

(1) Dropping ...

Afghans, he remarked. Ghani said the people of Afghanistan had always fought against covert and overt enemies, laying down their lives for the greater glory of the country. Bringing improvement to government institutions, particularly the security sector, was shared responsibility, he said.

"We should remember that our current sacrifices are part of the huge price being paid for the independent of the country. Efforts have been made over the past few decades to suppress our nation."

Ghani hailed the struggle of security forces jihad against terrorism, praising the nation for extending all-out support to their defenders. He hoped the Afghans would emerge victorious in the ongoing war because every Afghan aspired for a peaceful live and a bright future.

"We don't want the destruction of others; our forces are not intruders. Our nation has no such designs on others. We neither consider any country our strategic depth nor have links with any terrorist group. Bloodshed is not our way of life as we desire peace and the wellbeing for our neighbours."

Ghani promised the next presidential election would be held on schedule and the Wolesi Jirga polls this year. He said the election commission was an independent body and the government was ready to assist it. (Pajhwok)

(2) Hekmatyar ...

Hezb-i-Islami, in September. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani welcomed Hekmatyar's public return, saying the former strongman would cooperate with the government.

"Hezb-i-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's return will have remarkable effects on peace, stability, prosperity and development in all aspects," Ghani's office said in a statement.

The deal has been criticised by some Afghans and human rights groups for the pardon it granted to Hekmatyar and many of his fighters.

Hekmatyar's return "will compound the culture of impunity", Human Rights Watch researcher Patricia Gossman said of the deal, calling it an "affront" to victims of abuses.

A controversial figure from the insurgency against the Soviets in the 1980s and the civil wars of the 1990s, Hekmatyar is accused of ordering his fighters to bombard Kabul, leading to many casualties, besides other abuses.

His faction of Hezb-i-Islami has played a relatively small role in the current conflict, in which the Taliban have a leading role in battling the Western-backed government in Kabul.

In hiding for nearly a decade and a half, Hekmatyar had been designated a "global terrorist" by the United States, which has been leading an international military mission in Afghanistan for the past 15 years.

American and other Western leaders praised the deal with him, however, hoping it could help lead to wider peace in Afghanistan. (Reuters)

(3) Corruption ...

humanitarian aid.

In a new report, Collective Resolution to Enhance Accountability and Transparency in Emergencies: Afghanistan, developed in partnership with Humanitarian Outcomes, the global anti-corruption organization found that strengthening the role of local governance structures to promote transparency and investing in communication with affected communities would strengthen the response of humanitarian aid providers and the integrity of the aid they deliver.

Through in-depth interviews with affected communities and stakeholders, the study found that corruption risks exist in a number of stages within the program cycle of humanitarian

aid in Afghanistan.

In a statement issued by the organization, it said the most notable included during the negotiation of conditions for access and area selection for programming; inappropriate interference in the selection of beneficiaries; risks of nepotism and ethnic bias in staff hiring; a lack of means to reliably hold corrupt staff and organizations accountable; and a lack of transparent and effective communication and feedback mechanisms with aid recipients.

The statement indicated that many people interviewed were unaware of the amount and timing of aid entitlements and some had tried to complain about aid quality or corruption issues to no effect.

"Corrupt practices were reported both within local government agencies at the provincial and sub-provincial levels, as well as within the contracting chain with national and international aid organizations, the statement read.

Corruption is a major problem in Afghanistan, threatening people's ability to trust in government, undermining security and pulling apart the fabric of society, Transparency International said.

The organizations said there is a significant need to create incentives to mitigate corruption in the humanitarian arena and to increase the openness and transparency generally on the corruption experience and challenges faced by humanitarian organizations in Afghanistan.

Transparency International made the following recommendations:

Humanitarian aid agencies should:

- Be open, principled and supportive in addressing corruption pressure and threats and prioritise internal and external risk mapping.
- Establish joint mechanisms to engage and effectively capture the perspectives of those receiving assistance.
- Support and engage in inter-agency initiatives and invest in collective approaches to mitigation.
- Develop more rigorous, and possible collaborative, approaches to recruitment, partnerships and contracts, and tendering at local levels.

