Kentucky during May through June 2021, among persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 in 2020. Kentucky residents who were not vaccinated had 2.34 times the odds of reinfection compared with those who were fully vaccinated."

Sounds like they included both. Is that where you're getting the 2,500 to a thousand number, Doctor?

GIROIR: So, if you -- I'm sorry to do the math, but they're saying 2.34 times more, but when you do the math, if you had been infected with COVID and not vaccinated, your chance of getting reinfected was one in a thousand. If you got vaccinated, it's one in 2,500.

This does not deal with people who are naturally immune versus vaccinated. That's a whole different question. And it begs the question about whether you have antibodies is that as good as being vaccinated, and the data right now pretty much say it is.

GALLAGHER: Where do you come down on booster shots, Admiral? I mean, there's a lot of talk now that people might need booster shots, maybe the immunocompromised, your thoughts on that?

GIROIR: So, the immunocompromised that was authorized by the FDA and I'm fully supportive of it. I also believe very soon we will be at a point where we will be doing boosters to those who are older than 60. Israel just dropped it to over than 50.

We know vaccine immunity wanes over time. And we know that as it wanes, the people who get hospitalized or die are the immunosuppressed or the elderly, so I do think the writing is on the wall. We are going to have boosters for the elderly very soon.

And for the normal healthy individuals, it may be two years, three years, but I think boosters are going to be inevitable.

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GALLAGHER: Our correspondent in Atlanta Jonathan Serrie started his report tonight Admiral with the St. Chill -- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital saying that total hospitalizations among pediatric patients has gone from 1.5 percent to 3.5 percent, your final thoughts on that.

GIROIR: Delta is a very dangerous virus. And we are seeing more and more pediatric cases probably 100,000 cases last week, probably a thousand children hospitalized.

The best way to protect children is for everyone to be vaccinated, they are getting this in the community now, they're not getting it in the schools. So, we do have to raise the vaccination rates. And when children go back to school, use all our available tools like testing to keep them safe.

In the United Kingdom, the rates for children went down when they went back to school even though they didn't mask, why? Because they did some careful cohorting and they tested and I think we can get our kids back in school on schedule if we're careful.

GALLAGHER: Admiral, it's great insight. Thank you for coming on, Sir. We appreciate it.

GIROIR: Thank you.

GALLAGHER: And you can find nearby vaccine locations by going to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

While the federal judge is refusing requests from landlords to put the Biden administration's new eviction moratorium on hold. However, the judge ruled that the freeze is illegal.

Judge Dabney Friedrich says her hands are tied by an appellate ruling from the last time courts considered the evictions moratorium in the spring. Alabama landlords who are challenging the moratorium are appealing her ruling.

Well, stocks were up, the Dow gained 16 for another record close, the S&P 500 finished ahead seven. Also, a two new record close and the NASDAQ also rose seven.

For the week, the Dow was up nine-tenths of a percentage point, the S&P 500 gained seven-tenths, the NASDAQ lost one-tenth.

Up next, a startling admission from President Biden's Homeland Security Chief about the state of the border crisis. It is a Fox News exclusive.

But first, here's what some of our Fox affiliates around the country are covering tonight. WSVN in Miami as Tropical Depression Fred moves along Cuba's northern coast and could regain tropical storm status.

Forecasters say the system is on a projected track toward the Florida Keys on Saturday and southwest Florida on Sunday.

Fox 32 in Chicago as the city's top doctor says Lollapalooza was not the COVID-19 super spreader, that some people feared it might be the Chicago Health Commissioner says while there were positive cases related to attendance of the music festival two weeks ago, it appears the strict requirements for attendance did their job.

Meantime, a media report says 63 people on Martha's Vineyard have tested positive for COVID-19 just days after former President Obama's 60th birthday party there.

And this is a live look at Gulfport Mississippi from Fox 25. One of the big stories tonight there, the National Wheelchair Softball Association World Series tournament takes place at the Coast Coliseum parking lot in Biloxi. Teams from all across the country are participating. The tournament was supposed to take place in Biloxi last year but it was postponed because of the pandemic.

That's tonight's live look outside the Beltway from SPECIAL REPORT and we will be right back.

