

Page 2 | NATIONAL
Why Biden May Not Be Able to Extricate the US from its Middle East Quagmire

Afghanistan and the Second Great Game

When US President Joe Biden announced in April of this year that he would be pulling out all remaining US troops...

Page 2 | NATIONAL

Page 3 | ECONOMY

MoF: Average Daily Customs Revenue Increases to Over \$4M



Kabul
33° / 16°



Herat
39° / 22°



Nangarhar
43° / 24°



Balkh
35° / 25°



Heart of Asia

Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

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Legal Experts: Afghan MPs Not Above the Law

Reports said there are dozens of criminal and corruption cases involving members of Afghanistan's Parliament and these members have not appeared in court.

Legal experts on Saturday, referring to legal charges brought against members of Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga—the lower house of Parliament—said that no lawmaker is above the law.

Legal expert Wahidullah Farzaee argued that there is no difference between a lawmaker and an ordinary citizen when it comes to facing criminal charges and being accountable before the law of the nation... **P3**



Karzai Discuss Peace Efforts With UN Envoy on Afghanistan, Regional Issues

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Saturday met Jean Arnault, the United Nations Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues to discuss the Afghan peace process and regional cooperation in support of the process. The office of former president added in a statement that UN Secretary-General's representative for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons was also present in the meeting.

Karzai welcomed the appointment of Arnault as United Nations Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues, calling him a skillful diplomat and hoped that his efforts play effective role in the peace process.

Meanwhile, Dawa Khan Meenapal, head of the Government's... **P3**

CENTCOM Commander Vows to Support Afghan Forces Even After Withdrawal



General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the CENTCOM commander, in an interview with the Military Times, said that the US will continue to support the Afghan security forces and will keep on putting pressure on the adversaries to ensure that they do not attack US from the region.

For the past 20 years, US Central

Command has been the busiest of the US military's geographically arrayed headquarters, but even with the end of the American commitment of troops on the ground in Afghanistan, a reduced presence in Iraq and an overall US shift to countering China and Russia, CENTCOM oversees a restive region that will continue to warrant

attention.

On realistic threats emanating from Afghanistan after withdrawal, McKenzie said that there is a high degree of certainty that Al-Qaeda and IS-K, both have aspirations to attack the United States. "We believe that what has prevented these attacks from being developed from Afghanistan is the pressure

that's been put on these groups. So, what would concern me the most in the long term would be a future situation in Afghanistan where there wasn't adequate pressure kept on these groups. Then, they would certainly rebuild, restrengthen themselves, and attack us in our homeland," he added.

On the future, McKenzie said that the US still intends to support the Afghan military from just over the horizon. "We're still going to support them with funding. We're going to try very hard to support the Afghan air force over the horizon and we will do some televised remote advising with them as we go forward. We will continue to support them, just not in the way we are supporting them now," he said.

Meanwhile, the Taliban again reiterated on Saturday that it would be "unacceptable" to them and a "mistake" on the part of any nation to retain a military presence in Afghanistan to guard airports or other installations after the departure of US-led NATO troops from the war-torn country.

The Taliban vowed to resist deployment of any... **P3**

Families Find the Bodies of Two Missing Kabul Women

The bodies of two young women employed by Afghan Film in Kabul, who had been missing since Saturday's explosion, were finally tracked down by their families on Sunday.

The families of Tayeba Mousavi and Fatama Mohammadi confirmed Sunday they found the women's bodies at the government forensic medicine department.

The discovery comes after both families had desperately searched for the women at all hospitals.

According to the families, both women had been burnt beyond recognition.

Tayeba was a talented artist... **P3**



NATO Members to Bid Symbolic Farewell to Afghanistan

US president Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts will bid a symbolic farewell to Afghanistan today in their last summit before America winds up its longest "forever war" and the US military pulls out for good.

The meeting is bound to renew questions about whether NATO's most ambitious operation ever was worth it.

The 18-year effort cost the United States alone \$2.26 trillion, and the price in lives includes 2,442 American troops and 1,144 personnel among US allies, according to figures from Brown University. NATO does not keep a record of those who die in its operations.

Those casualty figures dwarf Afghan losses, which include more



than 47,000 civilians, up to 69,000 members of the national armed forces and police, and over 51,000 opposition fighters.

The military effort followed the 2001 arrival of a US-led coalition that ousted the Taliban for harboring al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Few experts argue that it brought long-term stability, meaningful

democracy or security.