Donor agencies should:

- Take greater shared responsibility for risks and mitigation measures.
 - Increase dialogue with partners on risks, sharing experience and investing in good practice mitigation measures.
- The government of Afghanistan should:
- Promote the integrity of humanitarian assistance and the impartial delivery of assistance to insecure areas.
 - Deepen the role of local governance structures, such as tribal elder's councils, particularly where local elders have been observed as working with integrity and transparency in aid
 - distribution and are recognised as being representative of their communities. (Tolonews)

(4) Lack of Skilled ...

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) has said it is committed to establishing new vocational centers in the country to meet the needs of the local market.

According to ACCI, for now there is no option but to hire foreign workers to fill the gap. ACCI says that if government takes steps to formulate comprehensive programs to provide training to locals, Afghans will be eligible for more jobs.

"Government must establish training centers to skill workers, because we are facing problems in this field; we are compelled to hire 80 percent of workers from abroad," said ACCI deputy chief Khan Jan Alokozai.

According to (MoLSAMD), currently 45 vocational training schools are providing education to locals in different

parts of the country.

"We are trying to recruit more youths by building more vocational training centers," said MoLSAMD spokesman Abdul Fatah Ahmadzai.

The Afghan-Korea Vocational Training Center is one key institution which provides training to around 1,000 Afghan citizens in different fields such as auto repairs, general maintenance, electrical engineering, plumbing, construction, tailoring and computer technology. Trainers at the Afghan-Korea center have called on government to boost their capacity so that more students can get benefit from the center.

"If such centers are built, this will be helpful for youths, alongside their studies, they can learn a skill," said one trainer at the center, Sayed Nusrat.

"We are facing problems with stationary, we buy the books ourselves; these were provided to students in the past, but now we are not getting this," said another trainer Basira.

"Government must establish more vocational training centers for youths," said another trainer, Ahmad Rustam.

MoLSAMD said that 46 more vocational training centers will be established in the near future. (Tolonews)

(5) We should...

to him. He says that the world is now in a state that cannot provide its self-interests unless to share cooperation. Despite this fact, it is worth mentioning that foreign aids will continue as long as foreigners' interests are ensured or their national interests are not jeopardized. He says that fundamentalism, radicalism, despotism, inclusivism will lead to defeat and they are one of the main reasons behind

national's revolution and fall of Hezb-e-Democratic Khalq. He added that the victory in Jihad is one of historical glories of Afghan nation which resulted in great changes not only in Afghanistan but also in international level.

According to second vice president, those who compare the incidents of 7 and 8 of Saur, they will see both the issues dark which will be a great unkindness to the people who sacrificed for 14 years and were martyred, amputated or displaced. It is a fact that the 8 of Saur was ensued by ugly incidents which should not have happened. Nonetheless, the harms must not outweigh the glories of 14 preceding years. He believes that lack of and organized agenda for government making was the first reason behind Mujahedeen' failure and the jihadi parties failed to put a strong cornerstone for establishing a government. He emphasizes that lack of an organized and unanimous agenda for establishing a political system led to chaos and the situation went out of control. A Bonn-like conference should have been implemented before the 8 of Saur, he suggests.

Resorting to war rather than negotiation in post-Jihad state was the main reason behind the failure, Danish says adding that with the start of conflict and unrest in Kabul, war was replaced by negotiation and there was no agreement even for a ceasefire and truce. This destroyed all the boundaries and stoked factional, tribal, linguistic and religious conflicts, which are the most significant lesson to be learnt.

Mr. Danish states that discord will pave the ground for next enemy and there were many reasons and factors for the civil unrests among factions but it, certainly, smoothed the path for the emergence of the Taliban that is the common enemy. According to him, since the international community forgot Afghanistan, the country suffered significant blow. Following the victory of Mujahedeen, the western world, which was the main supporter of Afghanistan during jihad, kept distance from Afghanistan and left it to a number of interferer neighbors.