U.S. Speeds Up Kabul Withdrawal As Taliban Advances; Pediatric Hospitalizations Increase Amid Delta Surge;
CDC Recommends Extra Vaccine Dose For Immunocompromis....

GALLAGHER: Well, the man investigating the origins of the government's investigation into the 2016 election is presenting evidence to a grand jury.

The Wall Street Journal reports Special Counsel John Durham is also preparing a lengthy report expected to be completed in the coming months.

Durham has been looking into potential criminal charges against several lower-level FBI employees and some non-governmental personnel.

Well, exclusive Fox News information tonight with Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas privately admitting the situation along the southern border is unsustainable.

The leaked audio is from yesterday's trip to South Texas. Chief correspondent Jonathan Hunt has more from La Joya, Texas.

JONATHAN HUNT, FOX NEWS CHIEF CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Another day, another stream of migrants. These families from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, saying as most do that they began their journey to the U.S. because of violence and economic hardship at home.

In the blazing hot midday sun, Border Patrol agents work to process them as the agents do every day and night.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas met with some Border Patrol agents during his visit to South Texas, Thursday. And in audio, part of that meeting obtained by Fox News, the Secretary appeared more candid than he has ever been publicly in his assessment of the border crisis.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ALEJANDRO MAYORKAS, SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY: If our border is our first line of defense, we're going to lose and this is unsustainable. We can't continue like this. Our people in the field can't continue and our system isn't built for it.

HUNT: And the Secretary acknowledged the strain on Border Patrol agents.

MAYORKAS: I know very well, and hearing from Chief Hastings, Chief Ortiz, and others, how close we came to breaking, how close you came to breaking here in this sector. And it's our responsibility to make sure that never happens again. We don't get that close again.

HUNT: The new Border Patrol chief Raul Ortiz tells us he is fired up and ready to go. But with the number of migrant encounters surpassing 212,000 in July, he believes it's an uphill battle, especially during the pandemic.

RAUL ORTIZ, DEPUTY INCOMING CHIEF, UNITED STATES BORDER PATROL: Even though I have almost 20,000 Border Patrol agents, 400 of those are in a quarantine status because they were exposed to COVID. I've lost eight Border Patrol agents to COVID already this year.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HUNT: And getting back to the homeland security secretary's comments about the situation here being unsustainable, the White House appeared to be trying to clean up those remarks today. Saying that Secretary Mayorkas was referring to the need for the U.S. to continue deterrence and expulsion measures and to continue working with Mexico and other countries in the region.

Border Patrol agents we spoke to hear tell us whatever the words meant, they are just that words, they would prefer to see actions. Trace.

GALLAGHER: (INAUDIBLE). Jonathan Hunt, live for us along the border. Jonathan, thank you.

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Up next, what the Pentagon is saying and not saying about the deteriorating situation in **Afghanistan**. We'll have a live report.

First, "BEYOND OUR BORDERS" tonight. Britain's first mass shooting in more than a decade leaves six people dead including the gunman, police say the motive is unclear. They say there are no immediate signs that the crime was an act of terrorism or connected to right-wing groups.

Police in Thailand's capital fire rubber bullets and tear gas to stop hundreds of protesters attempting to march to the prime minister's residence. The demonstrators are demanding he resigned over his handling of the country's coronavirus crisis. It is the third anti-government **protest** in Bangkok this week, in which police have intervened.

Mexicans marked the fall of the Aztec capital 500 years ago. The Spanish- led foresees the city of Tenochtitlan, August 13, 1521. Citizens plan to paint a line on the streets to show the ancient boundaries in what is now a city of 9 million people.

Just some of the other stories beyond our borders tonight. We'll be right back.

GALLAGHER: "BREAKING TONIGHT", our top story at the bottom of the hour, U.S. troops are rushing to **Afghanistan** to assist the evacuation of Americans from the embassy in Kabul.

Meantime, the Taliban could be closing in on the capital of Kabul in a matter of hours. Lucas Tomlinson live for us at the Pentagon. Lucas, good evening.

LUCAS TOMLINSON, FOX NEWS PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Trace. Tonight, the Taliban have Kabul surrounded. Fierce fighting reported just 30 miles outside the Afghan Capital.