"At this point, you get the impression that NATO leaders almost want to downplay and leave quietly, rather than making too big a deal of it, and going on to focus on other business," said Erik Brattberg, director of the Europe Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace... **P2**

By: Walden Bello

Why Biden May Not Be Able to Extricate the US from its Middle East Quagmire

Next September, when the last C-130 cargo aircraft and Chinook transport helicopters take off from the infamous Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan that has doubled as a CIA torture center for suspected jihadists, they will not only be leaving behind the site of a military defeat. Their departure will also mark the dismal end of a strategy of direct military engagement to drastically reshape the Middle East that resulted instead in upending the global strategic balance. America's 20-year-long war in the Middle East contributed decisively not only to degrading U.S. imperial power but also to the domestic polarization savaging the American political process at present and to the emergence of China as the new center of global capital accumulation. Ending the Afghanistan commitment, liberals and progressives hope, will provide the conditions for a fundamental reset of US foreign policy. But even now, many are skeptical that the United States has really learned its lesson and that Joe Biden will not find another excuse to maintain a military contingent in Afghanistan.

In a United States that has gone through the trauma of COVID-19, followed by the January 6 insurrection and a pandemic of almost weekly mass shootings, Osama bin Laden, George W. Bush, 9/11, and the War on Terror might seem to be historical footnotes that pale before the country's present troubles. But these now seemingly distant personalities and events had a decisive role in shaping the present.

Osama's vision, Bush's opportunity
As I wrote in the aftermath of 9/11, Osama bin Laden operated with something like Che Guevara's "foco theory." Guevara believed that

direct engagement of the enemy was necessary to show peasants that guerrillas could defeat the military and encourage them to join the revolution. Bin Laden, operating on a global stage, saw the September 11 events as an act that would expose the vulnerability of the Great Satan and inspire Muslims to join his jihad against it. It did not quite work out that way. Instead of being inspired, most Muslims were horrified and distanced themselves from the terrible deed. Still bin Laden lucked out, thanks to George W. Bush and the neoconservatives that had come to power with him in Washington in 2001. For them, Osama's attack was a god-given opportunity to teach both America's enemies and friends that the empire was omnipotent. Ostensibly waged to go after the "roots of terror," the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were in fact what the Romans called "exemplary wars," and their aim was to reshape the global strategic environment to fit Washington's so-called "unipolar" status following the demise of the Soviet Union. Disappointed with his father's reluctance to finish off Saddam Hussein during the 1990-91 Gulf War, George W. Bush initiated these invasions as the first steps in a demarche that would eliminate the so-called rogue states, compel greater loyalty from dependent states or supplant them with stronger allies, and put strategic competitors like China on notice that they should not even think of vying with the United States. Disregarding the lessons of Vietnam and the British and Soviet debacles in Afghanistan, the Bush administration drove the United States into two unwinnable wars against highly motivated insurgents in the Middle East as bin Laden



watched with satisfaction, living unperturbed under the protection of an American ally, the Pakistani military, in the peaceful garrison town of Abbottabad in Pakistan. It was not exactly the scenario he had envisaged, but he was not about to quibble if the Bush administration, owing to its drive for unipolar hegemony, placed the United States on the road to overextension, which was, after all, his strategic aim.

Prolonged occupation demanded boots on the ground, and as Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage saw it, "The Army, in particular, [is] stretched too thin...fighting three wars—Afghanistan still, Iraq, and the global war on terrorism." At the height of the Iraq War, defense analyst James Fallows wrote, it was "only a slight exaggeration to say that today the entire U.S. military is either in Iraq, returning from

Iraq, or getting ready to go." Most of the Army's maneuverable brigades were overseas, and those left in the United States were too few to maintain the contingency reserve or the training base necessary. Even the famed Special Forces were degraded, with their actual numbers in the field coming to hundreds at the most. Lack of human resources led the high command to call on the Reserves and the National Guard. As might be expected, morale plummeted, especially as tours of duty were extended and casualties mounted in lands to which these part-time soldiers had never expected to be assigned.

And as the prospect of prevailing in the battlefield became more and more distant, public support for the Iraq and Afghanistan expeditions, which was very limited right from the start, went up in smoke.

NATO Members...

With the US leading the withdrawal, European allies and Canada want to hear Biden's thinking about how security will be assured at their embassies, along major transport routes and above all at Kabul's airport.

Many wonder whether the Afghan government can survive a resurgent Taliban. Some think Kabul's capitulation is only a matter of time.

