

**(1) Peace Deal...**

by Mr. [Zalmay] Khalilzad and the US will result in these issues."

Mr. Sediqqi said that the time for signing the US-Taliban peace deal is not clear yet.

According to him, a joint statement will be issued between Afghanistan and the US.

"The main goal of the [joint] statement [between the US and the Afghan government] is that the United States and the western countries reaffirm their commitments to the people of Afghanistan against the rumors which say the agreement or any agreement which the US signs with the Taliban will result in departure from Afghanistan," Mr. Sediqqi said. "They [the international community] want to clarify that it is not like this. The US commitment with Afghanistan is long term and permanent and it is based on the conditions in the country so that we achieve peace and combat the threats independently."

This comes as the White House signaled progress Friday in preparations for a peace deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan, saying that discussions between President Donald Trump and top advisors went "very well".

Trump met at his Bedminster, New Jersey golf course with national security advisors including Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford, the White House said.

Also present were national security point man John Bolton and Mr. Khalilzad.

"Discussions centered around our ongoing negotiations and eventual peace and reconciliation agreement with the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan. The meeting went very well, and negotiations are proceeding," deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley said in a statement. Mr. Trump said in a tweet that he had a "very good" meeting on Afghanistan.

"Many on the opposite side of this 19-year war, and us, are looking to make a deal -- if possible," he added.

Reports indicate that as part of a possible peace deal between the US and the Taliban, the US forces number will be reduced to 8,000 to 9,000 from the current 15,000.

"In continued close cooperation with the government of Afghanistan, we remain committed to achieving a comprehensive peace agreement," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

The US and the Taliban concluded their eighth round of talks on Doha on August 12 which were focused on four key issues: US forces withdrawal, counterterrorism assurances, a ceasefire and intra-Afghan negotiations. (Tolo news)

**(2) Trump Hails ...**

end its involvement in Afghanistan, where it has spent more than \$1 trillion and Trump has said since the start of his presidency that he wants troops out.

In return, the Taliban would commit to various security guarantees, including that the Islamist hardliners who long harbored al-Qaida would not allow Afghanistan to become a jihadi safe haven.

A U.S.-Taliban agreement would not in itself bring Afghanistan's war to an end, as the insurgents would still need to make a deal with the U.S.-backed Kabul government.

"In continued close cooperation with the government of Afghanistan, we remain committed to achieving a comprehensive peace agreement," Pompeo said in a statement.

This would include "a reduction in violence and a cease-fire, ensuring that Afghan soil is never again used to threaten the United States or her allies, and bringing Afghans together to work towards peace."

Even as the United States and Taliban claim progress in talks, little has changed for Afghans on the ground. A U.N. tally found last year was the deadliest on record, with at least 3,804 civilian deaths caused by the war — including 927 children.

And according to the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 217,000 people had to flee their homes because of fighting during the first seven months of 2019, prompting a huge need for humanitarian aid across the war-torn nation. (AFP)

**(3) Iranian Officials ...**

Transmission Company (Tavanir) is accompanying the deputy minister on this trip.

A source from the Ministry of Energy and Water confirmed the Iranian delegation's visit to Kabul and said they will stay here for two days.

The source said that the delegation will discuss technical matters around cooperation between the two countries in electricity and water sectors.

The delegation will also hold with officials from Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, the country's power distributor company, the source said.

The source added that the visit is a follow up of the Iranian energy minister earlier this month. (Tolo news)

**(4) New Dams ...**

water network to Kandahar city and production of 24 megawatts of electricity.

He said the dam's walls would be heightened by 12 meters and it would help store three times more water compared to the past.

Mahbobi said the dam had the capacity to store 500 million cubic meters water when it was first built around 70 years ago but now it could store only 290 million cubic meters water due to silting.

The dam would store around 950 million cubic meters water after raising its walls and the water would be accessible for farmers in all areas of the province.

He said the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had promised to initialize the project which would cost 470 million US dollars.

Mahbobi said four other dams and check dams would be also built in Kandahar.

He said the central government wanted to build four more dams in Kandahar city and in Arghistan district. Locations for some small check dams are being specified and their survey and design would start in future, he said.

Construction of a dam in the northern part of Kandahar city would help prevent floods and increase underground water level.

