

**(1) US Can't ...**

government the opportunity to succeed. And this focus on Al-Qaeda, the most dangerous threat to the United States at the time, paid dividends," he claimed.

"Today, by any measure, core Al-Qaeda, the organization that hit us on 9/11, is a shadow of its former self. Plots directed from within Afghanistan and Pakistan had been consistently disrupted. Its leadership has been decimated. Dozens of terrorist leaders have been killed..."

Importantly, he continued, the US had built a counter-terrorism capability that could sustain this pressure against any network in South Asia that might threaten America. That was because of the work of US service members, Obama said. (Pajhwok)

**(2) President-Elect ...**

West said. Trump said he wants what he refers to as better trade deals, and also wants more U.S. companies to keep their operations within the United States, West said. (Xinhua)

**(3) High-Ranking ...**

political issues have a responsibility to carry out their work transparently and to not betray Afghan people," Massoud said.

The Afghan Anti-Corruption Network meanwhile warned that continued corruption will have a negative impact on the progress made in the country to date and claimed that even casualties among security forces are somehow linked to the phenomenon.

"Afghan security forces also are being killed because of corruption in government departments," said Khan Zaman Amarkhel, head of the Afghan Anti-Corruption Network.

Amarkhel did not clarify this statement but there have been reports in the past of claims that security forces allegedly sold ammunition and weapons to insurgents, which in turn puts them at risk.

Transparency International meanwhile said recently that government institutions need to cooperate in the fight against corruption and that a commission should be established to supervise them. (Tolonews)

**(4) NATO Asks...**

Obama has said the US cannot defeat Taliban in Afghanistan and that violence will continue to exist in the country.

"I don't want to paint too rosy a picture. The situation in Afghanistan is still tough. War has been a part of life in Afghanistan for over 30 years. The US cannot eliminate the Taliban or end violence in that country," Obama said before US soldiers at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida.

"But what we can do is deny al-Qaeda a safe haven and what we can do is support the Afghans who want a better future, which is why we have not only worked with our military but we backed a unity government in Kabul," he added," Obama said.

The question raised however is whether Afghanistan losing its importance to NATO and US?

"There are lots of problems in the way of NATO and US and the US is worried about the situation," said Nadir Baloch, a member of the defense commission of the Meshrano Jirga (the Upper House of Parliament).

There are about 13,000 foreign troops currently stationed in Afghanistan of whom more than 9,000 are Americans. (Tolonews)

**(5) Fulfilling Pledges...**

of the government.

The minister said 24 new commitments were made at the Brussels Conference this year, with the Afghan government making 15 commitments and the rest by the international community.

According to the MoF, the Afghan government's commitments include taking tangible steps for reforms, preparation for Wolesi Jirga and provincial council elections, drafting a strategy for fighting corruption, implementing financial reforms and stabilizing economy by implementing structural parameters through International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The government also needed to increase the number of female workers in civil services by two percent, establishing a special court for the entire country to deal with cases of violence against women until the end of 2018.

The government has to begin implementation of Women's Economic Empowerment plan in the first half of 2017, the MoF said.

The ministry said implementation of the National Citizen Charter program in 2,000 villages and employing 1,200 people through CBR were other commitments of the government.

Launching management reform program in the ministries of agriculture, interior, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and High Audit Authority are new commitments of the government which need to be implemented until the end of 2018.

Creating a comparative mechanism for public and private partnership and offering three public and private projects for bidding by the High Economic Council, approving management rules for land and expropriation, approving municipality bankruptcy law, amending mines law, simplifying public services in Kabul, preparing a plan for reforms in investment, publishing high valued contracts are pledges of the government that need to be implemented until the end of 2018.

MoF Minister Eklil Hakimi said implementation of the government pledges was very important in order to obtain all international community support.

The Afghan government would share its performance report with the international community in a conference expected to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2018, he said.

With fixing schedule for upcoming elections, the Afghan government would be able to receive fund from donors for the elections. (Pajhwok)

**(6) UK Govt. Agrees ....**

EU's key treaty is the trigger for two years of talks leading up to a British exit from the 28-nation bloc.

The motion is now expected to pass after the main opposition Labour Party said it would accept the amendment.

