

US 'Do More' Mantra No Longer Works with Us, Pakistani Minister Tells RT

ISLAMABAD - A visit by the US representative to Pakistan this week was a sharp contrast to the rhetoric Washington used towards Islamabad lately. Threats and demands will not work with the Pakistani government, a cabinet member told RT.

This week Zalmay Khalilzad, US special representative to Afghanistan, visited Islamabad to discuss possible peace talks with the Taliban. The trip comes on the heels of a request by President Donald Trump for Pakistani assistance in dealing with the militant movement, which the US-backed government in Kabul has been unsuccessfully fighting against for 17 years. (Russia Today)

EU Plans to do All Oil Transactions with Other States in Euros

TEHRAN - The European Union is going to ditch the US dollar and use its own currency in oil contracts worth 300 billion euros, an Iranian official said, quoting a European commissioner.

"Based on the news I recently received and was confirmed by a European commissioner, from now on, the EU is going to ditch the US dollar and just use the euro in the financial transactions of all European oil deals with other countries," said Iran's nuclear chief, Ali Akbar Salehi, on Thursday. Speaking to reporters, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said the amount of these transactions is more than €300 billion. "Previously, the EU used to pay 85 percent of the money for the oil it purchased from other countries in US



dollars, but now with this new mechanism, all the money will be paid in euros," he said.

Once the mechanism takes effect, the US dollar will be isolated as a global currency, and the US will no longer be able to use dollars in the current dominating way, Salehi added.

His comments came one day after the EU commission presented its plan

to reduce the dollar's overwhelming dominance of the global economy and to strengthen the role of the euro, particularly for energy transactions. European capitals are increasingly frustrated with the global dominance of the dollar as a reserve currency, which hands the United States unparalleled diplomatic and economic power in a globalized world. (Press TV)

Uzbek Scientist's New Star Theory Supports Einstein, Doubts 'Black Holes'

TASHKENT - A scientist from Uzbekistan created a new theory about stars, according to which Einstein's theory of gravity leads not to black holes, but to objects of a previously unknown type - frozars, Trend reports referring to the Uzbek media.

The author of the new theory is Ph.D. in Physics and Mathematics Zahid Zakir.

Relying on exactly solvable models, he, unexpectedly for himself, came to a rigorous proof of the absence of black holes in Einstein's theory.

"I managed to be the first in the world to understand and prove that the collapse of stars in Einstein gravity has an internal mechanism of self-retardation. (Trend)

(1) Peace to Pave...

representatives said peace was a need which could pave the ground for investment and economic development.

They stressed protection of traders and investors in the country and asked the president to focus more on attracting investments and they would support the government in this regard.

President Ashraf Ghani thanked the traders for sharing their views with him and said the peace process could not be kept secret from the public eyes.

The government has announced the names of its peace negotiators and the consultative board tasked with collecting views from all segments of the society about peace, he said.

"Investors and the government are helpers of each other, we ought to work decisively for economic development of the country until 2024, so our country becomes an exporting nation," the president said. (Pajhwok)

(2) World Bank...

South Asian countries, especially Afghanistan and India, he said. Pakistan had only six weekly flights with each of the two neighbours.

Compared to this, India has 147 weekly flights with Sri Lanka, followed by 67 with Bangladesh, 32 with the Maldives, 71 with Nepal, 22 with Afghanistan and 23 with Bhutan. (Pajhwok)

(3) Dunford Says...

Gen. Dunford, who addressed an event organized by the Washington Post, said that American military presence in Afghanistan is essential to contain terrorists who otherwise would regroup and take revenge on the US.

"Were we not to put the pressure on Al-Qaeda, ISIS (Daesh) and other groups in the region we are putting on today, it is our assessment that, in a period of time their capability would reconstitute, and they have today the intent, and in the future, they would have the capability to do what we saw on 9/11," Dunford said in response to a question about a potential withdrawal of US forces Afghanistan.

He said that his top priority is not to ensure security and stability in Afghanistan, which has been lying in shambles as a result of the 17-year-long war, but to "make recommendations for the deployment of military force that protects the American people, the homeland and our allies."

"The presence that we have in Afghanistan has, in fact, disrupted the enemy's ability to reconstitute and pose a threat to us," Dunford said.

The remarks come as US has accelerated its efforts for helping a political settlement for Afghanistan. In line with these efforts, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad on Thursday visited Kabul for the third time in his multi-nation tour for Afghan peace.

The US envoy left Kabul for Moscow after meeting Afghan leaders. (Tolo news)

(4) Afghanistan...

That's the highest number of terrorism-related deaths reported by a single country in 2017. Iraq had been in that top spot since 2013.

The report says these numbers are due to an increase in attacks by the Taliban and the ISIS affiliate that's active in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The news comes just a few days after President Donald Trump reportedly asked Pakistan for help with Afghan peace talks.

As Newsy previously reported, Pakistan's prime minister Imran Khan said Trump sent him a letter requesting the country's support in solving the ongoing war in Afghanistan, and bringing Taliban insurgents to the negotiating table. (newsy)

(5) Khalilzad Leaves...

team at Geneva Conference on Afghanistan late last month, the statement said.

"Our will for ensuring peace in Afghanistan is serious," Ghani said as quoted in the statement. He added that the joint efforts can help Afghanistan achieve a lasting peace.

Ambassador Khalilzad started his multi-nation tour for Afghan peace this week.

According to the US Department of State, Ambassador Khalilzad's trip includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Belgium, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. The trip will continue until December 20.

The trip is aimed at supporting and facilitating an inclusive peace process in Afghanistan while empowering the Afghan people to decide their nation's fate, the US Department of State said last week. (Tolo news)

(6) UK Ambassador Sir...

