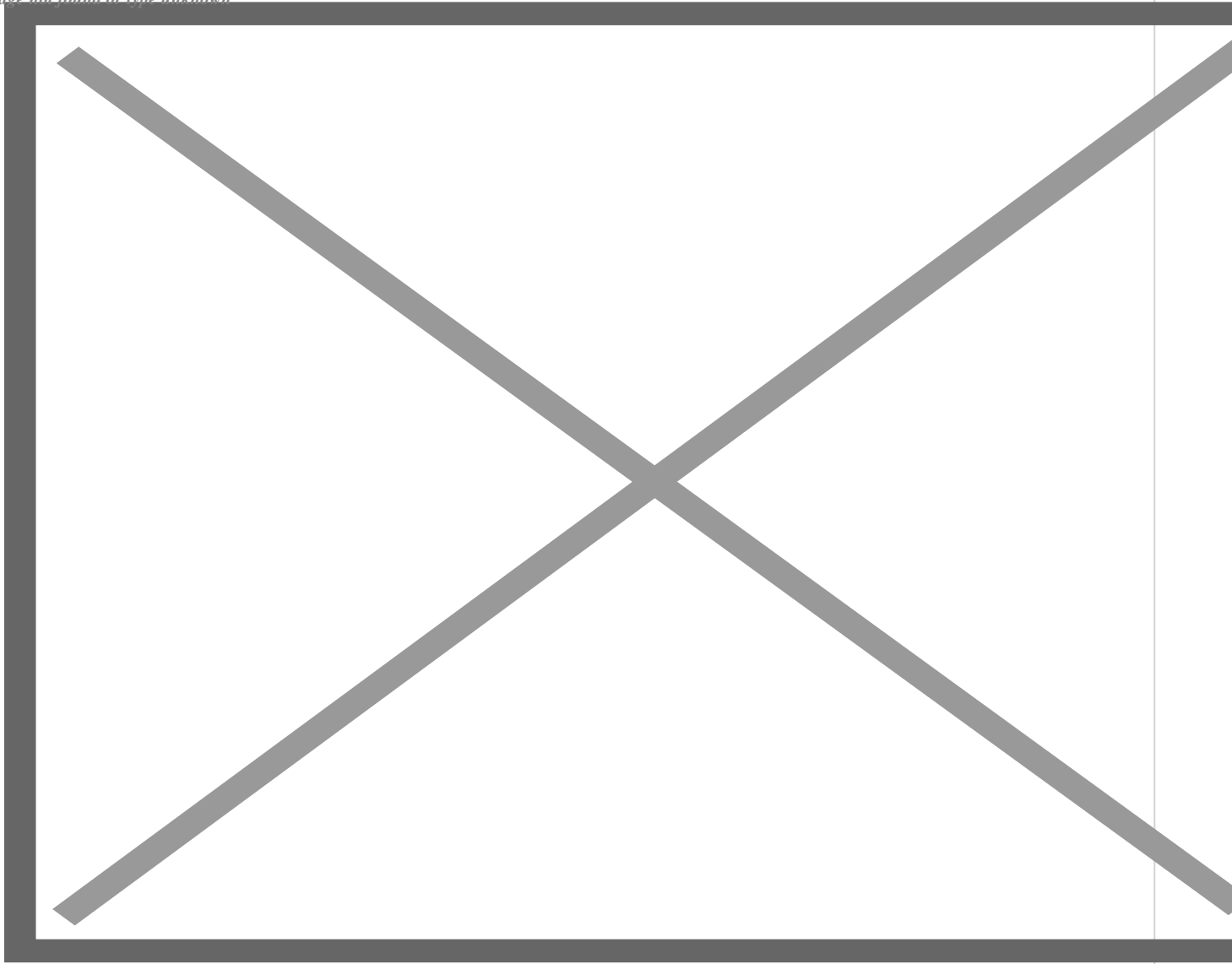


UK rules out returning troops to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan

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The UK last month withdrew most of its 750 soldiers remaining in Afghanistan as part of a US-led pullback of foreign forces

London, August 17 (RHC)-- British and NATO forces will not return to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban, the United Kingdom's defence secretary said, after the group took control of Kabul following a blistering nationwide offensive.

Ben Wallace told Sky News on Monday that it was "not on the cards that we're going to go back" as reports of bloodshed in the Afghan capital fuelled concerns of a looming humanitarian crisis. "I acknowledge that the Taliban are in control of the country," Wallace said.

The group's rapid takeover was a "failure of the international community", Wallace later told the BBC, describing the 20-year-long intervention led by the United States as a job only half-done. "All of us know that Afghanistan is not finished. It's an unfinished problem for the world and the world needs to help it," he said.

Asked how he would feel if he saw the Taliban flag flying over the former British embassy building in Kabul, British defense secretary Wallace said: "It's not the embassy any more, we have left that location ... so it's now just a building."

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