"The terms upon which we leave the EU will define us and our country for many years," said Labour Party Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer. He said Labour lawmakers are not seeking to block Brexit - which British voters in June chose to do - but to bring "clarity, scrutiny and accountability" to the process. (AP)

**(7) MPs Refuse ...**

to other sectors.

Saleh Mohammad Saleh, a lawmaker from eastern Kunar province, told Wednesday session said balance had not been considered in preparation of the next year's budget draft and some provinces had been subjected to discriminatory behavior in sphere of projects.

"Kunar being a deprived province has been not paid any attention in the budget. Funds are allocated in the budget for a few projects that too from the previous year and construction of a hydro-power dam which could resolve problem of half of the country's people has not been considered at all."

Sakhi Mashwani, another public representative from Kunar, said: "Provinces are not treated equally in the budget. People enjoying great power have influenced and diverted most of the budget to their provinces and other provinces have been deprived of their rights." He asked fellow lawmakers not to approve the draft budget because it lacked balance in treating provinces.

Safiya Aiymaq, a lawmaker from Badghis said: "Presidential Palace-based officials spread rumors that the draft budget is delayed by lawmakers due to their conflict with the government over the unseated ministers. But this is a patently wrong thinking." She called the 1396 solar year's budget as flawed one.

According to Aiymaq, the budget has no mention of any useful project for Badghis province, which she said had been deprived of clean drinking water, power, roads and development projects.

She said most projects mentioned in the budget document for Badghis were from last year into the current year.

Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said the budget would be approved when it met people's needs and was balanced. He said the document needed to be revisited.

"The budget is people's right and is not taken hostage or delayed by lawmakers. I ask the Wolesi Jirga to read the document carefully and present their views and suggestions to the finance and budget commission of the house." (Pajhwok)

**(8) NATO Committed...**

their political and practical support to Afghanistan for the long term.

The alliance secretary general said NATO's continued support for Afghanistan was a clear signal of commitment of the international community.

"The security situation in Afghanistan remains difficult but the Afghan Security Forces are responding with great bravery and professionalism. NATO allies and partners continue to support them politically, practically and financially," he said.

In return, Afghanistan made commitments to step up reforms and improve governance, he said, adding "we would review all these mutual commitments today". (Pajhwok)

**(9) Merkel Launches ...**

to re-elect Merkel as chief for the next two years, as the congress gave her just 89.5 percent - her second worst score, and the worst since she became chancellor in 2005.

Her lowest was in 2004, when she was approved by 88.4 percent.

National media had suggested that a score below 90 percent would be a slap in the face.

Merkel, who has led Germany for 11 years, last month confirmed she would run for a fourth term but acknowledged that the election would be "more difficult" than any other she has contested. Beyond domestic issues, Merkel also devoted a large part of her address to crises abroad as she noted that in 2016, "the world has not become stronger and more stable, but weaker and more unstable".

She deplored the failure of the international community to alleviate the suffering in Syria's besieged city of Aleppo, calling it a "disgrace". (Tolonews)

**(10) \$415m ADB ....**

twice its economic growth rate, with the country sourcing about 80% of its total supplies from neighbouring countries. Reliance on energy imports, the small size of the domestic market, limitations in transmission and distribution networks, governance and financing weaknesses leave energy security highly vulnerable.

The project will finance the new 500-megawatt back-to-back converter station - a critical step towards expanded power imports - at Dashti-Alwan to connect a new 500-kilovolt interconnection line with Turkmenistan with another 500-kilovolt line stretching to Kabul.

The converter will allow Turkmen power into the Afghan grid under the 10-year power purchase and sales agreement signed in November 2015 between the two countries.

In addition, it will construct a 180-kilometer 220-kilovolt transmission line from Doshi to Bamyan to expand the grid to at least 8 additional provinces, distribute power to nearly 150,000 people, and provide redundancy to the existing transmission network. (Pajhwok)

**(11) First HIA...**

Hekmatyar have been underway.

However, Hekmatyar remains on the United Nations (UN) blacklist which is called a major obstacle to Hekmatyar's return.

Few days back, a delegation of the UN Security Council discussed the issue with Afghan officials in Kabul. (Pajhwok)

**(12) Azerbaijan....**

Mammadyarov recalled that just three days ago Azerbaijan assumed the co chairmanship of the Heart of Asia - Istanbul process for 2017.