He said construction of three water dams in Arghistan was also important because the move would improve agriculture and people's economy in the district. (Pajhwok)

**(5) Brother of...**

Abdul Razzaq Cheema, told reporters the blast wounded more than 24 worshippers. The improvised explosive device, he said, was planted under the chair of the prayer leader and a timed device was used to trigger the explosion.

The police officer, however, shared no further details about identities of the victims. Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, was not immediately available to comment on the reported death of the brother of

Hibatullah, who himself also used to run an Islamic seminary, locally known as madrassa, in Kuchlak before becoming the chief of the insurgent group in 2016.

Hibatullah's predecessor, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, was also killed in Baluchistan in 2016 in an American drone attack while he was returning from neighboring Iran and traveling through the Pakistani province. The United States has long blamed Pakistan for not preventing insurgents from using its soil to plot attacks in Afghanistan.

Pakistani officials maintain insurgents take shelter in areas hosting camps for millions of Afghan refugees in the country.

The relationship between Washington and Islamabad, however, has improved in recent months mainly because Pakistan is credited for arranging ongoing U.S.-Taliban peace negotiations aimed at ending the 18-year-old Afghan war. (VoA)

**(6) Security Bosses ...**

many operations in the area and the people have seen an increase in security throughout the province.

Although security in Zurmat district and Paktia province has improved, the Taliban controlled Zurmat for many years and some local support for the militant group remains.

"The insurgents hide in the villages and when they are killed, their leaders say they were civilians," said Shuja. The trade routes and border to Pakistan make Paktiya a place of interest for Taliban fighters.

Because they are not from the area and do not have their families, they rely on the generosity of villagers or pure brute force.

Paktiya province is strategic for the military and important to the government. It shares a border with Pakistan, including the North Waziristan area. Jagged, barren mountains stretch across Paktiya province and dip into a lush valley leading across the border to Pakistan.

"We are working hard every day to protect the people and they see our work. What does the Taliban do? They invade homes, start firefights in villages and tax the people," Shuja added. (Pajhwok)

**(7) Kabul's Shah...**

provided information about the project. He spoke about the history of the mosque, pathology, mapping, minarets and other parts of the mosque to be reconstructed.

President Ghani the presence of King Amanullah Khan's daughters at the ceremony a moment of pride. He said a number of inns in Kabul would be reconstructed and all historical mosques surveyed.

Accompanied by officials from the Ministries of Urban Development, Hajj and Information and Culture, Ghani inaugurated the reconstruction of the mosque. (Pajhwok)

**(8) National Museum ...**

a month and anyone can visit it," the head of National Museum Mohammad Fahim Rahimi.

Afghanistan's Independence Day is celebrated on August 19 every year. Although Afghanistan was never part of the British Empire, it gained its independence from Britain after the signing of the Anglo-Afghan Treaty in 1919 — a treaty that granted complete neutral relations between Afghanistan and Britain.

The exhibition, which will continue for one month will be open for the people after August 19. (Tolo news)

**(9) U.S.'s North Korea ...**

that working-level talks, which Biegun has led, would resume with North Korea in coming weeks and that the U.S. side was planning for negotiations in a couple of weeks.

Trump and Kim have met three times since last year to discuss

ways to resolve a crisis over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, but progress has been scant on Washington's aim of getting the North Korea leader to give up the weapons.

The two last met on June 30 in the demilitarized zone between the Koreas and agreed to revive working-level talks stalled since their failed second summit held in February in Vietnam. But the talks have yet to resume and North Korea has since staged repeated short-range missile tests that raised doubts about whether they would. Trump, who has been eager to show success on the North Korean issue ahead of his 2020 re-election bid, has played down the launches and noted that Kim has stuck to his pledge not to resume tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear bombs suspended since 2017. On Aug. 9, Trump said he had received a "very beautiful letter" from Kim and he said the following day he looked forward to seeing him again "in the not too distant future."

North Korea has decried the U.S.-South Korean military exercises as rehearsals for war aimed at toppling Kim's leadership and has said they go against a pledge by Trump to end them. U.S. officials say the drills are largely computer-simulated as an alternative to previous large-scale annual exercises halted to expedite denuclearization talks.

