

**(1) Rapid US...**

Daudzi told CNN that while the negotiations have brought "clarity," neither side has fully agreed to anything.

The Taliban are demanding the United States commit to a withdrawal schedule and the United States wants the Taliban to commit to attacking al Qaeda and ISIS after the deal, he said. One key point is not close to being resolved.

The Taliban refuses to talk face to face with the Afghan government, Daudzai said.

"I think they (Taliban leaders) are worried that unless there is withdrawal schedule announced by US troops, if they meet with the Afghan government (it) would demoralize their commanders and field soldiers," Daudzi said. "Why are we fighting if you are talking?"

The Afghan government has always been willing to meet with the Taliban, said Daudzi, the former interior minister of Afghanistan who now leads the High Peace Council of Afghanistan, a group created in 2011 to spearhead reconciliation efforts.

When asked whether the possible pullout of US troops was a major concern, Daudzi said, "We judge the relationship on the ground. We don't see any practical consequences yet. But a pressure from President Trump -- that (he is) going withdraw and reduce costs -- that pressure in a way creates concern, but also creates and opportunity."

Trump tweeted Friday that he "inherited a total mess in Syria and Afghanistan" and that "We spend \$50 Billion a year in Afghanistan and have hit them so hard that we are now talking peace after 18 long years." "The US has about 14,000 troops in the country, most of which are present as part of a larger NATO-led mission to train, advise and assist Afghan forces. The conflict in Afghanistan, known as America's longest war, started after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It has cost more than 2,400 American lives, billions of US dollars and has stretched into its third US presidential administration. More than 45,000 Afghan security personnel have died since 2014, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said recently at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland. (CCN)

**(2) Protesting...**

Badakhshan province, said: "We three candidates were winners in the initial result but due financial and political corruption, names of few persons were removed in the final list at night around 8:30pm against all electoral producers." He accused the IEC of striking 'nighttime deals' with candidates and said they would continue to demand answers.

Saleh Mohammad, a former Wolesi Jirga member and a protesting candidate from eastern Kunar province, said: "The IECC dispatched its final decision to the IEC which violating the election law announced the final result by accepting money and changing names of candidates."

He warned they would not allow those buying the parliament seats to enter the house and urged the IECC to answer their questions.

A number of other protesting candidates expressed similar views and urged the government to resolve their issue at the earliest possible.

Meanwhile, Najibullah Kabuli, leader of Musharakat-i-Milli party told a press conference in Kabul that the October 20 and 21 Wolesi Jirga election were full of challenges and urged the protesting candidates to accept the final result and end their demonstrations. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Afghans Insist...**

Taliban officials met in Qatar last month for the fourth time and for six days. However, the group has refused to talk with President Ashraf Ghani's negotiators.

Other attendants of Nangarhar gathering called on the people to welcome Taliban if they are ready to be part of the system. "They (Taliban) are our brothers. Let them come so that peace is ensured," a tribal elder Osman Shinwari said.

Some politicians argue that President Ghani is creating hurdles for the peace process. They say that the Taliban wants to talk to the Afghan government as part of other several groups who will hold talks with the group on peace. Government has not confirmed or commented on such remarks. But, a tribal elder at Nangarhar gathering, Malik Akhtar, indirectly pointed at the issue and said "if the condition for peace is to leave power, then the power should be left, whether it is the power of a president, a governor or a district governor".

The religious scholars, activists, residents, and members of different political parties who attended a gathering in Faizabad city on Saturday, said the people should be made aware of the details of peace talks as they are aimed at determining their future.

They said they support the peace talks, adding that Taliban should hold face-to-face talks with the Afghan government in order to move the process forward.

"We are concerned about the details of the talks. We have no idea how much the interests of the Afghans have been considered or are being considered in the (peace) talks," said Sadullah Abuman, head of Badakhshan Ulema Council.

Head of Badakhshan Civil Society, Saifuddin Sayis, said they are concerned about the achievements of Afghanistan which "must be maintained in the negotiations".

Meanwhile, representatives of some political parties in Badakhshan said the absence of government in the peace talks is "concerning".