"In this function, we will seek close coordination and consultations with all stake-holders, most notably with NATO, with a view to facilitating comprehensive and coherent support by the international community to Afghanistan," he added.

The FM noted that Azerbaijan supports Afghanistan on its path of reforms towards integrating into regional and global economy.

"As being a critical piece of the New Silk Road, Azerbaijan will connect Afghanistan and Europe to support Afghanistan's sustainable future. Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad and a new seaport Alat in Azerbaijan will further link Asia to Europe, subsequently helping to bring lasting peace and development to Afghanistan and beyond," said Mammadyarov. (APA)

**(13) Cleanliness ...**

was to give people the message to keep clean the city like their homes and start cleaning their streets and surroundings. Mangal added with the completion of the drive the city would look more beautiful and diseases would be prevented.

Jalabad Mayor Hamidullah Afghan also asked people to help the municipality in such campaigns to keep the city clean.

Provincial council head and the foundation member, Ajmal Umar, said: "Cleanliness is half of faith and in a bid to inculcate a civic sense among citizens, we are conducting the campaign." (Pajhwok)

**(14) Returnees:....**

war-torn country from September 2015 -September 2016.

In addition, USAID is working with 15 UN and NGO partners to meet the acute humanitarian needs of people displaced by natural disaster and conflict and, in some cases, the acute needs of vulnerable returnees.

In 2016, USAID programmed \$87.5 million in response to the complex emergency. Those resources help to provide shelter, food and nutrition assistance, and health and hygiene services. (Pajhwok)

**(15) Confidence in...**

job growth and household finances, he said, adding the nation's security, political and economic transitions were still unfolding and more time was required for progress in these areas.

Only 29.3% of Afghans say the country is moving in the right direction, the lowest level of optimism since 2004. A marked rise in civilian casualties and increasing violence has contributed to the highest recorded level of fear in over a decade: 69.8% of Afghans are afraid for their personal safety.

According to the study, fear is still the most pronounced in the southwest at 82%, and in Helmand, 92.3% say they are afraid sometimes, often or always, a 7% increase since 2015 and a 25% increase since 2014.

At the same time, although general awareness of ISIS/Daesh has increased from 74.3% in 2015 to 81.3% in 2016, the perception that the group is a threat to security actually fell from 54.2% in 2015 to 47.9% this year.

The percentage of Afghans interested in migration has decreased significantly from 39.9% in 2015 to 29.6% this year, the largest drop on record in the survey which occurred even though unemployment rates remain high.

Afghans say the biggest problem facing youth is unemployment, 71.2%, and more than half (51.5%) cite unemployment as a reason they would leave the country if given the opportunity. Factors that might explain a decreased desire to migrate include the destination's reception and resettlement policies.

Asked about their household financial position, 36.6% say their financial situation has worsened, compared to 29.7% in 2015. The most affected areas include provinces that once housed foreign military camps, notably near Bagram Air Base.

"Confidence in public institutions and NGOs is at an historical low. By comparison, Afghans say they are most confident in, first, their religious leaders (66.1%), and second, the media (64.5%," the survey says.

Radio remains the most popular source of information, with 70.5% of respondents receiving news and information from it, followed by television at 66.4%. Nearly two-thirds of Afghans (64.5%) report watching TV.

As many as 74.0% say women should be allowed to work, a record high that appears related to the depressed economy and need for dual-earner households. Afghan support for women in leadership positions remains mixed.

Support for women in local leadership such as community development councils, is significantly higher than support for women in cabinet slots. Education/illiteracy is cited as the biggest problem facing women (36.1%), followed by unemployment (22.9%).

"The survey is a map of social change over time, presenting a body of crucial knowledge for policymaking and development programming in a rapidly transforming nation," remarked David D. Arnold, president of the Asia Foundation.

Since 2007, insecurity has been the most commonly given reason for why the country is moving in the wrong direction, followed by unemployment, corruption, bad economy and bad government. (Pajhwok)

**(16) Afghanistan...**

raise awareness or to monitor progress to attain SDGs.

The Applidea2R17 Contest will be an open opportunity to university students all over the ECO member states to get themselves involved in awareness raising and solution providing on SDGs.

