

**(1) Support for...**

inside Afghanistan," but other officials are looking into the issue of sanctuaries in Pakistan, he said.

According to him, the issue of sanctuaries was a serious one and one that needed to be addressed.

"The Quetta Shura, Peshawar Shura, these shuras are identified by cities inside Pakistan, we know Afghan Taliban leaders are in these areas," he said.

Specifically asked whether the Taliban leadership in Quetta and Pashawar and other major Pakistan cities "shouldn't sleep in peace from now on", he said "I won't put words in the (US) president's mouth but he definitely conveyed this message."

He said that following US President Donald Trump's announcement earlier this week on his new war strategy, he, Nicholson, as a commander, has a new policy - "one based on conditions and not time."

He said: "It gives us additional capabilities. We have a direction now provided by the US policy that is being supported by NATO."

On the issue of general security in Afghanistan, Nicholson said the "civilian casualties is a real tragedy".

"The Taliban cause the vast majority of civilian casualties and even though they have stated that it is their objective to reduce civilian casualties they have in fact increased civilian casualties. This is one of the points that we need to put on the table with the Taliban. They are not acting in the best interests of the Afghan people. "We know the Taliban receives the majority of its financing from narcotics traffic," he said adding that the organization has become a group that brings misery and hardship to the people.

Asked if he sees the Taliban as a terrorist organization, Nicholson said: "They do terrorist activities and they enable terrorists."

As an example he pointed to the Taliban links in the past to al-Qaeda.

On whether he had a mandate to go out and kill the Taliban, Nicholson said: "It is our mandate to put military pressure on the Taliban.

However, he said that the US wants a peaceful solution in Afghanistan but that the "Taliban need to know they cannot win militarily." He said he hopes they enter the peace process.

"In the meantime we will put increasing pressure on them inside the country and on the external sanctuaries."

In terms of developing the military, he said the special forces will be doubled and with the growth of the Afghan air force the Taliban will lose. He said these special forces' commandos have never lost a battle against the Taliban and with an expanded force they will retake the majority of territory either outside government's control or territory that is being contested. He said as these forces expand their control, coupled with pressure on external sanctuaries, the Taliban will get to a point where it realizes it cannot win militarily and will have to enter into a reconciliation process.

In terms of security leadership and the high turnover of defense and interior ministers, Nicholson said the issue of leadership is an important one but gave credit to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani who changed leaders this summer. Nicholson said however that corruption was still a problem - particularly that relating to fuel contracts and personnel.

By spring of next year every soldier and every police officer will be biometrically registered, he said.

On the fuel contract issue he said these contracts have been pulled back in under the US forces' control in order to cut down on corruption.

He said the attorney general's office was also making progress in terms of cracking down on corruption but that the US forces will keep an eye on this.

He said young leaders were meanwhile emerging - leaders who were energetic and were being taken seriously.

Asked whether he was confident about winning the war, Nicholson said: "I am very focused on my mission here and on delivering for the Afghan people and delivering for my nation and the alliance. I am very encouraged by the new policy by the United States ... yes I do feel confident."

This interview comes just two days after Nicholson addressed a press conference in Kabul and said the Taliban has become a "criminal organization that is more interested in profits from drugs, kidnapping and murder for hire."

He called on the group to lay down their arms and end the war.

"Taliban have a simple choice: Stop fighting against your countrymen. Stop killing innocent civilians. Stop bringing hardship and misery," he said.

He also said: "We will not fail in Afghanistan. Our national security depends on that as well."

Nicholson made it clear that the US and NATO stand by the Afghan security forces against terrorists and enemies of Afghanistan and said that the Taliban cannot win on the battlefield. "It's time for them to join the peace process." (Tolonews)

**(2) Rights Watchdog...**

"An attack on a place of worship during prayers is a horrific crime meant to max-

imize civilian deaths," said Patricia Gossman, senior Afghanistan researcher at Human Rights Watch.

"This contemptible act against a religious minority, claimed by ISIS's (Daesh) Afghan affiliate, is a grim reminder that civilians bear the brunt of Afghanistan's war." The statement said that the attack is similar to others that Daesh "affiliates have committed over the past year targeting Afghanistan's Shia minority. On August 1, an attack claimed by ISKP (Daesh Afghanistan) on a Shia mosque in Herat killed at least 20 and wounded more than 30."

"Since July 2016, sectarian suicide attacks have injured or killed hundreds of members of the Shia community in Afghanistan. This wave of attacks on Shia is largely attributable to the emergence of militant groups affiliated with Daesh," the statement said.

"Under the laws of war, deliberate attacks on civilians or civilian objects such as houses of worship are war crimes. Dressing as civilian police to carry out a military attack is also a war crime. Criminal acts such as murder committed by state security forces or armed groups as part of a widespread or systematic attack on a civilian population such as a religious minority are crimes against humanity," HRW said.