"There is at least a hope to break the stalemate of peace; therefore, we hope that the peace talks should continue despite that we are not in favor of hastening in the process," said Noorullah Baqi, member of Azadagan party, a political party based in Faizabad city of Badakhshan.

"We want the process and we are ready to support it," said Mohammad Ismail, member of Hizb-e-Islami party led by Abdulhadi Arghandiwal.

Besides the Qatar talks last month, representatives of over 40 countries attended the International Contact Group meeting last week in London where Mr. Khalilzad and President Ghani's Special Representative on Regional Affairs for Consensus on Peace had participated.

According to Afghan officials, participants of the ICG meeting announced their support to the Afghan peace process. (Tolo news)

**(4) Moscow Talks...**

Afghan peace and anti-terror fight. She said Russia is concerned about Daesh activities.

"We are closely cooperating with Pakistan on counterterrorism efforts and Afghanistan peace. We are worried about the expansion of Daesh activities there," Zakharova said.

The High Peace Council (HPC), meanwhile, said they support any action that facilitates face-to-face talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

"No doubt, we welcome the moves which are being taken for starting peace negotiations, facilitating peace process and supporting the process," HPC spokesman Sayed Ehsan Taheri said.

"Both Taliban and the Afghan politicians have accepted the invitation for attending the meeting. I think the Taliban and politicians will share concerns they have about the peace process," said Nazar Mohammad Mutmaen, a political affairs analyst.

On November 2018, Moscow hosted a meeting on Afghan peace which was attended by representatives of the Taliban and envoys from 11 countries including the United States.

From Afghanistan, a delegation of the High Peace Council had attended.

Mohammad Mohaqiq, the second deputy of chief executive of the National Unity Government; Mohammad Ismail Khan, a prominent member of Jamiat-e-Islami party; Atta Mohammad Noor, the former governor of Balkh; and former president Hamid Karzai reportedly will travel to Moscow to meet Taliban representatives on the Afghan peace.

Speaking at a gathering in Kabul on Friday, Mohaqiq said Afghanistan politicians have created a political opportunity for peace.

"He (President Ghani) does not want peace; he is enjoying the presidency. He says we will reach peace within the next five years, while 200 people are killed on a daily basis and, if we count it, it will be 680,000 people in one year. It means that peace will be achieved after the death of 680,000 people," Mohaqiq said. "Afghanistan politicians and Jihadi leaders have created a political opportunity (for peace) and will bring peace with the help of the nation."

This comes as representatives of over 40 countries attended the International Contact Group meeting in London this week where US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad and President Ashraf Ghani's Special Representative on Regional Affairs for Consensus on Peace also participated. The participants announced their support to the Afghan peace process. (Tolo news)

**(5) Urea Factory...**

Abdul Rahman Afghan, the factory director, also confirmed to Pajhwok the gas supply pipeline was repaired late on Friday night. He praised the security forces for resolving the issue. He urged the Taliban militants not to threaten public projects. (Pajhwok)

**(6) Tehran Supports...**

US and other countries by terrorist groups.

Afghan government has not so far commented on the accuracy of the mentioned news. (IRNA)

**(7) Kabul Control...**

government controlled or influenced 53.8% of the total number

of districts. This represents a decrease of seven government-controlled or influenced districts compared to last quarter and eight since the same period of 2017. 12.3% of Afghanistan's districts are now reportedly under insurgent control or influence. 33.9% of districts are contested. -- USFOR-A reported that the assigned (actual) personnel strength of the ANDSF as October 31, 2018, was 308,693 personnel - or 87.7% strength. ANDSF strength decreased by 3,635 personnel since last quarter and is at the lowest it has been since the RS mission began in January 2015.

-- USFOR-A declassified information on female personnel in the ANDSF this quarter. The information reveals that the ANDSF had 4,735 female personnel in its ranks - less than 2% of its current assigned strength. The number of women in the ANDSF increased by about 200 since last quarter and 101 personnel since the same period in 2017.