Here is Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby admitting the soldiers and Marines going to Kabul face a dangerous situation.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TOMLINSON: These soldiers and Marines they're fully kitted out, putting on night vision goggles, landing in Kabul, taking positions at the airport. They are going to a combat zone, are they not?

REAR ADM. JOHN KIRBY (RET.), PENTAGON PRESS SECRETARY: They are certainly going into harm's way, Lucas. And they will have --

(CROSSTALK)

TOMLINSON: Is this a combat zone?

KIRBY: Lucas, they will have the right of self-defense, they will be armed.

TOMLINSON (voice-over): The sudden decision to rush 3,000 troops to Kabul just weeks ahead of President Biden's deadline withdraw all American forces by August 31st, drawing into question if the Pentagon will be able to meet that goal.

The U.S. military's authority to carry out airstrikes in **Afghanistan** expires at the end of the month. The U.S. spent over \$85 billion in the past 20 years building an Afghan army. Officials say they have crumbled.

Top Pentagon brass want to keep 2,000 American troops in **Afghanistan**, President Biden overruled his generals. After withdrawing 2,500 U.S. troops in recent months, roughly the same number now going back to evacuate Americans.

TOMLINSON: They're saying that they have all the advantages as they're getting crushed on the battlefield. It makes no sense --

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(CROSSTALK)

KIRBY: Lucas, I appreciate the effort again. They have greater numbers. They have an Air Force -- a capable air force, which oh, by the way, is flying more airstrikes than we are every day.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TOMLINSON: Throughout the day, I've been receiving messages from Afghans desperate to be evacuated as the Taliban close in on Kabul. Trace.

GALLAGHER: Desperate situation. Lucas Tomlinson, live for us at the Pentagon. Lucas, thank you.

As the situation in **Afghanistan** rapidly deteriorates, my colleague Bret Baier talks tonight with Washington Post reporter Craig Whitlock, who has covered the war extensively.

BRET BAIER, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Thank you, Trace. Joining me now is Craig Whitlock, investigative reporter for The Washington Post. He's also the author of the upcoming book, The **Afghanistan** Papers: A Secret History of the War.

Thanks so much for being here. It's fortuitous that we're talking about this because obviously, the fast-moving events on the ground in **Afghanistan** have changed the dynamic. A lot of people thought the Taliban was going to take over -- we're going to take over eventually, but they're taking over a lot faster than even Intel thought.

Your thoughts as this is all transpired over the last few days.

CRAIG WHITLOCK, INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER, WASHINGTON POST: Yes, the rapid pace at which the Taliban has been sweeping through the country, including in urban areas, is really been breathtaking.

I think as you point out, the Biden administration had kind of come to terms with the idea that the Taliban might take over, eventually. But the idea that this could happen, you know, as days and weeks go by, I think really caught them flat-footed, and they weren't prepared with a lot of contingency measures.

But I think, you know, across the board, this has been surprising to those who is outside the country. But it's also clearly something the Taliban had planned for, that as soon as the U.S. military pulled out, that they were going to make their move.

BAIER: You know, do you think that the Trump administration would have handled this exit differently? In other words, President Trump back then had said he wanted to get U.S. troops home as well.

But how this is happening and what it looks like is just not a good thing for the Biden ministration.

WHITLOCK: It's not, and it's hard to know how the Trump administration would have handled it differently. I mean, they were the ones who, who had negotiated this deal with the Taliban to withdraw.

You know, it gets back to that old maximum, it's a lot easier to start a war than it is to end one.

I don't think the Trump administration had a plan to manage the fallout of the Taliban taking over. Trump, as you recall, he had -- he had originally pledged to withdraw all the troops by the end of his term, he left a couple 1,000 in.

But I think he would have run across some of the same obstacles, which is essentially the, you know, the US government throughout the government really wasn't prepared for this quick of a deterioration in the Afghan government.

BAIER: Craig, you know, I mean, obviously, the deployment of **Afghanistan** goes back to after 9/11. It's now four presidents who have been involved here. Your book goes into kind of how that evolved, the planning of it, and what was transpire -- transpiring behind the scenes.