"Insurgents who carry out atrocities against a specific ethnic or religious community are committing war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity," Gossman said. "All parties to Afghanistan's conflict should recognize that such grave international crimes may be prosecuted anywhere in the world at any time." (Tolonews)

**(3) Noor Reaffirms ...**

ordinary people for many times and from a specific point.

Noor did not elaborate further regarding the 'specific point' that continuously incurs losses to the ordinary people but in the past he and his party members have demanded the removal of the top security officials including national security and intelligence chief, blaming them for the failure and recklessness to ensure security of the people.

The Jamiat-e-Islami demanded the removal of the top officials after deadly coordinated suicide attacks rocked the funeral ceremony of Salim Izadyar nearly three months ago, leaving scores of people dead or wounded, days after a deadly attack left more than 400 people dead or wounded near the German embassy.

In the meantime, the security sources in Kabul confirmed that the death toll from the attack on Friday has surpassed 30 people.

The attack took place in the vicinity of Khair Khana area of the city, targeting a Shi'ite mosque, Imam Zaman mosque.

However, the Ministry of Public Health officials said the death toll has surpassed twenty people but did not confirm the exact toll.

The officials further added that over 40 people have also sustained injuries in the attack. (KP)

**(4) China Seeking ...**

silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organizations.

He also talked about giving more authority to the troops on the ground. "We will also expand authority for American armed forces to target the terrorists and criminal networks that sow violence and chaos throughout Afghanistan," the US president said.

Hours after the announcement, Taliban reacted to the new US strategy, claiming that they will continue fighting as long as American troops remain in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

**(5) Radical Change in ...**

the official said.

Pakistan had much to gain from partnering with US efforts in the region, the official said, warning that at the same time it also had much to lose by failing to take adequate steps to counter terrorist groups. "We will rely on a range of tools to convince Pakistani leaders that it is in their own interest to cooperate with us in Afghanistan. We recognise we have many common interests and common enemies in the region," he added.

The official, requesting anonymity, also recognised the sacrifices Pakistan has made in the fight against terrorism. However, he explained, no partnership could survive a country's tolerance of militants and terrorists targeting US service members.

"The US has taken steps to assist Pakistan in its counterterrorism efforts. For instance, Operation Resolute Support has killed or captured the leaders of many anti-Pakistan terrorist groups, and it will continue to target these figures," he said. Being an important US partner, Pakistan must take decisive action against terrorist groups that posed a threat to US interests, the official stressed, acknowledging (Pakistan has legitimate interest in Afghanistan.

"We would be working with them and at the same time make it clear that support to terrorist groups is not the best way to serve their interests in the region," the official said. (Pajhwok)

**(6) Security Forces ...**

The residents of Herat have demanded

security forces to conduct operation in villages as well. Shafiqullah, the resident of Herat, said: "Security forces should clear every village and valley of Herat from the presence of militants.

Namatullah, the resident of Shindand district, said compared to other district Shindand is the most insecurity place in Herat. He demanded the government to execute arrested rebels in front of public. The Taliban acknowledged clashes taken place in Herat, but provided no figures of dead Taliban. (Pajhwok)

**(7) Afghan Commanders ...**

weapons to the ANDSF and it should support the Afghan Air Force," Tolo News quoted Major General Amanullah Mobin, Commander of 209 Shaheen Military Corps in Balkh, as saying.

Governor of Badakhshan province Faisal Begzad said Washington should support the Afghan security forces, including the Air Force based on its new strategy. About 8,400 U.S. troops are currently deployed in Afghanistan and 3,900 extra troops are expected to be sent to the country under the new policy.

The Afghan officials are hopeful that they would see changes in the war on terror in Afghanistan and in the region with the possible increase of foreign forces.

"Foreign troops have no combat role in the fight against terrorists in Helmand (province), but they are providing advice and air support to us. This support is needed until our security forces become self-reliant," Helmand governor Hayatullah Hayat said.

United States President Donald Trump, on Monday night, unveiled a new U.S. strategy for war in Afghanistan without offering details about changes to troop levels.

Addressing the crowd at the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Trump started his speech by sending prayers to sailors who were injured and lost their lives after a collision at sea and said, "We send our thoughts and prayers to the families of our brave sailors who were injured and lost after a tragic collision at sea, as well as to those conducting the search-and-recovery efforts."

"I am here tonight to lay out our path forward in Afghanistan and South Asia. But before I provide the details of our new strategy, I want to say a few words to the service members here with us tonight, to those watching from their posts, and to all Americans listening at home," he added. President Trump further said that since the founding of America's republic, the country has produced a special class of heroes whose selflessness, courage, and resolve is unmatched in human history.