"We are currently in intense discussions with our member states, the United States, NATO and the United Nations on the absence of essential security conditions for our continued diplomatic

presence. It will be difficult to keep it" in place, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

For now, NATO plans to leave civilian advisers to help build up government institutions. It's unclear who will protect them. The 30-nation alliance is also weighing whether to train Afghan special forces outside the country.

As an organization, NATO will not provide sanctuary for Afghans who worked alongside its forces — routinely risking their lives — although a few individual members will. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg says it's simply time

to leave.

"Afghanistan has come a long way, both when it comes to building strong, capable security forces, but also when it comes to social and economic progress," he told The Associated Press. "At some stage, it has to be the Afghans that take full responsibility for peace and stability in their own country."

Few Afghans share that assessment of their country, which has a 54% poverty rate, runaway crime, rampant corruption and an illicit economy that outstrips the legal economy.

When NATO took charge of international security

operations in 2003, Afghanistan was its first major mission outside Europe and North America. The aim was to stabilize the government, build up local security forces and remove a potential base for extremist groups.

Yet 18 years later, security is at its lowest ebb for most Afghans. The capital is rife with criminal gangs, many linked to powerful warlords, and there are routine attacks by an upstart Islamic State.

Quite early into the operations, as combat took its toll on NATO troops, extremists and civilians, a stalemate developed. The Taliban could... **P3**

By: Abdul Hadi Mayar

Afghanistan and the Second Great Game

When US President Joe Biden announced in April of this year that he would be pulling out all remaining US troops from Afghanistan by the very beginning of July — the White House administration described it as a shift in "the US global focus from counterinsurgency campaign to current priorities."

That spoke volumes about the future American plans for the region and the mindset behind the February 2020 agreement that the previous administration inked with Taliban, regarding a complete exit from Afghanistan. Not to mention Washington's insistence on securing guarantees that the Taliban would not allow terrorist groups to operate on Afghan soil.

Of course, all this had been on the cards since May 2014 when then president Barack Obama announced that all combat operations would stop by the end of that year and troops would fully withdraw by the

end of 2016. However, his successor Donald Trump temporarily halted the process before later developing consensus with the Taliban; leading first to the September 2019 understanding and then the February 2020 final agreement, according to which the pullout was to be completed by May 2021.

However, the Biden administration's initial decision to complete the process by the upcoming 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks came within a changed regional and international power equation.

A total of 130,000 US and NATO troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 2014 while the remaining 9,600 servicemen had ceased combat operations. Ever since, the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) have only been receiving air support from the NATO Resolute Support Mission (RSM) for counterinsurgency operations. Major

combat operations were the ANDSF's sole responsibility and it largely remained successful on that front. Neither the Afghan or regional media, nor civil society have ever doubted Washington's intentions behind the move, particularly when it kept repeating that this did not mean it was turning away from Afghanistan. After all, how long could the US continue with this cumbersome exercise. The twenty-year war has cost a staggering \$2.26 trillion 240,000 lives, including some 2,300 American soldiers. By all standards, Afghan security forces — who had received advanced training from the world's most professional military consultants for two long decades and possessed all modern weapons at their disposal — were supposed to stand on their own feet and repel the insurgents' threat. Hopefully they are doing that well up to their capacity. What the US did not do was ensure complete cessation of hostilities

and resumption of a reliable peace process in Afghanistan before resuming the deferred troop withdrawal. Instead, under the provisions of the unilateral peace deal with the Taliban — the latter were duty bound to begin negotiations with Kabul the follow month. However, this did not happen until September 2020. And even then, this was after the Afghan government released 5,000 Taliban prisoners. The second round of Kabul-Taliban talks was held in January this year while the third one on May 14, during which both sides pledged to speed up the peace process.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, in an article in Foreign Affairs magazine, published back in March, spelled out his government's peace plan. At the heart of this were the following conditions: ceasefire, formation or interim administration, holding of fresh elections under the Afghan constitution, and the offer to step down in case of a peace deal plan.

Yet the Taliban, have always been clear that their vision for Afghanistan includes the enforcement of the Islamic system. Their spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, repeated this as recently as last month, in an interview with Foreign Policy Magazine.

As for the role of regional countries, the so-called Extended Troika — comprising the US, Russia, China and Pakistan — has continued its efforts for the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. In its April 30 meeting in Doha, the group "expected the Taliban to fulfil its counter-terrorism commitment" and "prevent terrorist groups and individuals from using the Afghan soil to threaten the security of any other country".