Also to become the future ambassadors to promote and popularize SDGs, developing technologies to facilitate and monitor the progress on SDGs, getting empowered with the skills and confidence to develop System Apps for sustainable development.

This joint initiative will help the ECO member states to understand the key indicators of SDGs and play their role to achieve these SDGs. (PR)

**(17) Afghan War....**

to enhance Taliban's operational performance.

Keane said the US was in the current situation largely because the war in Iraq itself became protracted and much-needed forces could not be applied to Afghanistan.

US ground forces, particularly the army, were too small to fight two counter-insurgencies simultaneously, and the Obama policy was not to win the war but to end US involvement, he explained.

"The new administration must call for a political and security assessment and face the harsh realities of possibly squandering 15 years of US combat in Afghanistan in a war not winnable," he asserted.

"Without an on-the-ground assessment, I honestly cannot tell you if that is sufficient, how many additional troops are required to support those functions and for how long. I do know this, without the US and Afghan resolve to win, we never will," he said.

Senator Jack Reed, a ranking member of the committee, said maintaining 8,400 US troops in Afghanistan into 2017 and providing robust support to the Afghan forces had laid the foundation for a sustainable US and international security presence.

"The decision also sent an important message to Afghans, the Taliban and others in the region, including Pakistan, regarding the commitment of the United States to progress to do progress in Afghanistan," he added. (Pajhwok)

**(18) Winter Offensive ...**

years no development project could be executed in the province due to insecurity and unstoppable fighting.

But Governor Spokesman Mahmood Danish said the government had launched several uplift projects in the city, with the completion of which a positive change would be brought to the province.

He announced more development projects were on the cards and would be launched soon. (Pajhwok)

**(19)Key Taliban ....**

expressed his regrets for the deeds he committed and said that after this he will fight against the Taliban.

Meanwhile, Provincial Governor Ahmad Faisal Bigzad, said clearance operations will be conducted in the province. "In the past three months hundreds of armed Taliban have joined the peace process in Badakhshan and we are trying to conduct clearance operations," Bigzad said.

At the moment Yamgan and Wardoj districts are under Taliban control but military experts believe that if government does not conduct clearance operations in the districts through winter, more districts could collapse during next year's fighting season. (Tolonews)

**(20)Safia Ferozi, ...**

myself as a woman," said Ferozi, who is one of only two female pilots in the Afghan air force and flies a C-208 - a turboprop plane used as transport for the armed forces.

Nearly 16 years since the collapse of the militant Taliban regime after the US-led invasion in 2001, Afghan women are taking steps to increase their presence in society, including in parliament, government and the military. Still, they face resistance in a deeply conservative society where women are largely expected to stay in the home and where violence against women remains a widespread problem.

"as a woman you face many challenges, but you have to deal somehow with all those problems"

When she was a child, Ferozi's family fled from their home in Kabul in the 1990s, during the civil war among Afghanistan's warlords. They took refuge in Pakistan, returning only after the fall of the Taliban.

In high school in post-Taliban Afghanistan, Ferozi saw a TV commercial urging women to join the military. So after graduation she enrolled in the military academy, studying to become a communication officer. Then it was announced at the academy that the air force was looking for women to become pilots.

Ferozi and 12 other women applied, and she was the only one who passed the tests to enter training.

While she was training at an airfield in the western province of Herat, she first met Capt. Mohammad Jawad Najafi, the pilot who would later become her husband. They married nearly two years ago.

She graduated from training in 2015. She gave birth to their first child, daughter Nergis, now nearly 8 months old, and is back flying missions.

Ferozi says she hopes to inspire other women.

"As a woman you face many challenges, but you have to deal somehow with all those problems," she said. (nbc news)

**(21)Shah Shaheed...**

blast. He and his family members were still that state of shock despite more than 16 months had passed.

He said his family members were asleep and it was midnight when suddenly a very powerful explosion woke them up and since then they still suffered from mental and psychological problems.

"I received some cash from the government and we spent it on my daughter's funeral, but the government did not remain committed to reconstructing destroyed areas, so I borrowed some money from others and reconstructed my house," he said.

Tawab Ghorzang, a spokesman for the National Security Advisor (NSA), said the government had pledged to help the affected families and had distributed some aid to the victims' families.