Previous rounds of talks have failed to narrow differences over U.S. demands for North Korea to give up all its nuclear weapons and Pyongyang's demands for relief from punishing economic sanctions. (Reuters)

**(10) Senior UK ...**

formed for that and I wouldn't be able to support that, no."

Asked to explain why, he said even an interim Corbyn-led government could do more damage than a disorderly exit from the world's biggest trading bloc.

Conservative opponents of a no-deal Brexit are deeply suspicious of Corbyn, whom they see as a dangerous Marxist intent on nationalising swathes of British industry and hiking state spending and taxes. (Reuters)

**(11) North Korea's...**

did not describe what Friday's weapons were or how they performed, but said that the tests were successful and strengthened the military's confidence in the reliability of the system.

North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper published photos that showed what appeared to be a missile soaring from a launcher installed on a vehicle and striking what appeared to be a coastal target. Kim is seen jubilantly raising his fist while celebrating with military officials.

"(Kim) said everyone should remember that it is the (ruling) party's core plan and unwavering determination to build a powerful force strong enough to discourage any forces from daring to provoke us and to leave any opponent defenseless against our Juche weapons of absolute power even in situations of physical clashes," KCNA said, referring to the North's national ideology of self-reliance. (Fox News)

**(12) Kashmir Is...**

its soldiers had been killed in the altercation.

The flare-up in violence along the LoC follows India's decision to revoke Kashmir's special status, sparking concerns that the decades-old dispute over the territory could escalate. India and Pakistan each have nuclear arsenals.

Earlier in the week, Indian defense minister Rajnath Singh said that

his country remains committed to its 'no first use' policy on nuclear weapons, but cautioned that "circumstances" could potentially change this position. (RT)

**(13) Japan May...**

materials at North Korean sites, government sources told the paper, citing a meeting that the US held with Japan before President Donald Trump's failed February summit with Kim Jong-un in Hanoi.

Though the cleanup robots remain in the planning stage for now, the inspection of facilities will be critical, both to map out the internal structure of the reactors and to gauge how much radiation the robots must be able to withstand.

PM Shinzo Abe has yet to meet with Kim directly, though he has expressed a desire to talk with the North Korean leader "without preconditions," particularly on the matter of Japanese citizens who were abducted in the 1970s and 1980s.

The US-South Korea military drills are a sore point for the North, which has been launching missiles for the past week in protest at the 10-day exercise, which Pyongyang sees as a simulated invasion of its territory. Pyongyang has stressed that while Kim is open to meeting with Trump, "inter-Korean contact itself will be difficult" unless Seoul pulls out of the drills. While the US and North Korea appeared to be making progress in denuclearization talks last year, the conversation was derailed in Hanoi when Washington refused to ease sanctions on Pyongyang in return for anything but total denuclearization. (RT)

**(14) 'Just Fake...**

conversations, cracking encrypted communications, and conducting surveillance.

The newspaper said that the intricate work was allegedly done by Huawei technicians in Africa, while not providing proof that the company's top executives in China had any knowledge of the alleged spying arrangement between the firm's employees and local authorities.

Talking to RT, Williamson has dismissed the report as "fake news" lacking any corroborating evidence. "We refuted that quite vociferously. Again, it just feels like it's one those stories that come up now and again, that are completely unverified. Even other companies that have been cited in terms of their involvement have made it very clear that they don't even have contracts in Uganda," he said.

The VP urged against taking such allegations at face value.

"So it looks like that this story is unfortunately just really fake news," he added.

Huawei's continuing status as a private company has proven to be in its favor, Williamson said, noting that employees that are also shareholders have "a real vested interest" in the commercial success and the quality of products and services it renders. "It's a private company owned by its employees, it's about a hundred thousand shareholders. There are extraordinary benefits of running an organization like that, because people don't necessarily just pick up their paycheck at the end of the week or at the end of the month." (RT)

**(15) Trade Turnover...**

million from Kyrgyzstan," the ministry said.

Turkey's foreign trade turnover reached \$26 billion in June 2019.

The export of the Turkish goods decreased by 14.3 percent compared to June 2018 and reached 11.8 billion in June 2019, while import decreased by 22.7 percent and reached \$14.2 billion. (Trend)