-- According to U.S. Air Forces Central Command (AFCENT), U.S. air assets in Afghanistan dropped 6,823 munitions in the first 11 months of 2018. This year's figure was already 56% higher than the total number of munitions released in 2017 (4,361), and is more than five times the total in 2016.

-- The number of attacks claimed by IS-K, the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan, decreased this quarter. According to ACLED, the group claimed three attacks in Afghanistan this quarter that killed 20 people, compared to 14 claimed attacks last quarter that killed 96 people. However, there were 74 attacks this quarter conducted by unidentified armed groups - some of which could have been IS-K - that killed 220 people.

-- The Department of Justice (DOJ) reports that the Afghan government has made insufficient progress to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. DOJ also reported that the Afghan government has not yet demonstrated sufficient motivation or action to deter future corrupt actors, or to convince the Afghan people that the government is serious about combatting corruption.

-- Narcotics trafficking remains a widespread problem, with CSTC-A observing senior Afghan security force leaders and civilian provincial authorities often controlling narcotics trafficking networks in the western, southwestern, and northern regions.

-- Despite interdictions, arrests, prosecutions and narcotic seizures, the cumulative opium seizures for the past decade are equivalent to merely 7.5% of 2018's total opium production as reported by UNODC.

-- As of December 22, the International Organization on Migration reported that 757,292 undocumented Afghans returned from Iran in 2018. DOD says that 96% of the Afghan returnees from Iran are unskilled or semiskilled single male laborers under age 30, a population that could be vulnerable to recruitment into extremist groups or the illicit economy.

-- The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) reported that Afghanistan is experiencing a major livelihood crisis due to a prolonged drought. IPC anticipated that 10.6 million people

would face severe food insecurity due to the drought. According to the UN, the drought affected 229 of 401 districts and displaced approximately 260,000 people.

-- New SIGAR analysis shows that the Afghan government's aggregate domestic revenues grew by more than 9% year-on-year, while sustainable domestic revenues grew by 14%.

-- Afghanistan jumped 16 spots in the World Bank's Doing Business rankings from 183rd to 167th among the 190 economies measured. According to the Bank, the jump in the rankings was due to improvements to Afghanistan's legal framework for businesses. (Pajhwok)

**(8) Textbooks...**

out of ten in their schedule and the shortage of books had negative impact on their study.

According to him, high school graduates from Helmand do not perform well in the university entrance test because they lack books to study.

Abdullah Jan, a civil society activist, said without textbooks students could not learn their lessons in a right way.

He said Helmand province not only lacked textbooks but also faced with the shortage of professional teachers.

Helmand education director Daud Shah Safari told Pajhwok that they had received 200,000 textbooks this ongoing year and had distributed them among students.

"We need for one and a half million textbooks but we have so far received 200,000, which are not enough," he said, but he did not know the reason behind the shortage of books.

Safari added they had 118,000 Dari language textbooks which they exchanged with the educational department of western Herat province's Pashto version.

He said the exchanged books were for students of grade one to six and the process to distribute them among students in Helmand had started. He said another 27,000 textbooks provided by UNICEF would be distributed soon. (Pajhwok)

**(9) President Ghani...**

appointed as head of PPS.

He was appointed as Deputy Minister of Interior for Security last year.

Meanwhile, Gen. Najib Aman was appointed as head of counterterrorism department of Ministry of Interior in 2016.

Hours after reports on the removal of the officials, the National Security Advisor Hamdulh Mohib's office said in a statement that new deputies were appointed for the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

According to Mohib's office, Abdul Saboor Qane was appointed as first Deputy Minister of Interior, Khoshal Sadat as Senior Deputy Minister of Interior for Security and Mahir Yaqubi was appointed as head of counterterrorism department of the ministry. (Tolo news)

**(10) Jalalabad Bomb...**

Public Health Hospital Director Inamullah Myakhel confirmed to Pajhwok a woman injured in a blast in the city was taken to hospital.

However, Saifur Rahman, an eyewitness, told Pajhwok the bomb blast injured a woman and a shopkeeper traveling in a rickshaw.

There has been no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast. (Pajhwok)