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Here is President Obama, he is in Bagram Air Base. This is May 25th, 2014. Take a listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BARACK OBAMA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: For many of you this will be your last tour in **Afghanistan**.

(APPLAUSE)

OBAMA: And by the end of this year, the transition will be complete, and Afghans will take full responsibility for their security, and our combat mission will be over. America's war in **Afghanistan** will come to a responsible ending.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Now, you write in the book, quote, "The war was nowhere near a conclusion, responsible and otherwise, and U.S. troops would fight and die in combat in **Afghanistan** for many years to come. The bald-faced claims to the contrary ranked among the most egregious deceptions and lies that U.S. leaders spread during two decades of warfare. Obama had scaled back military operations over the previous three years, but he failed to pull the United States out of the quagmire." A lot was happening behind the scenes.

CRAIG WHITLOCK, "THE **AFGHANISTAN** PAPERS" AUTHOR: There was. And it's striking to remember, that was seven years ago that Obama said the war was coming to a responsible conclusion. But the biggest lie he told was that this was the end of the combat mission for U.S. troops. And it just wasn't. We still had almost 11,000 troops in **Afghanistan** at that point. And they continued to fight in combat. They flew thousands of air combat missions. They were involved in counterterrorism operations. Whenever the Afghan security forces found their backs against the wall or were on the verge of getting routed by the Taliban, U.S. forces would step into the fight.

Almost 100 U.S. troops have been killed in **Afghanistan** since then. So even though to this day the Pentagon claims there is no combat mission in **Afghanistan**, the facts on the ground speak completely different story.

BAIER: Yes, and arguably the marines and soldiers who were suiting up to go in and try to rescue American civilians and get them out of **Afghanistan**, that is a combat mission, however you look at it.

WHITLOCK: They have to be ready for that. Now, I don't think they are going in there to conduct offensive operations against the Taliban. They are going in there to try and protect U.S. citizens and get them out. But they are going in armed, and they will fire if they need to to protect people, no question.

BAIER: I only have a few seconds left here, Craig, but what do you think the lesson from **Afghanistan** is after almost 20 years?

WHITLOCK: There is a lot of lesson. The biggest one is hubris. I think the U.S. government across four administrations really thought they could build up an Afghan government in their own image that would run the whole country like we wanted them to. And in the end that just -- it didn't work and it fell apart.

BAIER: Well, thank you very much. The book is a great read. We appreciate your time.

WHITLOCK: Thank you, Bret.

BAIER: "The **Afghanistan** Papers." Trace, I will sent it back to you.

TRACE GALLAGHER, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Bret, thank you.

Up next, disturbing new information about the suspect in the fatal shooting of a Chicago police officer and the wounding of another.

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GALLAGHER: We are learning new information tonight about the suspect in the killing of a Chicago police officer and the wounding of another. Correspondent Garrett Tenney tells us it turns out he had been released from jail despite serious charges.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

GARRETT TENNEY, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: The man accused of killing Chicago police officer Ella French, Emonte Morgan, was on probation in April for a robbery when he hit a man in a crosswalk in downtown Chicago and didn't stop until a mile later when he crashed into a parked car. Despite his victim being hospitalized after flying into a stop sign, Morgan wasn't charged with any felonies, which could have sent him to jail. Instead, with a few misdemeanors and a citation, his case was sent to traffic court, and less than 12 hours later he was released.

Chicago criminal defense attorney Mike Rosenblat says given the lack of serious charges back in April, though, it's not likely a judge would have sent Morgan to jail for violating his probation, and he doesn't see any red flags in how this case was handled.

MICHAEL ROSENBLAT, ATTORNEY: It wasn't obvious the day before Officer French was killed and her partner was shot, nobody would look at this case and say anything inappropriate took place. Nobody would look at it. No judge, no prosecutor would look at this case and say somebody made a mistake, somebody dropped the ball.

TENNEY: After Morgan's initial court appearance in May, "The Chicago Sun- Times reports the Cook County Adult Probation Department filed petition in court, saying the 21-year-old violated his probation with a hit and run. But the judge reportedly decided to give authorities time to renotify Morgan of the hearing and scheduled it for several months later.

