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“We’re going to stick with you,” Biden tells President Ghani at White House, promising ‘sustained’ partnership

KABUL: President Joe Biden declared the US support for the embattled Afghan government will not end, telling President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani that Washington will prop up the country's military and economy as US troops end a 20-year occupation. The partnership between Afghanistan and the United States is not ending. It's going to be sustained, Biden told President Ghani during a meeting in the White House on Friday, adding that "support for Afghanistan is not ending, in terms of support and maintenance of their help to maintain their military, as well as economic and political support."

Biden also insisted that "Afghans are going to have to decide their future" and "what they want," but "reassured them: 'We're going to stick with you, and we're going to do our best to help you have the tools you need.'"

Joined by Abdullah, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, President Ghani vowed gratitude to Washington, praising Biden for a "historic" decision to withdraw troops - though the move originated under the Donald Trump administration, which first reached an accord deal with the Taliban last year.

While noting that the withdrawal has freed Afghan leaders to "reconcile and reconsider" the situation in the country, President

Ghani said the US-Afghan relationship was "entering a new chapter," and that "the partnership with the United States would not be military, but comprehensive, regarding our mutual interests."

President Ghani also said his nation had entered a "110th moment," comparing his position to that of President Abraham Lincoln ahead of the American Civil War.

President Ghani added that "it's a choice of values, the values of an inclusive system or an exclusionary system."

The top official also met with Pentagon leaders on Friday, where Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin stressed that the US is "deeply invested in the security and stability of Afghanistan" and that Washington is committed to an "enduring partnership."

At the tail end of the meeting with Defense officials, President Ghani was asked by a journalist about a recent US intelligence assessment. But revealed by the Wall Street Journal earlier this week - which concluded that the Afghan capital could fall in a matter of days within six to 12 months of the American exit. While the report came under the scrutiny of Taliban attacks on districts across the country, President Ghani was dismissive, saying "There have been many such predictions, and they've all turned out to be false."

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Afghans living in US demand for a democratic Afghanistan, press Pakistan to end support to Taliban

KABUL: Dozens of Afghan Americans stood in front of the White House to welcome Afghan President Ghani when he arrived for the first time in the US. President Joe Biden for the first time face-to-face in the White House. The group held a sign that read "We Demand Permanent Ceasefire in Afghanistan!"

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COVID-19: Ministry reports 1,095 new cases, 56 deaths in Afghanistan

The Ministry of Public Health on Saturday reported 1,095 new positive cases of COVID-19 out of 3,840 samples tested in the last 24 hours. The ministry also reported 56 deaths and 100 recoveries from COVID-19 in the same period.

The new cases were reported in the provinces of Kabul (27), Balkh (2), Kandahar (1), Takhar (1), Kunar (2), Faryab (3), Helmand (2), Paktia (2), Nuristan (2), Kapisa (1), Ghazni (2), Paktika (2), Bamyan (2), Bamiyan (2), Bala Ghori (1), Khost (1) and Samangan (1).

Afghans will not bow to force: President Ghani

KABUL: President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani late on Friday said that Afghans will not be compelled to submission by force and that the Taliban should agree to a ceasefire and enter a political process.

Addressing a press conference following his meeting with US President Joe Biden, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other American officials and lawmakers, President Ghani said that the Afghan forces are prepared to ensure the country's security and that he respects the decision by the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

"The military and intelligence community, moreover, have also discussed stationing troops in nearby countries, should they want to return to Afghanistan," he said.

President Ghani said "it is a dialogue with a new chapter of our friendship, our strategic relationship and our people-to-people relationship and government to government relationship that we have focused on," he added.

Meanwhile, Ashraf Ghani, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, who accompanied President Ghani in his trip to the US, said the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan will not stop talks with the Taliban unless the group shows the doors for negotiations.

US launches drone strikes in Afghanistan ahead of Afghan-US presidents meeting

KABUL: The US military has launched two drone strikes against Taliban positions in northern Afghanistan, a US defense official told Fox News on Friday. The strikes came hours before President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani meeting with President Biden at the White House. An unknown number of Taliban fighters were killed in the strikes, which took place in the provinces of Kunar and Paktia. The US military is preparing to pull most of its remaining forces from Afghanistan in the coming weeks, with about the 9-11 deadline announced by President Biden.