

**(1) Pakistan's Army...**

Bajwa's presence is particularly significant as both Afghan and U.S. officials ratchet up pressure on Pakistan to close Taliban sanctuaries on its soil. Islamabad denies charges that it harbors militants. (AP)

**(2) Sayyaf, Saudi...**

Afghanistan and a number of other Muslim countries had sacrificed a lot in fighting against terrorism, he said.

Saudi Arabia, which enjoys an important position among Islamic countries, could play a better role in ensuring peace and ending the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, Badr quoted Sayyaf as saying. He said Sayyaf also talked with Saudi officials on the problems of the Afghans living in the holy land. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Uzbekistan Cuts...**

The NSA also held talks with Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Khafizovich Kamilov on security, economic and diplomatic ties.

Kamilov briefed him on preparations for an upcoming peace conference in Tashkent. He said Uzbekistan was committed to peace and stability in Afghanistan and would continue efforts in this regard.

Atmar briefed Uzbek officials on attracting investment and the facilities offered to businessmen. Shah hailed the NSA visit as a decisive and successful.

Uzbekistan has declined the cost of electricity exported to Afghanistan from 7.6 cents to five a unit. The new price will take effect this month. (Pajhwok)

**(4) Afghans Stage...**

He alleged terrorists trained in Pakistan were continued to be sent to Afghanistan for carrying out attacks.

Shinwari said the protestors shared their demands and a resolution with the European Parliament.

The resolution letter, a copy of which was obtained by Pajhwok, urged the international community to impose political, economic and military sanctions on Pakistan and drag the Pakistani military to the International Court of Justice. (Pajhwok)

**(5) NZ Volunteers...**

prime minister has asked the AG to investigate the claims made in the book Hit & Run.

"We believe only a full and independent Royal Commission of Inquiry can result in the truth to be found and justice to be done. We will continue for our voice to be heard," Aida Tavassoli added. (Pajhwok)

**(6) Afghan Officials...**

familiar with the backdoor negotiations. The problem, however, is that neither is talking to the other or to the High Peace Council, which was created by the government to talk peace with the Taliban, they said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the contacts.

Hakim Mujahid, a member of the High Peace Council, confirmed that Stanikzai still has regular contacts with the Taliban's point man for peace talks, Mullah Abbas Stanikzai. The two are not related. Mujahid — who was the Taliban's representative to the United Nations during the group's five-year rule of Afghanistan that ended in 2001 — said the group would not respond well to Trump's tough talk. "The language of power, the language of threat will not convince Afghans to surrender," he said.

Andrew Wilder, vice president of the Asia Program at the U.S. Institute of Peace, said multiple players in Kabul have contacts with the Taliban. "But this isn't being done in a coordinated manner to achieve clearly defined objectives," he said. Later this month, representatives from dozens of countries are to meet for a second time in the Afghan capital for the so-called Kabul process aimed at forging a path to peace. The first round was held in June.

Still, the latest spate of violence has limited options for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who is also fending off a mini-revolt within his own government, feuding with the vice president as well as a powerful northern governor. Meanwhile, the former No. 2 of the Taliban, Aga Jan Motasim,

who still counts the radical religious movement's leader Mullah Habaitullah Akhonzada among his friends, warned that Trump's strategy of using the military to force a more compliant Taliban to the negotiation table could lead to more suicide attacks.

From within his fortress style house in Kabul, protected by steel gates and gunmen, Motasim said he wants to be a bridge between the government and Taliban.

Motasim was a senior member of the Taliban leadership shura, or council, until 2010 when he was shot 12 times after advocating peace negotiations with the Afghan government. Blame for the shooting has been directed at both elements within the Taliban who opposed peace talks and Pakistan's powerful spy agency, often seen as the force behind the Taliban.

Motasim now travels in a bullet-proof car and even his friends have to be announced by men with weapons before they are allowed to enter. He spends his time between Kabul, where he talks to the government, and in Turkey, from where he can contact his former Taliban colleagues.

The 2010 shooting of Motasim in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi reflects the deadly conundrum that confounds efforts to find a peaceful end to Afghanistan's war.

Pakistan is accused of giving sanctuary to the Taliban to assert influence in Afghanistan and to counter what it sees as growing influence of India in Afghanistan. Pakistan flatly denies the allegation, but Taliban who have advocated peace talks that threaten to sideline Pakistan have often ended up arrested, dead or forced to live elsewhere.

Pakistan has its own complaints about Afghanistan, saying it allows its territory to be used by anti-Pakistan militants who have staged horrific attacks in Pakistan. It also charges that Afghanistan is being used by hostile India to destabilize its troubled border regions.

