



Exiting Afghanistan

Context: The U.S. pullout without any settlement leaves the Taliban stronger.

Afghan end game:

1. When Mr Biden ordered a review of the U.S.'s Afghan strategy, there was speculation that he would delay the pullout at least until there was a political settlement.
2. Besides the U.S. troops, the thousands of coalition troops under NATO's command are also expected to pull back.
3. This leaves the already shaky Ghani government in an even more precarious situation. After September, the government will be left with itself on the battleground against the Taliban.
4. The country is already witnessing a series of targeted killings of journalists, activists and other civil society members opposed to the Taliban. This does not mean that the government is on the verge of collapse. The U.S. has promised that it would continue remote assistance to the government.
5. The role of regional players such as Russia, China and India, which have a shared interest in a stable Afghanistan, will also be crucial in deciding the country's future.
6. But one thing is certain: the U.S., despite all its military might, has lost the war and its withdrawal, without any settlement or even a peace road map, leaves the Taliban stronger and the government weaker. That is an ominous sign.