"American patriots from every generation have given their last breath on the battlefield for our nation and for our freedom. Through their lives, and though their lives were cut short, in their deeds they achieved total immortality. By following the heroic example of those who fought to preserve our republic, we can find the inspiration our country needs to unify, to heal, and to remain one nation, under God. The men and women of our military operate as one team, with one shared mission and one shared sense of purpose. They transcend every line of race, ethnicity, creed, and color to serve together and sacrifice together in absolutely perfect cohesion," Trump said. (ANI)

**(8) McMaster ...**

outcome there that ensures the safety and security of the American people. Afghanistan is connected to broader security concerns across the region," he explained. The outcome, the advisor continued, was to ensure that a threat from that region did not threaten the safety and security of the American people.

"No, I don't think I'm confident," he said, when asked if he was certain that a political settlement could be reached between Kabul and Taliban that would not end up once US forces left Afghanistan.

The Afghans remember 1996 to 2001 and what it was like living under Taliban's regime, he remarked, saying the US was working hard to disconnect the dots , especially in connection with the Taliban's relationship with Al Qaeda and other terrorist organisations.

"But what we also recognise is none of these groups are monolithic or homogenous either. So if there are those who are ready to join a political process, like Hezb-e-Islami did over the past year, then I don't think the Afghan government would object to that," he added. (Pajhwok)

**(9) 2-Day Meeting...**

from various countries and international organizations participated in today's meeting to mull over projects that had primacy for Afghanistan and the region.

Raaz said there were a total of more than 30 projects, but the meeting participants would choose in the next two days projects that were to be prioritized. Railways tracks projects among Afghanistan, China, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI), the Central Asia-South Asia power project (CASA-1000), and 500 KW power transmission line of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan (TUTAP) are some of the national and regional projects topping the Afghan government's priority list.

The RECCA-VII in Turkmenistan would focus on energy, digitalization, roads construction, transit and trade related projects, which had a vital role for Afghanistan and the region, she concluded. (Pajhwok)

**(10) US Might...**

done a lot in Afghanistan and that the continuation of its cooperation is vital.

"We think it is important that there is a regional approach and part of that is developing and strengthening that relationship in partnership with India. They have been making important contributions towards Afghanistan's democracy and their stability and we think it is important to continue that efforts," a White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said.

China however supported Pakistan's efforts in resolving Afghanistan's crisis.

"We should value Pakistan's considerable role in Afghanistan's issue and should respect its legitimate security concerns," Hua Chunying, spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

Military analysts meanwhile said as much as more powerful countries of the world and region get engaged in Afghanistan's war, the situation and the current crisis will get more complicated. (Tolonews)

**(11) U-14 Football Team ...**

The team scored 33 goals in total but lost to Bangladesh in the semi-final round from a penalty shot. "We have done our preparations in the past two months for the tournament.

The team is motivated and we hope that this time we win the cup," the team's coach, Wahidullah Wahidi, said.

A member of the team, Mohammad Sulaiman Akrami said: "I participated in a few international competitions and this time I hope we bring the cup home to our country." (Tolonews)

**(12) Media Urged...**

role in bringing the peoples and governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan closer to ensure success of the efforts for peace, she believed.

Islamabad was following a policy of a peaceful neighborhood so that the regional states could achieve their common goals of eliminating poverty and ushering in an era of progress, the minister continued.

Maryam Aurangzeb said Pakistan and Afghanistan had suffered heavily in men and material due to terrorism and extremism - common enemies of both countries. She urged media to deny space to voices that triggered misunderstandings and rise help spread the message of peace and love.

The visiting media delegation promised to help promote good relations between the two countries. She said Pakistan would take measures to facilitate a meaningful interaction between journalists of the two countries. (Pajhwok)

**(13) Contracts ...**

How did the firm make it to Kabul?

The Beirut-based company, registered with Afghan government institutions under different names, was founded by Mounir El-Khatib in 1957. Then it was called Consolidated Engineering Company.

Five-year later, it was merged with Zahir Alami and renamed as Khatib & Alami. But accurate information about the firm's arrival and operations in Afghanistan is not available.

Evidence gathered by Pajhwok shows Khatib and Alami Consulting Engineers SAL Offshore submitted documents for doing projects in Afghanistan to the Afghanistan Embassy in Uman, the capital of Jordan the immediate neighbour of Lebanon, last year.

Based on a letter from the Afghanistan Embassy in Jordan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul introduced the company to the Ministry Commerce and Industries on February 20, 20017 for operations in the country. (Pajhwok)

**(14) Pakistani Army Won't ...**

Islam (JUI-S), also issued a call for 'jihad' to every section of society.

Dawn news stated that when asked about terrorist attacks being carried out in Pakistan by local actors affiliated with religious groups, Haq claimed that no Pakistani was involved in killing innocent people.