This past Saturday, three days before that scheduled hearing, is when police say Morgan shot Officer Ella French in the head, killing her and critically injuring her partner. When asked why police didn't ask for more serious felony charges in the hit and run case, and if they were aware that Morgan was out on probation for robbery at the time, a CPD spokesperson told the "Chicago Sun Times" "We do not have that information at this time."

(END VIDEO TAPE)

TENNEY: Emonte Morgan remains hospitalized after being shot in the stomach by an officer Saturday night. His next court appearance is on Monday. Trace?

GALLAGHER: Garrett Tenney in Chicago. Garrett, thank you.

The New York State Assembly will suspend its impeachment investigation into Governor Andrew Cuomo once he steps down. The chamber's top Democrat says lawyers for the Assembly Judiciary Committee say it cannot impeach and remove an elected official no longer in office. Cuomo announced earlier this week he would resign in 14 days over sexual harassment allegations brought by at least 11 women.

Embattled California Governor Gavin Newsom is beginning a four-day sweep through the state. The Democrat is trying to hang on to his job in the face of next month's recall election. Correspondent Marianne Rafferty shows us tonight from Los Angeles.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM, (D) CALIFORNIA: Just vote no, and go to the mailbox, and get these ballots back.

MARIANNE RAFFERTY, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom kicking off his "Vote No on Question One" campaign in his hometown of San Francisco, asking Californians to reject the recall while leaving the second question blank. It asks voters which one of the 46 candidates on the ballot should replace him.

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NEWSOM: We need to focus in on the task at hand, a simple no vote.

RAFFERTY: The governor can count on the country's top Democrats. President Biden and VP Kamala Harris will visit the golden state in a matter of weeks to stump for Newsom, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been pledging her support.

NANCY PELOSI, (D-CA) HOUSE SPEAKER: I have my own operation working to get out the vote, making calls to defeat the recall of our governor.

RAFFERTY: But the race may be closer than expected considering Democrats outnumber Republicans in the state almost two to one. Recent polling shows 50 percent of likely voters want to keep him in office, while 47 percent want him recalled.

Republican Larry Elder is leading the list of contenders, with 18 percent of likely voters picking him as first choice in a race where whoever gets the most votes wins. The conservative radio host has argued Newsom's approach to minimum wage and pandemic restrictions hurts Californians.

LARRY ELDER, (R) CALIFORNIA GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE: A third of all small businesses in California are now gone forever because he ignored science and slammed this state down. It's outrageous.

(END VIDEO TAPE)

RAFFERTY: Ballots are being mailed out this week and Californians have until September 14th to make their votes count. Trace?

GALLAGHER: Marianne Rafferty live in Los Angeles. Marianne, thank you.

Up next, the panel on **Afghanistan**. Plus, Winners and Losers.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The urban warfare in Kabul will be catastrophic.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We're all mindful of the perilous situation in **Afghanistan**.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: This is going to be a Taliban country in a matter of weeks.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: **Afghanistan** is spinning out of control.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Are documents being shredded? How are things being secured.

NED PRICE, STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN: We are going to continue to have a diplomatic presence on the ground in **Afghanistan**. But we are reducing the size of our civilian footprint given the evolving security situation there.

SHABIA MANTOO, U.N. REFUGEE AGENCY SPOKESWOMAN: **Afghanistan** is on course to witness the highest ever number of documented civilian casualties in a single year since U.N. records began.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: These soldiers and marines, they're fully kitted out, putting on night vision goggles, landing in Kabul, taking positions at the airport. They are going to a combat zone, are they not?

JOHN KIRBY, PENTAGON PRESS SECRETARY: They are certainly going into harm's way, Lucas.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

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GALLAGHER: Let's bring in our panel, Mollie Hemingway, senior editor at "The Federalist," Charles Lane, opinion writer for "The Washington Post," and Steve Hayes, editor of "The Dispatch." Welcome to you all. One month ago today, Mollie -- not today, but one month ago, maybe a few days after that, it seems that President Biden said it was highly unlikely that the Taliban would take over in Afghanistan. Today Congressman Mark Green of Tennessee, also an Afghan vet, he said this. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. MARK GREEN, (R-TN): The truth of the matter is this surprised them. They were not expecting this. No one in Congress was briefed this was going to happen. They got caught with their pants down.