This whole scenario reminds of the 2001 US-NATO intervention when critics described it as the beginning of a Great Game: a hypothesis, which, otherwise, never saw the day of light as far as the Caspian gas and oil reserves are concerned.

MoF: Average Daily Customs Revenue Increases to Over \$4M

The Ministry of Finance says that there is still a corrupt network involving customs employees across the country. The average daily revenue being collected by Afghan customs offices has increased since the start of the fiscal year 1400, according to figures provided by the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Finance says 35 billion Afghanis (over \$448M) have been collected in customs offices since the start of the fiscal year (Dec 21), which shows an increase in customs revenue compared to the first six months of the previous fiscal year (1399).

Acting Minister of Finance Khaled Payenda said the average daily income from customs offices is up to 330 million Afghanis (4 million and 230 thousand dollars), but three months ago, the average daily income was 180 million Afghanis (2 million and 307 thousand

dollars).

The daily income of one of the customs offices in the country has increased by ten times, said Payenda at an event that was held on Monday inside the ministry. "A province was not collecting 2 million to 3 million Afghanis a day, then on one day it collected 96 million Afghanis, and now that province collects 50 million Afghanis per day," he said.

The Ministry of Finance says that there is still a corrupt network involving customs employees across the country.

"Our colleagues say that Redbull--energy drinks--and some other drinks are not included in our system and so these items ... they are imported under the name of other things," said Khaled Payenda, acting minister of finance, who added that "the problem is that we do not know who the merchants are, because only their brokers are coming



to us."

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Chambers Federation asserts that the customs policies have many problems that enable corruption around the country.

"If the customs tax calculations are done in a different way in different provinces, or at different border areas or customs clearance centers, this will lead to corruption and a lack of

coordination between the private sector and industries," said Mohammad Ismail Ghazanfar, chairman of the Afghanistan Chambers Federation.

Previously the acting minister of finance in a session of the Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of Parliament, said that up to \$8 million a day was being embezzled from customs offices in the country

CENTCOM...

foreign military in the country after all international forces leave. "The presence of foreign forces under whatever name or by whichever country in our homeland is unacceptable for us," the insurgent group said.

The Taliban insisted that security of airports, foreign embassies and diplomatic offices is the responsibility of Afghans, saying that "no one should hold out hope of keeping military or security presence" in Afghanistan. "If anyone does make such a mistake, the Afghan people and the Taliban shall view them as occupiers and shall take a stance against them as they have taken against invaders throughout history," the statement said.

Stoltenberg said the security of the Kabul airport and other "critical" infrastructure would be discussed at Monday's NATO summit in Brussels. "Because this is important not only for NATO but ... for the whole international community, for a diplomatic presence of all countries, and of course, also for development aid and different aid organizations. So, NATO allies are addressing these issues as we speak," he said.

Karzai...

Media and Information Center, said that Afghanistan will not achieve peace as long as the Taliban enjoy support in Pakistan.

"All terrorist groups, including the Taliban, are being supported in Pakistan. As long as there is support for terrorist groups in Pakistan, it is impossible to reach lasting peace," Meenapal said. "That is why relations between Taliban and Pakistan should be defined and it should end so that the region achieves stability and Afghanistan achieves lasting peace."

Pakistan, which helped facilitate US-Taliban negotiations in Doha that resulted in troop withdrawal deal, wields considerable influence with the Taliban. Tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan have increased recently as Pakistan officials have said that they stopped with contacts with Afghan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib over his remarks against Pakistan.

Legal...

"A person facing allegations--whether a member of the national assembly or an ordinary man--does not have legal immunity," said legal expert Wahidullah Farzaee.

This comes a week after Mir Rahman Rahmani, the speaker of Afghanistan's Parliament, during a parliamentary session said that there are allegations of bullying, kidnapping and corruption against some MPs, and stated that they have not yet appeared before the country's legal and judicial institutions to respond to the allegations.

Reports said there are dozens of criminal and corruption cases involving members of Afghanistan's Parliament and these members have not appeared in court.

"The Wolesi Jirga did not allow a legal and judicial investigation to be launched against those MPs who are accused of land grabbing, murder, and the kidnapping of debtors who owe for

construction projects," said MP Ramazan Bashardost.

"Dozens of letters sent by the legal and judicial institutions indicate that these people are accused of bullying and of being involved in kidnapping," said Rahmani.

