

(1) Peace Deal ...

President Ghani thanked every officer and service member of police for ensuring security and providing peaceful environment to people to celebrate the independence day nation-wide.

He reaffirmed no compromise on security forces and said peace was led and owned by the Afghan government. "Talks are unconditional while peace is conditional."

The president ordered security forces to eradicate Daesh and other terrorist networks in every part of the country and get them out of their safe havens with the support of the people.

Ghani also termed the use of technology in election as vital and stressed more attention in this regard.

He asked police to remain committed to providing security during elections the way they proved their mettle on the battle-field. (Pajhwok)

(2) Soraya to Afghans ...

peace and stability in Afghanistan, asking the people to support the government's efforts.

Amanullah Khan's tomb, built decades ago, has been repaired several times. The mausoleum is currently being rehabilitated.

The renovation of the mausoleum was supposed to be completed before Afghanistan's 100th Independence Day, but officials say it was delayed by technical issues. (Pajhwok)

(3) Norway Fully ...

hosted by Norway, the statement said.

The Norwegian envoy said his country was fully ready for hosting the intra-Afghan negotiations.

He stressed his country wanted peace and stability in Afghanistan and was ready for any kind of cooperation in this regard. (Pajhwok)

(4) Canada to Help ...

contributions that the Afghan-Canadian community makes to our country.

"I extend my best wishes to everyone celebrating Afghanistan's Independence Day, here in Canada and around the world," the premier concluded. (Pajhwok)

(5) Fighting Daesh ...

proved this and we will defend the country," Herat Police Chief Gen. Aminullah Amarkhail said.

Army officers, who attended the event, said they are fully ready to defend the country against any type of threats by militants.

"We are ready to preserve Afghanistan's sovereignty and we are ready to protect the Afghan people," said Noorullah, member of the Army's Commando Unit.

"All members of the Afghan forces are committed to defending the country's freedom and protection the nation against threats from the country's enemies," a police officer Mubarak Sadat said. (Tolo news)

(6) Girls School ...

22 classes of the school have been damaged in the incident.

"Investigation is underway. No one has been arrested so far. It has been done by those who are against education and Islam," the Shakardara district governor Shah Mahmood Ibrahimkhail said.

The residents in the area said that the district is insecure and armed group are active in the district.

Local officials said the school had received warnings two times

The Taliban in a statement rejected involvement in the incident. (Tolo news)

(7) Huawei Expects...

denies.

Huawei's chief financial officer, who is also Ren's daughter, is fighting extradition from Canada to face U.S. charges related to possible violation of trade curbs on Iran. Beijing arrested two Canadians in a possible attempt to force her release.

Ren looked relaxed and confident throughout the two-hour inter-

view at a palatial new building in neoclassical European style where Huawei entertains customers. The atmosphere was a striking contrast from a June 17 news conference at which Ren compared the company to a "badly damaged airplane" and warned U.S. sanctions would cut Huawei's projected smartphone sales by \$30 billion over the next two years.

President Donald Trump has suggested controls on Huawei might be lifted if Beijing agrees to a deal on trade and technology disputes that led to U.S. tariff hikes on Chinese imports.

Ren rejected that. He said Huawei couldn't ask for favors that might hurt the interests of China's poor majority.

"I couldn't take it if those poor people sacrificed their own interests for the benefit of Huawei," said Ren. "Maybe my daughter will suffer more. But I would rather do that instead having the poorer people in China sacrifice for Huawei's survival and development."

The May announcement of export curbs prompted warnings that sales of Huawei smartphones and other products that use U.S. chips and other technology could be devastated. The curbs also mean a loss of billions of dollars in potential annual sales for American vendors.

Even before the announcement, Huawei was working on developing its own chips, software and other technology that might reduce reliance on American vendors. The company spent \$15 billion last year on research and development, more than Apple Inc. or Microsoft Corp. Huawei reported sales in the six months through June rose 23.2% over a year earlier. Its chairman, Liang Hua, said in July that Huawei was reviewing its core products to make sure they all could be delivered to customers without American components.

"At a strategic level, the U.S. entity list is helpful to Huawei," said Ren. He said the company has responded by eliminating "marginal, unimportant businesses or products" and focusing resources on "major products."

"The whole company can focus more on our most competitive products," he said.

This month, Huawei unveiled its own smartphone operating system it said can replace the popular Android system from Alphabet Inc.'s Google. Huawei's phones still use Android but Google is blocked from supporting maps, music and other services. Earlier this year, Huawei released its own chip for next-generation smartphones and the first phone based on that chip.

