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Inside C2

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Make Today Different

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Era ends, uncertainty looms as U.S. forces quit main Afghanistan base

KABUL, July 2 (Reuters) - American troops pulled out of their main military base in Afghanistan on Friday, leaving behind a piece of the World Trade Center they buried 20 years ago in a country that the top U.S. commander has warned may descend into civil war without them.

The brisk pace of the U.S. withdrawal comes as the Taliban insurgency ramps up its offensive throughout the country while peace talks in Qatar have failed to make significant progress.

The Pentagon said the turnover of Bagram airbase to Afghan security forces was a "key milestone" in the withdrawal.

Despite the rapid pace of the pullout, the U.S. military currently still has the authority to protect Afghan forces.

"Those authorities still exist," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters, but did not give a timeline for when they might end.

U.S. President Joe Biden said the withdrawal is on track, but some American forces will still be in Afghanistan in September as part of a "rational drawdown with allies." read more

Even so, the Bagram pullout brought an effective end to the longest war in U.S. history.

The base, an hour's drive north of Kabul, was where the U.S. military coordinated its air war and logistical support for its entire Afghan mission. The Taliban thanked them for leaving. "We consider this withdrawal a positive step. Afghans can get closer to stability and peace with the full withdrawal of foreign forces," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

Other Afghans were more circumspect. "The Americans must leave Afghanistan and there should be peace in this country," said Kabul resident Javed Arman.

But he added: "We are in a difficult situation. Most people have fled their districts and some districts have fallen. Seven districts in Paktia province have fallen and are now under Taliban control."

For the international forces, more than 3,500 of whom were killed in Afghanistan, the exit came with no pageantry. A Western diplomat in Kabul said Washington and its NATO allies had "won many battles, but have lost the Afghan war." It was at Bagram, on a plain hemmed in by the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush, that New York City firefighters and police buried a piece of the World Trade Center in December 2001, days after the Taliban were toppled for harboring



Osama bin Laden.

'BLACK SITE'

Afghan soldiers stand guard at a checkpoint outside the U.S. Bagram air base, on the day the last of American troops vacated it, Parwan province, Afghanistan July 2, 2021. REUTERS/Mohammad Ismail U.S. Army soldiers and contractors load High Mobility Multi-purposed Wheeled Vehicles, HUMVs, to be sent for transport as U.S. forces prepare for withdrawal, in Kandahar, Afghanistan, July 13, 2020. Picture taken July 13, 2020. U.S. Army/Sgt. Jeffery J. Harris/Handout via REUTERS Aerial porters work with maintainers to load a UH-60L Blackhawk helicopter into a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III during the withdrawal of American forces in Afghanistan, June 16, 2021. Picture taken June 16, 2021. U.S. Army/Sgt. 1st Class Corey Vandiver/Handout via REU It was also here that the CIA ran a "black site" detention center where terrorism suspects were subjected to abuse that President Barack Obama subsequently acknowledged as torture.

The base later swelled into a sprawling fortified city for a huge international military force, with fast food restaurants, gyms and a cafe serving something called "the mother of all coffees." Two runways perpetually roared. Presidents flew in and gave speeches; celebrities came and told jokes.

An Afghan official said the base would be officially handed over at a ceremony on

Saturday.

U.S. officials have told Reuters that the vast majority of troops have left Afghanistan, ahead of the timetable set by Biden, who had promised they would be home by Sept. 11, the 20th anniversary of the attack that brought them to Afghanistan.

Biden said he thinks the government of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, with whom he held talks at the White House last week, has the capacity to withstand recent Taliban advances. But he said Ghani's government should deal with "internal issues," an apparent reference to infighting among rival political factions.

'CONSEQUENCES'

Washington agreed to withdraw in a deal negotiated last year under Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump. Biden rejected advice from generals to hang on until a political agreement could be reached between the insurgents and Ghani's U.S.-backed government.

Biden told Ghani in Washington last week the Afghans now must decide their own future. Ghani said his job was now to "manage the consequences" of the U.S.

withdrawal.