On Monday, Parliament speaker Rahmani said there are serious charges of bullying, kidnapping, keeping illegal armed men and money laundering against MP Shahpor Hassanzoi, and Hassanzoi has not appeared before the court to respond. Hassanzoi rejected the allegations.

"If you really represent this Wolesi Jirga, then show me the second and third letters," said Hassanzoi.

"A lawmaker is the servant of the public, not a boss who makes a show of his power; anyone who acts against the law must be referred to the legal and judicial institutions," said MP Ziauddin Akazi.

Ramani said another letter with allegations against MP

Zia Yaftali was also sent to the Parliament from the legal and judicial bodies.

Meanwhile, the Office of the Attorney General of Afghanistan has said that it has launched an investigation into the reports of illegal activities involving some members of the Parliament.

Sources familiar with the process in the Afghan national assembly have said that there are several legal cases against the MPs in the legal organizations. A source said that the legal and judicial bodies are working on the case involving MP Zia Yaftali. The case against MP Hassanzoi, however, was being investigated by the criminal department of the Ministry of Interior.

"Cases that involve members of the national assembly and are sent to the Attorney General for investigation--the AGO has processed them in light of the law," said Jamshid Rasuli, a spokesman to AGO.

Families...

who worked for Afghan Film and was currently working on a movie.

Yesterday, Tayeba had a meeting with the Ministry of Information & Culture. She was killed in the first of two explosions after leaving the meeting. She died

outside the Ali Jinnah Hospital in an IED explosion.

Tayeba had also been doing a master's degree at Kabul University. She had no father and was the breadwinner of her family.

At least seven civilians were killed and six others wounded in two separate explosions on

Saturday afternoon in Dasht-e-Barchi in PD13 and in PD6 near the Ali Jinnah Hospital.

In both instances IEDs were detonated against vehicles, according to police.

The Ministry of Interior reported that all the victims were civilians. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

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NATO...

not be routed from outlying areas, but neither could its fighters seize and hold major cities.

Troop surges made little difference, and it soon became clear that NATO's military training effort was its exit strategy. Only by creating a big army capable of standing on its own feet could the organization wind up its operations.

But the Afghan army was plagued by corruption, desertion and low morale. Experts say it still is, and this

remains a major concern as NATO insists on funding the nation's security forces after it's gone.

Donald Trump's unilateral decision to leave by 1 May stunned US allies. It highlighted NATO's weakness: European members and Canada simply cannot sustain major operations without logistical support from their biggest partner.

Biden's decision to pull US troops out by the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington

changed little, although he did consult allies this time.

James Dobbins, a former Afghan envoy who now works for the RAND Corporation think tank, predicts the exit will mean the loss of government legitimacy.

"The U.S. departure will be seen as a victory for the Taliban and a defeat for the United States," he said in an opinion piece. "The result will be a blow to American credibility, the weakening of deterrence and the value of American reassurance elsewhere."

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Several Dead in China Gas Line Explosion

At least 12 people were killed and over 100 injured in the blast in a residential neighborhood in the Hubei province city of Shiyan.

At least 12 people have been killed and more than 100 others injured after a gas line explosion ripped through a residential compound in central China's Hubei province, local officials said.

Rescue efforts were continuing, according to a statement from the disaster management bureau in the city of Shiyan on Sunday.

Videos shot by witnesses and verified by Beijing News show several buildings

reduced to rubble and rescue workers carrying shocked survivors on stretchers. The explosion took place at about 2230 GMT and an investigation was underway to determine the cause of the blast, the statement said.

Industrial accidents are common in China due to weak safety standards and corruption among officials tasked with enforcing them.

The blast comes a day after eight people were killed and three others injured when toxic methyl formate leaked from a chemical handling facility in the southwestern city of Guiyang.



A look at the world

Saudi Arabia Bars Foreign Pilgrims from Hajj Due to COVID

No foreign pilgrims will be allowed to perform the Hajj once again this year after Saudi Arabia restricted the annual pilgrimage to citizens and residents, and set a maximum of 60,000 pilgrims in response to the coronavirus pandemic. "Those wishing to perform the hajj must be free of chronic diseases and be vaccinated"



and between the ages of 18 and 65, the ministry said in a statement on Saturday. "In light of what the whole world is witnessing with the coronavirus pandemic ... and the emergence of new variants, the relevant authorities have continued to monitor the global health situation," the statement added.

Last year, the kingdom reduced the number of pilgrims to about 1,000 Saudi citizens and residents to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, after barring Muslims abroad from the rite for the first time in modern times.