Ren rarely appeared in public or talked to reports before his daughter's December arrest. Since then, however, he has given a flurry of interviews to foreign reporters in an effort to repair the company's reputation.

"I think it's working," he said. Asked about ongoing pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, which borders Shenzhen, Ren said the violence was "not good for society and the people" but doesn't affect Huawei.

"There is no impact at all on Huawei's business," he said. "We are still focused on our own production. We still focus on fixing the holes in our bullet-riddled airplane." (AP)

(8) Militants Leave...

and the army to strike terrorists, until all parts of Syria are liberated," Assad said, according to comments released by his office.

The withdrawal is a blow to the opposition. Syrian government forces have been on the offensive in Idlib and northern parts of Hama province since April 30, forcing nearly half a million people to flee to safer areas further north. The fighting also killed more than 2,000 people, including hundreds of civilians.

After months of intense bombardment, the insurgents' defenses ap-

pear to be crumbling as they are now losing ground at a much faster pace compared with the first three months of the government push.

In the long-running Syrian civil war, now in its ninth year, the northwestern region — where Turkish, Russian, U.S. and Iranian interests are at stake — has taken center stage in the conflict.

The latest government gains come as NATO allies Turkey and the U.S. are discussing setting up a buffer inside Syria — one that Ankara wants to push Syrian Kurdish fighters it considers terrorists further to the east.

There has been speculation, meanwhile, that Russia and Turkey, which back rival sides in Syria's conflict, have reached an agreement that would allow the Syrian army to retake parts of Idlib and reopen a highway that links the capital, Damascus, with the northern city of Aleppo, Syria's largest.

Khan Sheikhou, which had been held by militants since 2014, sits on that highway.

After the capture of Khan Sheikhou, Syrian troops are likely now to move north toward Maaret al-Numan, another town on the highway that has been subjected to intense airstrikes over the past days. Opposition activists also reported intense bombardment on the rebel-held town of Jisr al-Shughour on the southwestern edge of Idlib on Tuesday. (AP)

(9) Greece Says...

European Union sanctions.

Soon after the detention order was lifted, a U.S. federal court ordered the seizure of the vessel on different grounds, but that petition was rejected by Gibraltar.

Tehran said any U.S. move to seize the vessel again would have "heavy consequences".

Earlier, the United States said it had conveyed its "strong position" to the Greek government over the tanker, which is carrying about 2 million barrels of oil.

The issue will be a major foreign policy test for Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, a pro-western conservative elected in July.

Any efforts to assist the tanker could be construed as providing material support to a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, which has immigration and potential criminal consequences, a U.S. State Department official said.

A Greek diplomatic source cited by the state Athens News Agency said the country was in communication with the United States on the matter, but did not say what Greece would do.

"(The U.S.) position on the specific issue is known and has been communicated not only to Greece but other states and ports in the Mediterranean."

It is standard practice for a vessel to give notice 48 hours before docking at a port, Greek officials said.

It was unclear where the ship might head if Greece refused it permission to dock. Cyprus, further east, has bitter experience from seizing Iranian products destined for Syria; munitions it confiscated exploded in 2011, causing the island's worst peacetime disaster.

Washington wants the tanker detained on the grounds that it had links to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which it has designated a terrorist organization.

European Union nations ban oil sales to Syria and the United States has sanctions on Iranian oil sales. (Reuters)

(10) Hong Kong...

by broader worries about the erosion of freedoms guaranteed under the "one country, two systems" formula put in place after Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, including an independent judiciary and the right to protest.

Three people were wounded, one critically, in a knife attack by an unknown assailant near a "Lennon Wall" of colorful pro-protest messages in the city's Tseung Kwan O

district in the New Territories overnight, police said. One man was arrested.

The protests have prompted sharp reactions from Beijing, which has accused foreign countries, including the United States, of fomenting unrest in the territory. China has also sent clear warning that forceful intervention is possible, with paramilitary forces holding drills in neighboring Shenzhen.

Britain's Foreign Office said it was extremely concerned about reports that a Hong Kong staff member had been detained in mainland China, but there was no immediate suggestion that there was any link to the protests.

Staff member Simon Cheng did not return to work on Aug. 9 after visiting the neighboring mainland city of Shenzhen the previous day, Hong Kong news website HK01 reported. China's Foreign Ministry declined to comment. Hong Kong police did not respond immediately to requests for comment.

Twitter Inc and Facebook Inc also said on Monday they had dismantled a state-backed social media campaign originating in mainland China that sought to undermine protests in Hong Kong.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang declined direct comment on the Twitter and Facebook actions, but defended the right of Chinese people to make their voices heard.