In exchange for the U.S. withdrawal, the Taliban promised not to allow international terrorists to operate from Afghan soil. They committed to negotiate with the Afghan government, but talks in the Qatari capital Doha made little progress.

The U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan this week said Washington was firmly committed to assisting Afghanistan and would provide security assistance of \$3 billion in 2022.

The Taliban refuse to declare a ceasefire. Afghan soldiers have been surrendering or abandoning their posts. Militia groups that fought against the Taliban before the Americans arrived are taking up arms again.

A senior Western diplomat said the United States has asked three Central Asian nations - Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - to provide a temporary home to about 10,000 Afghans who worked with either U.S. or allied forces.

Several European nations were also providing refuge to hundreds of Afghan employees and their families as they faced a direct threat from the Taliban.



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China bill delayed in U.S. House amid partisan wrangling

WASHINGTON, June 28 (Reuters) - U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee Republicans said on Monday they opposed Democratic-led legislation intended to boost competitiveness with China and push Beijing on human rights, meaning the panel will likely advance the bill this week with only Democratic support.

A spokesperson for Representative Michael McCaul, the top committee Republican, said he opposed the "Ensuring American Global Leadership and Engagement Act," or Eagle Act, which the committee will consider on Wednesday. read more

The desire for a hard line in dealings with China is one of the few truly bipartisan sentiments in the deeply divided U.S. Congress, which is narrowly controlled by President Joe Biden's fellow Democrats.

However, the two parties disagree on how best to deal with China. For example, Republicans object to provisions in the Eagle Act that would authorize funding for climate initiatives.

Report ad

But Republicans also said they felt the Eagle Act calls for too many studies and would be a missed opportunity to take meaningful action like tightening control of technology exports and regulating access to some types of sensitive personal data, such as Americans' health information.

"It's largely just a messaging bill," a Republican aide said.

The Eagle Act was introduced in May by Democratic Foreign Affairs Chairman Gregory Meeks. read more

The Senate on June 8 passed by a strong bipartisan 68-32 majority its own sweeping China bill, the "U.S. Innovation and Competition Act," or USICA, which authorizes about \$190 billion for provisions to strengthen U.S. technology and research, and approved \$54 billion to increase U.S.



production and research into semi-conductors and telecommunications equipment

Ranking Member Michael McCaul (R-Tex.) questions witnesses during a House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing looking into the firing of State Department Inspector General Steven Linick, on Capitol Hill, in Washington D.C., U.S., September 16, 2020. Kevin Dietsch/Pool via REUTERS



Editor's Choice



A man is detained after a fight broke out during a Loudoun County School Board meeting which included a discussion of Critical Race Theory and transgender students, in Ashburn, Virginia. REUTERS/Evelyn Hockstein



U.S. Army soldiers from the 2nd Platoon, B battery 2-8 field artillery, fire a howitzer artillery piece at Seprwan Ghar forward fire base in Panjwai district, Kandahar province southern Afghanistan, June 2011. REUTERS/Baz Ratner



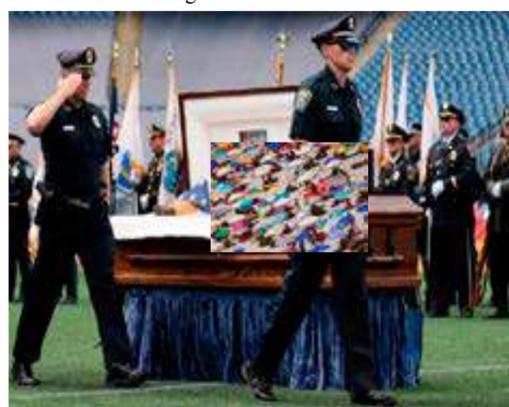
A person celebrates the summer solstice at the Kokino megalithic observatory, near the city of Kumanovo, North Macedonia. REUTERS/Ognen Teofilovski