Forgetting Afghanistan by the west, mainly the US, led to a fire the smoke of which blinded all and put a strong harm on international community. This is an eye-opener that we all, including the international commu-

nities and Afghanistan's allies, should learn from.

The greatest lesson, according to Danish, is that we should protect our today with the past experience. That is to say, the recent government, which is ruling for a decade and half, is the heir of jihad and Mujahedeen and the product of Afghans' resistance within 24 years (from 1357 to 1380). The jihadi groups and their allies, which assembled in Bonn, agreed upon an agenda and after two years, the people's representatives, including the leaders and jihadi figures, founded a new political administration - the current one - in the Loya Jirga (the Grand National Assembly) for approving the Constitution which had highly valuable outcomes in several arenas within a decade and half.

Finally, he expressed happiness over the fact that the National Unity Government (NUG) has constantly called for making peace which had tangible outcomes in some cases such as the agreement with Hezb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He welcomed him for joining the peace process and choosing a peaceful life beside the Afghan nation and state. On the other hand, he regretted over the existence of warring parties which responded the state's peace offering with suicide bombings and inflicting casualties upon Afghan soldiers and civilians in barbaric way. He said that it was the responsibility of all people, political parties, civil institutions and particularly jihadi leaders to support Afghanistan' security forces regardless of any differences.

(6) Taliban can't ...

not govern the people through coercion, No one is going to accept it," he observed.

Great international powers that wanted to subjugate the Afghans eventually disintegrated, he said, stressing: "All of us must join hands for peace -- a longstanding dream of our martyrs and compatriots." (Pajhwok)

(7) Herat can ...

trade in the region. The growing urbanization of Herat city is pride for Herat and Afghanistan."

Governor Mohammad Asif Rahimi said the conference would focus on how to protect heritage sites though legal and possible ways.

He thanked international organisations and countries for cooperation with the Afghan government in rehabilitation of historic sites. The conference would continue until evening and a joint statement would be issued at the end. (Pajhwok)

(8) Unity Govt. ...

they chanted, insisting the rulers had no legitimacy.

Amid slogans in his support from the crowd, Massoud gave the mujahidin the credit for steering the country out of anarchy and warlordism. The holy warriors' agenda was social justice and development of the whole country and legal transfer of power, he added. Abdul Latif Pidram also told the audience the incumbent government was illegal. He stressed the country should be ruled by real representatives of the people. (Pajhwok)

(9) Taliban ...

and the elimination of their equipment.

"These operations will involve conventional attacks, guerrilla warfare, complex martyrdom attacks, insider attacks, and use of IEDs to achieve their objectives."

The group said Operation Mansouri will be launched to coincide with 8 Saur 1396 (Friday April 28, 2017) across all provinces at 5am local time. They warned civilians to stay away from military bases and personnel. (Tolonews)

(10) Process of ...

Hakimi recently saying the

one belt, one road (OBOR) programme would help boost transportation and energy infrastructure.

"Despite the grand plans, implementing the transport connectivity programme won't be easy owing to the dangerous security situation and differences between the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan," the report said. (Pajhwok)

(11) Pakistan Sends...

own reservations by Afghan authorities to take on the TTP and affiliates, which have been responsible for some of the deadly terrorist attacks in the country. (IRNA)

(12) Top Islamic ...

fortified IS complex. "Within minutes of the insertion, the combined force came under intense fire from multiple directions," Davis said. "It was during these initial moments of the raid that the two Rangers were mortally wounded."

As the fighting raged on, the U.S. and Afghan forces called in air support, getting help from drones, AC-130 gunships, Apache attack helicopters and F-16 fighter jets.

It was not until 3 a.m. local time that U.S. and Afghan forces were extracted from the area.

A statement by U.S. Forces-Afghanistan praised the performance of the U.S. and Afghan forces as "exemplary," adding initial indications were that they had been able to avoid civilian casualties despite the presence of women and children in the IS cave complex.

Earlier Friday, U.S. defense officials identified the Army Rangers killed during the operation as Sergeant Joshua Rodgers and Sergeant Cameron Thomas.