JOHN KIRBY, PENTAGON PRESS SECRETARY: No outcome has to be inevitable here. I'm not going to speculate about surprise. We're obviously watching this just like you are watching this and seeing it happen in real time, and it's deeply concerning.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: He wouldn't speculate about surprise, but it sure appeared to be a surprise, Mollie. Your thoughts?

MOLLIE HEMINGWAY, SENIOR EDITOR, "THE FEDERALIST": The pundits and media and politicians are talking about the incompetence of the exit or how surprised they are about what it is like to leave Afghanistan. But they shouldn't be surprised. This is the natural result of 20 years of failed strategy. They should be talking about the incompetence of the strategy that this country used for two decades.

We went from using our military to fight and win wars into the impossible task of nation-building. When we were attacked on 9/11, we needed to have a swift and serious response. We did that. But then President Bush took his eyes off the ball. We got mired in the Iraq War. He and Cheney and Obama and Biden then took on this task of nation-building in Afghanistan, the country historians call the graveyard of emperors. That is what people need to focus on so that we never do it again. When our military is used, we need to have clear, strategic objectives. We need to get in and get out. And that is what people don't want to talk about, but it's the most important lesson to learn right now.

GALLAGHER: She makes a good point, Steve, because the idea really was after 9/11 you go in and you attack the people that attacked you, and then it was about democracy building. Hopefully their thought was that was going to stop al-Qaeda from coming in. And here we are 20 years later, and it seems like the door is back open for Al-Qaeda to come back in, Steve. Your thoughts?

STEVE HAYES, EDITOR, "THE DISPATCH": Yes, it sure does. Al-Qaeda never left Afghanistan. It's important to have a big discussion about the overall strategy, and I think there are plenty of ways in which the strategy in Afghanistan failed over the past two decades. But it definitely matters if the Biden administration was surprised by the swiftness of the Taliban advance. You have had statements from Biden administration officials in recent days that are very close to Baghdad Bob territory. You had Ned Price, you just played a clip of him a moment ago saying last week that the Taliban want a durable solution through negotiations. There is no evidence whatsoever that the Taliban want a durable solution through negotiations.

You have had other senior administration officials talking about how the United States would threaten to isolate the Taliban if it takes Afghanistan by force. The Taliban isn't worried about being isolated. And by the way, as this is all unfolding, the Taliban can look next door to Iran, which is the world's greatest state sponsor of terror, continuing to conduct attacks against Americans and our interests, and we're not isolating Iran. We're inviting Iran to be part of the world community. So the arguments that you are getting from the Biden administration suggest that they were surprised by this because they are so incoherent.

GALLAGHER: And it's not fair to say, Chuck, that John Kirby wouldn't use the word "combat," but, boy, he was really hesitant. I want to watch this back and forth with he and Lucas Tomlinson and get your response.

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(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

LUCAS TOMLINSON, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Do you consider this a combat mission?

JOHN KIRBY, PENTAGON PRESS SECRETARY: This is a very narrowly focused mission of safeguarding the orderly reduction of civilian personnel out of Afghanistan.

TOMLINSON: Marines and the soldiers that are now strapping on going to Kabul, this isn't combat?

KIRBY: Lucas, Lucas, what I'm telling you is, and I have said it before, they will have the ability to defend themselves.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: They're trying to fly civilians, Chuck, out of what used to be Kabul International Airport, right. And the Taliban is maybe hours or days away from taking over. It sure looks like this could become a combat mission.

CHARLES LANE, OPINION WRITER, "WASHINGTON POST": It could. A great question that I think no one knows the answer to is what is more in the Taliban's interest, to stand back a while and let the Americans go peacefully so they don't risk retaliation from these very capable U.S. troops, or to somehow engage them and bloody them and try to embarrass them further and make things even more difficult for President Biden.

I just want to go back to what Mollie said with her second guessing and so forth of this mission and focus on today and what is happening today. And what is happening today, whether you like it or not, whether we should have been there or not, is that thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people who depended on us are now left high and dry and exposed to tremendous potential reprisals and violence at the hands of this extreme Islamist group, number one.