Captain Melvin Cabebe with the US Army's 1-320 Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division stands near a burning M-ATV armored vehicle after it struck an improvised explosive device (IED) near Combat Outpost Nolen in the Arghandab Valley north of Kandahar, July 2010. REUTERS/Bob Strong



People sunbathe on the beach on the Sicilian island of Lampedusa, as a flow of migrants arriving continuous on the Mediterranean island, in Lampedusa, Italy. REUTERS/Guglielmo Mangiapane



Police officers salute the casket of K-9 Kitt in Gillette Stadium during a memorial service held in honor of the police dog, who was killed during a domestic violence call, in Boston, Massachusetts. Jessica Rinaldi/Pool

The Fourth Industrial Revolution

Robots, Drones And Sensors Are Changing The Way We Farm

The Future Of Farming Is Here - High-Tech Brings Agriculture Into The 21st Century



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Last spring, farmer Brian Tischler was sitting in his tractor when he had an idea. What if his tractor was fully autonomous? Thanks to AgOpenGPS – a software he developed that tracks where crops are seeded – he’s had more time to think of new ideas to improve his workflow. Tischler began creating on the spot, envisioning features for the autonomous tractor like remote control via smartphone, the ability to sense obstacles, and geolocation to ensure the tractor stays within a field. Across the farming industry, tech innovations like Tischler’s are revolutioniz-

ing the way agriculture is done. These applications come at a critical time. The world population is expected to swell to 9.8 billion by 2050. Climate change and infectious disease are looming threats to livestock production and crop yield. Tischler made the tractor program open source, sharing it online so farmers from across the globe can download and develop additions. Tischler, who recently won the 2018 ASTech Award for Outstanding Achievement in Agricultural Innovation, views the software as a way of giving back to the farming community. A lot of

leading-edge technology is not affordable for smaller operations.



“What inspires me is connecting with other people who share how they’re using [the software],” says Tischler.

Such innovations have made the \$3 trillion industry more efficient, resourceful, and productive. In recent years, there have been varied applications of agriculture technology: crop-watering drones, software that uses satellites to manage nut and citrus orchards, virtual trials of new farming techniques, genomics testing that can ward off food contamination, and more.

Recent innovations have made the \$3 trillion farming industry more efficient, resourceful and productive.

The DJI “Agricultural Wonder Drone” makes it possible for a single farmer to feed or spray pesticide on as much as 80 acres of crops a day. By comparison, a worker on foot may cover less than one acre in the same amount of time. Using the DJI drone, the farmer maps out the field by walking through it and the unit’s controller creates a flight path, almost like a flying Roomba.

In Canada, the R2B2 team of scientists are researching rural connectivity and precision agriculture. Their studies utilize digital devices, applications, and databases of geospatial techniques to analyze and respond to variability in the field.

R2B2 looks at how wireless optimization and tools like sensors and drones support sustainable farming practices. For example, by using sensors to measure moisture and nutrients in the soil, farmers avoid loading up fields with excess irrigation and pesticides, saving money and protecting the environment.



Using linked technologies, a connected farm can also employ solar wireless devices like Ecorobotix, a solar-powered weeding robot. Dr. Helen Hambly, R2B2’s lead scientist explains, “In the next generation of farming, there is a lot of monitoring done through connected and wireless devices. Wireless has changed things substantially.”

These innovations come at a critical time, as the world population is expected to swell and climate change and infectious

disease are looming threats to livestock production and crop yield.

Many farmers have adopted precision agriculture practices. Christian Gastón Palmaz, CEO of Napa’s Palmaz Vineyards, created VIGOMany farmers have adopted precision agriculture practices. Christian Gastón Palmaz, CEO of Napa’s Palmaz Vineyards, created VIGOR (Vineyard Infrared Growth Optical Recognition), smart software that marries infrared imagery with soil moisture measurements. The algorithmic approach ensures that the vines grow at the same rate and that the exact amount of water needed is used—reducing water use by an estimated 20 percent.

Palmaz says, “Big data analytics has had a profound impact on understanding and addressing slight amounts of difference, which would otherwise propagate over time.”