In a statement, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the U.S. owed both soldiers an "irredeemable debt" for their bravery and sacrifice.

But despite the apparent success of U.S. and Afghan forces in killing the leader of IS in Afghanistan, some questions remain.

The location of the IS headquarters complex is just a couple of kilometers away from an extensive IS tunnel-and-cave complex targeted just two weeks ago with the largest non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal, a GBU-43 Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb. (VoA)

(13) Zebak ...

Taliban overran the town so easily." The security personnel put up little resistance, with local police and uprising members failing to defend their areas. Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed the fighters had captured a military base 21 security checkpoints in the district. More than 20 policemen were killed, he said. (Pajhwok)

(14) US Marines ...

instability. The deployment came one day after the Taliban militant group announced the start of its "spring offensive," a heightened campaign of bombings, ambush attacks, and other raids that begin as weather conditions improve.

The new deployment is the latest sign of how the NATO military alliance is increasingly being drawn back into fighting in Afghanistan.

The Marines will largely operate from a sprawling installation known during earlier Marine operations as Camp Leatherneck, but will be based in other locations and could engage in combat.

The US has around 8,400 troops in the country with about another 5,000 from NATO allies. The Pentagon said Wednesday that two US troops were killed in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province during a military operation against the ISIL terrorist group.

In total, 2,217 American soldiers have died in the country since the invasion in 2001

and another 20,000 have been wounded, according to the Pentagon.

On Monday, US Defense Secretary James Mattis visited Afghanistan as President Donald Trump's administration looks to craft a new policy in the country.

The change of policy was put on display earlier this month, when Gen. Nicholson ordered a Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb - also known as Mother of All Bombs - to be dropped on a purported Daesh target in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

Afghanistan is still suffering from insecurity and violence years after the United States and its allies invaded the country as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The 2001 military invasion removed the Taliban from power, but their militancy continues to this day. (FNA)

(15) MoD Backtracks...

guilty of negligence. "We hope that in addition to the military corps commander, the former officials of the defense ministry also should be investigated to assure people that government is taking care of their security," MP Sadiqi Zada Nilli said.

Government officials however said they will thoroughly investigate the attack on the military corps and will punish those who failed to carry out their duties as required.

"President (Ashraf) Ghani said during a visit to the military corps that the incident should be investigated thoroughly, and it will be investigated," said Shah Hussain Murtazawi, a spokesman for the president.

This attack came just weeks after another deadly attack on a military installation - the Sardar Mohammad Daud Military Hospital in Kabul. (Tolonews)

(16) UN Chief Warns the DPRK could also result in increased arms competition and tensions, further impeding the ability of the international community to maintain unity and achieve a peaceful solution," Guterres said. (Xinhua)

(17) ASEAN Leaders...

ASEAN's resolve to promote peace, stability, security and prosperity in the region.

"Geopolitical and strategic developments around the globe also pose a challenge to our shared interests and goals, if not the security of our environment," he said.

He also stressed the need to aim for a drug-free ASEAN.

"The scourge of illegal drugs threatens our gains in community-building," he said.

Equally important, he said, is the need for ASEAN not to waver efforts to eliminate security threats to regional growth and development. (Xinhua)

(18) EU Unity ...

as EU 27. It is only then that we will be able to conclude the negotiations, which means that our unity is also in the UK's interest," he said.

Tusk said the EU wanted solid guarantees for all citizens and their families who will be affected by Brexit in Britain and in the EU -- a total of around five million people. (Reuters)

(19) EU to Meet ...

accused thousands of people accused of being involved with the attempted coup with far too heavy a hand.

Erdogan has also said he wants to re-establish the death penalty, seen as a move that would scuttle any hopes of reinvigorating the EU membership talks. The 27 European Union leaders negotiating the exit of Britain from the bloc acknowledged Saturday that Northern Ireland could join the bloc in the future if its people vote to unite with Ireland, an EU member state. (AP)

(20) EU Leaders ...

up to the same obligations as a member, cannot have the same rights and enjoy the same benefits as a member." (Xinhua)