And number two, allies all over the world, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, Latin America, are all asking themselves today, are we going to end up like these folks in Kabul? Maybe highly imperfect and so forth, but put their trust in the United States. And at the end of the day, one fine day the president said, contrary to the advice of my military advisers who tell me that with just 2,500 troops we can make a go of it, we are leaving.

GALLAGHER: Yes, and Mollie, you can respond to that. These people, these interpreters, these people who we depended on for years need to get out. We're trying right now to get them out.

HEMINGWAY: It's absolutely true that the Pentagon did not make good exit plans, in part because they were trying to trick President Biden into staying there. That's what our Pentagon has done. That is how they have been able to keep people there. But the fact is that rather than focusing on what's in the Taliban's interest, we need to be thinking about what is in our interest. It is not in our interest to spend trillions of dollars, 20 years, and all of the lives that we lost for a mission that couldn't even be sustained for a few days without that level of support.

GALLAGHER: Here we go quickly, Winners and Losers. Steve?

HAYES: My winner are air conditioner repairmen. With nearly half of the country under excessive heat watch, they have been awfully busy lately, and I think are making some good bucks. My loser is David Mikkelson, the head of the left leaning factchecking outfit Snopes who was busted with more than 60 articles of plagiarism. Plagiarism used to be a capital offense. People can recover from it now, but he should be more than suspended in my view.

GALLAGHER: Chuck?

LANE: My winner is the state of Texas and the Republicans who currently run it. They are going to pick up -- they are confirmed to pick up two seats in the House per the census that came out this week. And call me captain obvious, but my loser this week is Andrew Cuomo, the former, soon-to-be former governor of New York, forced to resign over the sexual harassment case.

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GALLAGHER: He did resign? Mollie, you last?

HEMINGWAY: My winner are parents who are taking on the school boards for pushing bad ideas such as Critical Race Theory and other racist ideas on their children. My loser, Secretary Mayorkas who is overseeing the humanitarian disaster at the border caused by the Biden administration's policy.

GALLAGHER: Thank you all. When we come back, "Notable Quotables."

GALLAGHER: Finally tonight, it's Friday. That means "Notable Quotables."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: These forces are being deployed to support the orderly and safe reduction of civilian personnel.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The ability of the Afghan government to resist the Taliban is near zero. We are talking about the demise of the country within weeks.

GOV. ANDREW CUOMO, (D) NEW YORK: The best way I can help now is if I step aside.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Did you advise him to step down?

CHRIS CUOMO, CNN ANCHOR: I think you've got a job to do, and I'm letting you do it.

JOE BIDEN, (D) PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: He has done a hell of a job. That's why it's so sad.

SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER, (D-NY) SENATE MAJORITY LEADER: Despite this long road we have taken, we have finally, finally reached the finish line.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: All we are doing is we are helping the Democrats pass their Bernie budget.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I am so excited. Every senator here wants to defund the police, believes in God, country, and apple pie.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Selflessly they go out here and do their jobs. They do it because it's the right thing to do.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: The police are not our enemies.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Now she has to pivot, and now she has to be our best friend. It's too damn late.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: In my 30 years this is the most complicated situation I have ever experienced.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: School board, I quit. I quit your policies.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We will not show you a passport. We will not wear a mask, not this time. I choose freedom.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Screw your freedom, because with freedom comes obligations.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't think I heard you. Is this heaven?

(APPLAUSE)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Come to our field of dreams and play ball.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

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GALLAGHER: Monday on SPECIAL REPORT, the latest on the deteriorating situation in **Afghanistan**. Please join us for FOX NEWS SUNDAY. The guests will be former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Institutes of Health Director Dr. Francis Collins.

Thanks for watching SPECIAL REPORT. I'm Trace Gallagher. FOX NEWS PRIMETIME hosted by Lawrence Jones starts right now. Lawrence.

LAWRENCE JONES, FOX NEWS HOST: Thank you, Trace. One of the best in the business. Good evening, welcome to FOX NEWS PRIMETIME.

Load-Date: August 14, 2021

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