"Sir Nicholas Kay will bring a wealth of experience on the political developments in Afghanistan in his new role as NATO's Senior Civilian Representative and I would like to thank him for his tireless work as the British Ambassador to Afghanistan.

"Despite the violence, we have seen tentative steps towards a peace process beginning to

emerge and the UK, along with our international partners, stands firmly with the Afghan government to support their efforts to build peace."

Sir Nicholas Kay is currently serving as UK Ambassador to Afghanistan. He brings an extensive experience on Afghanistan and the South Asia region, having also worked as UK Regional Coordinator for Southern Afghanistan in Helmand in 2006-2007 and as Head of the Pakistani and Afghanistan Section in the South Asian Department of the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office in 1995-1997.

Sir Nicholas Kay will replace Ambassador Cornelius Zimmermann of Germany, who has been in the post since March 2017.

The Senior Civilian Representative carries forward the Alliance's political-military objectives in Afghanistan, representing the political leadership of the Alliance in Kabul officially and publicly.

The role involves liaising with the Afghan Government, civil society, representatives of the international community, and neighbouring countries.

Working closely with the Resolute Support mission, the Senior Civilian Representative provides a direct channel of communication with NATO Headquarters in Brussels. (Pajhwok)

(7) Communities Across...

During one of the events in Kunduz, participants discussed the role of legislation in reported cases of violence against women and stressed that criminal acts should not be informally mediated but rather should be handled by formal justice institutions.

"Violence is a despicable phenomenon that affects many women," said Nahida Asefi, a representative from the Kunduz Department of Women's Affairs. "All of us have the responsibility to work toward the elimination of such violence."

In Kandahar, radio panellist Maryam Durrani, a women's rights activist, described the situation for women in the province as particularly grim. "Women in Kandahar's rural areas don't have access to basic services such as education, healthcare or formal justice mechanisms," she said. "These women are literally confined to their homes where they live a stressful life."

In Herat, and in other events taking place across the country, participants sought to counter misinterpretations about Afghan legislation. "Women are facing challenges in exercising their basic rights in Afghan society," said Farishta Yaqoobi, a women's rights activist and one of the panellists in the discussion. "These are not only

security challenges; they are the harmful traditions."

Another participant at the Herat event, the head of Herat's Government Printing Department, outlined recommendations for dealing with challenges women face in Afghanistan. "The first step to change women's situation in our country is to start awareness programmes with families to convince them that both men and women are equal," said Mahnaz Pirooz.

In Jalalabad and neighbouring provinces, more than 80 speakers, including representatives from civil society, local government, religious institutions, law enforcement and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, participated in local media programmes to draw attention to the seriousness of the problem in the region and to explore new approaches.

"If women in our families are treated in accordance with Islamic rules and the country's laws, there will be no sufferers of violence," said Farmanullah Akhonzada, a religious scholar and a panellist in a UN-backed radio programme broadcast in Nuristan. "If the government and each family make an effort to educate boys and girls, we will witness the elimination of all kinds of violence."

The participants in each of the campaign's events called for thinking about practical steps to end violence against women and restore their status in society. The campaign, which began on 25 November and was organized by UNAMA's regional offices in many provinces across the country, is scheduled to conclude on 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

The UN family in Afghanistan maintains that alongside the effective legal and institutional mechanisms for access to justice, stopping violence against women requires an effort from everyone, not only taking action but also speaking out against violence in homes, workplaces and social settings. (Monitoring Desk)

(8) Afghanistan...

imported from abroad, but shoes are produced inside the country," said fabrics importer Obaidullah. Meanwhile residents have said that imported textiles and clothing is sold at higher prices at local markets.

"Businesses are not in good condition compared to the past, because people's economic condition is not good," said Yaser, a textile seller in Kabul.

"We need to undertake infrastructural work on this sector, the government should accept its responsibility. Government should work in this sector and use the

cotton and raw materials which we have, so that textile factories are reconstructed," said a shopper in Kabul, Nazir Ahmad Rahimi.

Economists say that if the government attracts investment in this sector, the country soon will become self-reliant. (Tolo news)

(9) Afghan Forces...

the ability to resist against security forces. Less areas have remained to be cleared of militants," Khan said.

"The enemies are in dispute with the people not with us. We have prepared technical plans and we have defeated the enemy. The enemy cannot face us," said Abdul Basir Achakzai, Nad Ali police chief.

Afghan soldiers fighting the Taliban in parts of Lashkargah, Nad Ali and Nahri Saraj said Taliban has planted mines in many areas in the districts and that many roads have been damaged due to explosions.

Soldiers said they also get air support by Afghan and foreign forces.

"They (Taliban) had planted mines in the people's houses and around the houses. We defused the mines and now people are very happy with us," said Fazl Bari, an army soldier.

"Our operation is ongoing successfully. We have pushed back the Taliban," said Khalil Ahmad, an army soldier in Helmand.

Helmand officials said they will establish security check posts in cleared areas. (Tolo news)

(10) Nearly 5,000...

to the war affected people. Meanwhile, Naqibullah Faiq, Faryab governor, told Pajhwok that he had ordered district chiefs and local officials to survey and find the exact numbers of displaced families in their areas before they receive food and other essential items.

He assured to procure and provide essential items for the displaced families and said, the central government and aid organizations should also take action for helping these people.

Faiq said that the displaced people would face with severe problems due to coldness of weather and shortage of primary items if they did not receive help on time.

Chahari Qul, one of the displaced person from Qarghan district said that he along with seven-member family left their home and currently resided in Andkohi district for their survival.

"The weather is cold, we have no place for sleep, we have no food and water, the government should pay attention to us," he said. (Pajhwok)