Technology can also help manage livestock wellness and reproduction. Remote Insights developed ear tags that monitor sows’ behavior, movements, eating and drinking. The data is collected and analyzed to check that the animal has a healthy appetite and normal mobility. Moocall created monitors to check when a female cow is in heat and a pregnant one is ready to give birth. Such forward-thinking equipment can save a farmer numerous trips to the field or barn to review the herd. There’s palpable excitement within the field about the myriad of technological possibilities, strengthening old farming traditions, by using technology to answer existing needs. As Hambly says, “This is the farming of the future.” (Courtesy <https://www.verizon.com>)

History of the Fourth of July



Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of The Spirit of ‘76 Painting Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Independence Day is commonly associated with fireworks, parades, barbecues, carnivals, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games, family reunions, political speeches and ceremonies, and various other public and private events celebrating the history, government, and traditions of the United States. Independence Day is the national day of the United States.

Background

During the American Revolution, the legal separation of the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain occurred on July 2, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence that had been proposed in June by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia. After voting for independence, Congress turned its attention to the Declaration of Independence, a statement explaining this decision, which had been prepared by a Committee of Five, with Thomas Jefferson as its principal author. Congress debated and re-revised the Declaration, finally approving it on July 4. A day earlier, John Adams had written to his wife Abigail:

“The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festi-

val. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more.”

Adams’s prediction was off by two days. From the outset, Americans celebrated independence on July 4, the date shown on the much-publicized Declaration of Independence, rather than on July 2, the date the resolution of independence was approved in a closed session of Congress.

Historians have long disputed whether Congress actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, even though Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin all later wrote that they had signed it on that day. Most historians have concluded that the Declaration was signed nearly a month after its adoption, on August 2, 1776, and not on

July 4 as is commonly believed. In a remarkable coincidence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only signers of the Declaration of Independence later to serve as Presidents of the United States, died on the same day: July 4, 1826, which was the 50th anniversary of the Declaration. Although not a signer of the Declaration of Independence, James Monroe, the Fifth President of the United States, died on July 4, 1831. Calvin Coolidge, the Thirtieth President, was born on July 4, 1872, and thus, was the only President to be born on Independence Day.



Happy Fourth of July!!! Independence Day 2021



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

to recognize July 4 as a state celebration.

- In 1783, Moravians in Salem, North Carolina, held a celebration of July 4 with a challenging music program assembled by Johann Friedrich Peter. This work was titled “The Psalm of Joy”.
- In 1791 the first recorded use of the name “In-dependence Day” occurred.
- In 1820 the first Fourth of July celebration was held in Eastport, Maine which remains the largest in the state.
- In 1870, the U.S. Congress made Independence Day an unpaid holiday for federal employees.
- In 1938, Congress changed Independence Day to a paid federal holiday.



While the official observance always falls on July 4th, participation levels may vary according to which day of the week the 4th falls on. If the holiday falls in the middle of the week, some fireworks displays and celebrations may take place during the weekend for convenience, again, varying by region.

The first week of July is typically one of the busiest American travel periods of the year, as many people utilize the holiday for extended vacation trips.

Please send your comments to the News & Review Editor at john4252@gmail.com



Fourth of July Observance Historical High-lights

- In 1777, thirteen gunshots were fired, once at morning and again as evening fell, on July 4 in Bristol, Rhode Island. Philadelphia celebrated the first anniversary in a manner a modern American would find quite familiar: an official dinner for the Continental Congress, toasts, 13-gun salutes, speeches, prayers, music, parades, troop reviews, and fireworks. Ships were decked with red, white, and blue bunting.
- In 1778, General George Washington marked July 4 with a double ration of rum for his soldiers and an artillery salute. Across the Atlantic Ocean, ambassadors John Adams and Benjamin Franklin held a dinner for their fellow Americans in Paris, France.
- In 1779, July 4 fell on a Sunday. The holiday was celebrated on Monday, July 5.
- In 1781, the Massachusetts General Court became the first state legislature