"The West has been defaming jihad, [equating it] with terrorism, but we need to raise a call to jihad and ask each prayer leader in every mosque to preach the importance of jihad, so that our youth is prepared all the time," he said.

Dawn News quoted him as saying: "We are fighting the Americans in Afghanistan and those who cannot fight are waging jihad with their words and pens; the whole nation needs to rise up to defeat the West." (Tolonews)

**(15) Afghanistan Wins...**

medals at the competition in the 85kg division and 75kg division respectively. Athletes from 29 Asian countries attended the contest in South Korea.

"I was excited when I stood on the stage as a gold medal winner. I dedicated this medal to all people of Afghanistan," Qaderi said.

"First I want to send my condolences to those who lost their friends and family members in the attack in Qala-e-Najaha (on Friday). It is too hard to celebrate

a championship when all the people are mourning the loss of their dear ones," said Bawar Hotak, head of the bodybuilding federation.

"I congratulate the team. Achieving a gold medal in the Asian competition is hard and I am happy that we hoisted our flag among 29 countries."

The national team was selected from the 12th Mr Afghanistan Championship in Kabul this month and this is the second time Afghanistan has brought home a gold medal.

In 2015, Haroon Azimi won a gold medal in the Asian championship in the weight category of over 100 kgs. (Tolonews)

**(16) Paktika Officials...**

for the past 24 days.

He said so far 216 militants had been killed and more than 100 wounded.

A local official, who declined to be named, said security forces went out and Gomal collapsed into the hands of Taliban. According to security officials, nine Afghan forces personnel have been killed and 15 others wounded so far in the clashes in Gomal near the border with Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

**(17) Kandahar Gathering ...**

Lawmaker Lalai Hameedzai said Pakistan had been supporting the conflict in Afghanistan to make sure her interests were protected.

He said Pakistan was the 'epicenter' of terrorism where insurgents were being trained in 70,000 seminaries in different parts of the country.

Daud Gulzar, a tribal elder from Zabul province and presidential advisor, said the US and the world finally recognized Pakistan's 'dual faced policy.'

Mohammad Karim Atal, head of the Helmand provincial council, said the US should extend the war on terror to Pakistan and eliminate terrorists there. (Pajhwok)

**(18) Dostum Calls for...**

province and chief executive of Jamiat-e-Islami party who is a close ally of Gen. Dostum in new political coalition reaffirmed his and his allies hard stance against the security institutions and officials after the deadly attack in Kabul that left scores of people dead or wounded.

Noor in a statement said one of the main barriers on the way for peace and stability is the weakness of the security officials and Friday's attacks confirm such claims.

The governor of Balkh further added that the lack of a proper strategy has led to the suffering of the ordinary people for many times and from a specific point.

Noor did not elaborate further regarding the 'specific point' that continuously incurs losses to the ordinary people but in the past he and his party members have demanded the removal of the top security officials including national security and intelligence chief, blaming them for the failure and recklessness to ensure security of the people. (KP)

**(19) Kabul Mosque...**

religion and law and it is far from Islam. The enemies once again proved that they are not paying respect to any religious values," the council said in a statement.

The council warned Afghanistan's enemies that they will not succeed in creating division among Sunni and Shia Muslims in the country by conducting such heinous acts.

The religious scholars' council asked security organizations to do everything in their power to prevent such attacks from happening.

The US Embassy's Special Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Hugo Llorens also condemned the attack and said the United States has great respect for the Hazara community and their resilience in the face of these horrific attacks. (Tolonews)

**(20) Diesel up, ...**

control office at the Ministry of Commerce, linked the hike to low imports.

However, he said the imports had declined due to a cleaning process for gas reservoirs in Turkmenistan. He assured consumers and dealers the problem would be resolved in the near future.

Food Traders Union head, Fazal Rahman, said the price of a 50 kilograms bag of Kakhstani flour declined from 1,180afs to 1,170afs.

A 49kg sack of Pakistani sugar cost 1,920afs, a 16 liters can of Khurshid ghee 1,130afs and a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice 1,800afs - same rates as last week's. (Pajhwok)

**(21) Veteran Wants...**

money, and most importantly lives, trying to rebuild countries in our own image, instead of pursuing our security interests above all other considerations."

To understand the true cost of the Afghanistan War, Rouse says Americans need to listen to veterans' experiences on the ground there. Then the public can make an informed decision about whether they want their leaders to continue on this path and once again extend America's longest war. The 16-year campaign in Afghanistan has claimed more than 2,200 American lives, thousands of allied forces, and tens of thousands of Afghan civilians and military personnel. The war has also cost American taxpayers in excess of \$1 trillion, when factoring in aid for veterans. (CNN)