Noor Mohammad, 49, another resident of Shah Shaheed area, said the powerful blast shook their home and they all awakened from sleep.

"When the horrific explosion happened, a cupboard and a television set fell over me and seriously injured my leg which was once wounded in an accident in 1989."

He said his head was hit by the television and he still felt pain despite visiting doctors several times.

"When I see two people fighting or I hear a loud sound, it remembers me the explosion, I put my fingers in my ears and try to go away from the scene, I feel I am in a world of smoke and fire," he said.

Mohammad said children's voices in his family also harassed him and he did not know where to go and how to solve his problem.

The war in Afghanistan just offered

destruction and deaths since long, he said, asking Taliban militants to stop murdering civilians.

Faridullah, 45, is another person in Shah Shaheed area who has been affected by the attack.

He said his two daughters aged 12 and 16 years were suffering from mental illness since the explosion.

"I took them to several doctors, their illnesses could not be cured, sometimes my daughters get awake at midnight and feel terrified and start crying," he said.

He said it was not his family alone suffering from such problems, but dozens of other families in the area were in the same situation.

He asked the government to implement its pledges and told the Taliban that their actions just caused mass destruction and killing of innocent people. (Pajhwok)

**(22)5 Policemen....**

did not know specific figures. Shah Walikot is one of Kandahar's northern districts where insurgent attacks have increased recently.

Elsewhere, militants attacked a security check-post in Arghistan district. One Afghan Border Police (ABP) member was killed and two others were wounded.

The Kandahar governor's spokesman, Samim Khpalwak, said insurgents stormed the security post in Bala Zehrai area of the district. Both sides suffered casualties. (Pajhwok)

**(23)30 Militants ...**

Mujahid, confirmed the killing of only three fighters and injuring of eight others. He claimed inflicting heavy casualties on security forces. (Pajhwok)

**(24)Asia-Pacific...**

changing in global trade regime have been circulated among several countries at present. It made them shift their aspirations to RCEP," the minister said on the sidelines of RCEP negotiation opening ceremony on Tuesday.

The minister said that the delegations were intensifying negotiations in goods, services and investments sectors with major disagreements still persisting. (Xinhua)

**(25)Merkel's ...**

sought to satisfy that by promising that last year's huge migrant influx won't be repeated, backing both a partial ban on face-covering veils and calls for tougher rules on deportation. (AP)

**(26)Russian-Turkish...**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan apologized for the Downing incident, and Moscow began gradually lifting its restrictions on Ankara.

Putin met with the Turkish president in Russia's second largest city of St. Petersburg in August, after which the two have kept frequent phone conversations on bilateral ties and regional hot issues.

Putin held talks with Erdogan during a visit to Ankara in October on the sidelines of the World Energy Congress. (Xinhua)

**(27)U.N. Rights...**

sources that torture remains common in regular criminal investigations in Sri Lanka. "The Committee is concerned that the broad police powers to arrest suspects without a court warrant has led to the practice of detaining persons while conducting the investigations as a means to obtain information under duress," it said. (Reuters)

**(28)Russian Military ...**

killed and one doctor was seriously wounded. Rebel fighters captured eastern Aleppo in 2012. The Syrian government troops and allied forces have recently launched a broad campaign to end their presence in the city. (Xinhua)

**(29)Iraq Approves....**

approved a 17 percent payment from the national budget's total expenditures to Kurdistan's regional government. According to Iraqi law, the annual budget must be approved by the Iraqi presidency following parliamentary approval. (Xinhua)

**(30)About 40....**

the bodies are burned beyond recognition. The debris is scattered," Taj Muhammad Khan, a government official based in Havelian, told Reuters.

Khan, who was at the site of the crash, said witnesses told him "the aircraft has crashed in a mountainous area, and before it hit the ground it was on fire". Images shown on Pakistani TV channels and circulated on social media showed a trail of wreckage engulfed in flames on a mountain slope.

Irfan Elahi, the government's Aviation Secretary, told media the plane suffered engine problems but it was too early to determine the cause of the accident. (Reuters)

**(31)Iran Seeks ...**

and Caucuses. This has helped the country to authoritatively engage with the international economy, he added. (Xinhua)