Further demonstrations are planned in the next few days, including by MTR subway workers on Wednesday, secondary school students on Thursday and accountants on Friday.

The protests are exacting a toll on the city's economy and tourism, with the Asian financial hub on the verge of its first recession in a decade.

Singapore universities have canceled exchange programs to Hong Kong after Singapore warned its citizens to defer travel there, news website Today reported.

Singapore's foreign ministry said in an advisory last week large protests in Hong Kong had become unpredictable and could turn violent with little or no notice. (Reuters)

(11) EU Rebuffs...

place (alternative) arrangements as far as possible before the end of the transition period, as part of the future relationship," Johnson wrote. "Time is very short."

Tusk said Johnson had proposed no realistic alternatives, and the European Commission took a similar line, though the EU's most powerful leaders - Merkel and Macron - had yet to comment.

"Those against the backstop and not proposing realistic alternatives in fact support re-establishing a border. Even if they do not admit it," Tusk tweeted.

A note seen by Reuters setting out the agreed joint position of the 27 EU states staying on after Brexit said the EU regretted Johnson's bid to scrap a "necessary, legally operative solution" in favour of a "commitment to try to find a solution" ..

European diplomats expect little progress on Brexit until the British domestic landscape becomes clearer when parliament returns on Sept. 3 - after which the opposition Labour Party has vowed to try to collapse Johnson's government.

With British politics in such turmoil, it is still unclear how, when or indeed if the United Kingdom will leave the EU. Many expect an election within months.

With such uncertainty, some suspect perfidy in London.

A diplomat from one EU country told Reuters that Johnson's letter was "pure PR" and not meant to spur constructive talks but rather set the stage for a "blame game" with the EU. (Reuters)

(12) Italy's Di Maio...

new coalition can be formed. Failing that he will dissolve parliament. League leader Matteo Salvini has de-

manded early elections, 3-1/2 years ahead of schedule, confident that his surging popularity in the opinion polls will sweep him into power and push the anti-establishment 5-Star into opposition.

Di Maio said 5-Star lawmakers would stand by Conte, who is a law professor with no political affiliation. "Each of us knows that we are on the right side of history," Di Maio said in a post on Facebook.

"The League will have to answer for its wrong decision to bring everything down, opening a government crisis in the middle of August ... just to chase the polls," he added.

Political sources told Reuters on Monday that Italy's opposition Democratic Party has held "good", initial contacts with 5-Star over the possibility of forging a new coalition. (Reuters)

(13) US Stoking...

There has been speculation about what kind of missile was being tested at the time. One theory in Forbes said Moscow was testing a "mega-torpedo," 30 times larger than the conventional ones found on submarines.

The explosion prompted President Trump to take to Twitter to say that the U.S. was monitoring the situation, but has more advanced technology. (Fox News)

(14) China Could...

power is increasingly uncertain."

The researchers found that although the U.S. military is still perceived as a force to be reckoned with globally, the "combined effect of ongoing wars in the Middle East, budget austerity, underinvestment in advanced military capabilities and the scale of America's liberal order-building agenda has left the U.S. armed forces ill-prepared for great power competition in the Indo-Pacific."

More alarmingly, the report warns that China would be able to use the U.S. military's lack of reach in the region to launch a military attack against America's regional allies and achieve victory even before the U.S. responds, Newsweek reported. "Having studied the American way of war — premised on power projection and all-domain military dominance — China has deployed a formidable array of precision missiles and other counter-intervention systems to undercut America's military primacy," the report said.

"By making it difficult for US forces to operate within range of these weapons, Beijing could quickly use limited force to achieve a fait accompli victory — particularly around Taiwan, the Japanese archipelago or maritime Southeast Asia — before America can respond, sowing doubt about Washington's security guarantees in the process."

The report comes amid heightened tensions between Washington and Beijing. While the two countries have repeatedly clashed over trade, with President Trump criticizing the Chinese government over policies that he claims hurt the American economy, the U.S. military cautioned China earlier this year over the islands claimed by China in the disputed South China Sea.

Two U.S. warships sailed near islands claimed by China back in May, while two American nuclear-capable B-52H flew over the South China Sea at least twice in March. (Fox News)

(15) 'We Don't Fall...

The diplomat reiterated that if Russia ever obtains missiles that were previously banned under the INF Treaty, it will not deploy them unless the US does so first.

During his trip to France on Monday, President Vladimir Putin had said that if short- and mid-range missile systems are "produced by the US," Moscow will do the same. Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said that Russia will deploy such missiles only if Washington does so in Europe or Asia-Pacific. (RT)