Two-thirds were residents from among the 160 different nationalities that would have normally been represented at the Hajj. One-third were Saudi security personnel and medical staff. This year the pilgrimage is expected to start in mid-July.

Hajj, a once-in-a-lifetime duty for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it, is a major source of income for the Saudi government.

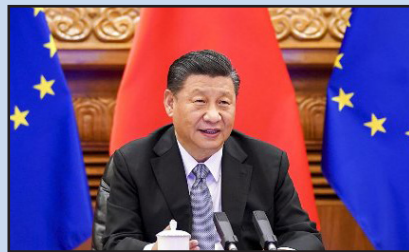
Before the pandemic enforced social distancing globally, some 2.5 million pilgrims used to visit the holiest sites of Islam in Mecca and Medina for the week-long Hajj, and the lesser, year-round Umrah pilgrimage, which altogether earned the kingdom about \$12bn a year, according to official data.

The congregation of millions of pilgrims from around the world could be a major cause of coronavirus transmission.

The limit on Umrah pilgrims is 20,000 a day, with a total of 60,000 worshippers allowed to perform daily prayers at the mosque.

The Umrah usually attracts millions of Muslims from across the globe each year. Authorities said the Umrah would be allowed to return to full capacity once the threat of the pandemic has abated.

China Tells G7 Leaders 'Small' Groups Don't Rule the World on Final Day of Summit



China on Sunday pointedly cautioned Group of Seven leaders that the days when "small" groups of countries decided the fate of the world was long gone, hitting back at the world's richest democracies which have sought a unified position over Beijing.

"The days when global decisions were dictated by a small group of countries are long gone," a spokesman for the Chinese embassy in London said.

"We always believe that countries, big or small, strong or weak, poor or rich, are equals, and that world affairs should be handled through consultation by all countries."

The re-emergence of China as a leading global power is considered to be one of the most significant geopolitical events of recent times, alongside the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union that ended the Cold War. The G7, whose leaders are meeting in southwestern England, has been searching for a coherent response to the growing assertiveness of President Xi Jinping after China's spectacular economic and military rise over the past 40 years.

Leaders of the group - the United States, Canada, Britain, Germany, Italy, France and Japan - want to use their gathering in the English seaside resort of Carbis Bay to show the world that the richest democracies can offer an alternative to China's growing clout.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau led a Group of Seven discussion of China on Saturday and called on leaders to come up with a unified approach to the challenges posed by the People's Republic, a source said.

The G7 are planning to offer developing nations an infrastructure scheme that could rival Xi's multi-trillion-dollar Belt and Road initiative.

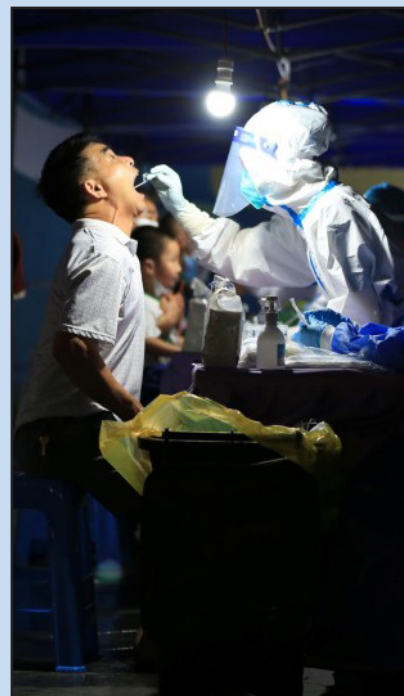
Beijing has repeatedly hit back against what it perceives as attempts by Western powers to contain China, and says many major powers are still gripped by an outdated imperial mindset after years of humiliating China.

China Reports 34 New Coronavirus Cases

China also reported 18 new asymptomatic infections, versus 27 a day earlier.

Mainland China reported 34 new COVID-19 cases on June 12, down from 35 cases a day earlier, the country's national health authority said on Sunday.

Of the new cases, six were local transmissions, versus eight the previous day, the National Health Commission said. All of the local cases



were in southern Guangdong province. China also reported 18 new asymptomatic infections, versus 27 a day earlier. China does not classify symptomless infections as confirmed cases.

The eastern Chinese city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province has completed a round of mass COVID-19 testing after it reported imported cases, state media People's Daily said.

All of the nearly 240,000 people in the city's high-risk areas have tested negative for the virus, the paper added.

The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in mainland China now stands at 91,428, while the death toll remains unchanged at 4,636.



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