

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021*

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah of Afghanistan and an Exchange With Reporters**

*June 26, 2021*

*President Biden.* Well, it's good to see two old friends. We met many, many times in Afghanistan for long hours. And they're welcome here. They've had a chance to meet with the—all the major players of the administration—from the Secretary of Defense, to the CIA—across the board. And it's good to have them here in the White House.

The partnership between Afghanistan and the United States is not ending. It's going to be sustained. And you know, our troops may be leaving, but support for Afghanistan is not ending, in terms of support and maintenance of their—helping maintain their military, as well as economic and political support.

And they've both got very difficult jobs. Every time I think I've got a lot—tough job, I think, Mr. President——

*President Ghani.* [Laughter]

*President Biden.* ——but seriously, I—they're doing important work of trying to bring about unity among Afghan leaders up—across the board.

And they have to—Afghans are going to have to decide their future of what they want—what they want. But it won't be for lack of us being a help. There's going to be a—and the senseless violence that has to stop, but it's going to be very difficult.

But we're going to stick with you. And we're going to do our best to see to it you have the tools you need.

*President Ghani.* Well, thank you, Mr. President. First of all, let me pay tribute to the 2,448 Americans who paid the ultimate sacrifice, over a million American veterans who have served with honor and dignity for your security and our freedom.

The United States has not spared any effort in blood or treasure during these years. And as a grateful nation, I want to acknowledge that and ask you——

*President Biden.* Thank you.

*President Ghani.* —— to thank the Gold Star families.

Second, President Biden's decision has been historic. It has made everybody recalculate and reconsider. We are here to respect it and support it.

Third, we are entering into a new chapter of our relationship where the partnership with the United States would not be military, but comprehensive, regarding our mutual interest. And we're very encouraged and satisfied that this partnership is taking place. Thank you for ordering the priorities.

The Afghan nation is in an 1861 moment, like President Lincoln, rallying to the defense of the republic, determined that the republic is defended. It's a choice of values: the values of an exclusionary system or an inclusionary system. We're determined to have unity, coherence, national sense of sacrifice and will not spare anything.

Just for your information: Today, the Afghan Defense and Security Forces have retaken six districts, both in the south and the north. It's showing our determination. So I hope that nobody does the Bernard Shaw on us, exaggerating our death before something has happened.

Let us understand that in moments of great transition, things happen. But you will see that with determination, with unity, and with the partnership, we will overcome all odds. Thank you, Mr. President.

*President Biden.* Thank you. Thank you all. Appreciate it. Thank you.

*Sentencing of Former Minneapolis, Minnesota, Police Officer Derek Chauvin*

*Q.* Mr. President, do you have any reaction to Derek Chauvin being sentenced to 22½ years in prison?

*President Biden.* I've not been able to hear anything about what's happened. How long has he been sentenced?

*Q.* Twenty-two and a half years.

*President Biden.* Well, I don't know all the circumstances that were considered, but it seems to me—under the guidelines—that seems to be appropriate.

Thank you

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Afghanistan :: President Ghani; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Afghanistan :: High Council for National Reconciliation Chairman Abdullah.

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