The United States has suspended military aid to Pakistan to press it into kicking out Taliban. But Washington also says it sees Pakistan as key to bringing a peaceful end to the Afghan war.

Increasingly, the Taliban have gained control of areas inside Afghanistan. Even Washington's own Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, says more than half of Afghanistan is either under direct Taliban control or under their influence. Other estimates put the figure as high as 70 percent.

Washington's reaction to the news of Taliban territorial gains has been to prevent SIGAR from releasing estimates of territory gained or lost by the government, the special inspector general's office reported last month. Washington has also classified information regarding the strength and performance of Afghanistan's security forces.

In a report late last year SIGAR said \$72 billion of the \$120 billion spent in Afghanistan since the war began went to the country's security.

"Clearly, the time is ripe to ask why an undertaking begun in 2002 and costing \$70 billion has — so far — not yielded bigger dividends," the report said. (ABC NEWS)

**(7) Afghan Intelligence...**

the Haqqani terrorist network for planning the attack.

He said the car bomb was detonated shortly after it was captured and around 250 kgs of explosives, 8 rockets, some hand grenades, and some other explosives were also discovered from the vehicle.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

This comes as a group of insurgents launched a coordinated attack on a non-governmental organization's compound in Jalalabad city late last month, leaving at least three dead and twenty five others wounded.

According to the local officials, three people including two security guards of the Save the Children office were killed and twenty five others including four security guards of the office were wounded.

The officials further added that the militants launched the attack near the NGO compound by initially detonating a vehicle packed with explosives triggering a standoff

that lasted for several hours before all militants were shot dead. (KP)

**(8) New Book Exposes...**

intelligence services remained throughout "an incubator and enabler of extremism."

Coll concludes that Washington's inability "to solve the riddle" of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and "to stop its covert interference in Afghanistan" constituted the "greatest strategic failure of the American war."

In the book, Coll has also talked about the developments in Afghanistan following the assassination of Ahmad Shah Massoud until 2016 and how the US decided to intervene in Afghanistan.

Coll also points towards the payment of money by the CIA to the opponents of the Taliban to persuade them to cooperate with the US.

According to Coll, Taliban leaders who were afraid of the US's military power were looking to surrender to the US through a ceremonial mechanism, therefore Taliban's founding leader Mullah Omar wrote a letter to former president of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai and other Taliban leaders, but Washington in that epoch of time was pursuing only a military solution.

"We did fail to achieve our goals and why we are still in Afghanistan, so I want to pick four themes that were occurring in the narrative and may be give you a (sense) of some of the episodes. One is the problem of our warring at some stages of the war, second is the failure of our relationship with Hamid Karzai and the fragility of our investment in democratic Afghan politics more broadly. Third is the illusion that built up in our counter-insurgency war in Afghanistan and finally the failure of political and diplomatic strategy," said Coll.

Of even greater significance, in Coll's view, is Washington's dysfunctional relationship with the government of Pakistan, or more specifically with the Pakistani Army, which effectively calls the shots on all matters related to internal and external security.

Pacifying Afghanistan was always going to pose a challenge and without Pakistani collaboration, it would become next to impossible, Coll writes.

The United States needed two things from Pakistan: first, that it would permit supplies bound for coalition forces in landlocked Afghanistan to transit its territory; and second, that it would prevent al-Qaeda and Taliban remnants from using Pakistan as a sanctuary and operating base.

"In July 2009, the National Security Council also reviewed intelligence reporting on "threat finance," meaning the Taliban's budget. The latest reporting listed the Taliban's key financial resources as fundraising in the Persian Gulf emirates, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which brought in an estimated \$100 million annually, and then drug dealing, protection rackets, local taxation, extortion, and kidnapping.

Doug Lute noted at an interagency meeting that the Taliban appeared to be succeeding with very lean operating funds: "We spend \$60 billion a year," Lute remarked. "They need \$60 million a year," an excerpt from the book reads.

Coll writes that the Pakistani military leaders were playing a double game. United States officials knew they were being had, yet could do little about it. With its own well-established record of having broken promises to Pakistan, Washington was not exactly in a position to call in any markers.

Referring to the mistakes made by the US in Afghanistan, Coll writes that the Americans were not focusing on the double games by the Pakistani military or deliberately neglected such moves.

He writes that former US special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke was looking to Karzai to lose the 2009 presidential elections so that Abdullah Abdullah could come in as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the government, but Karzai was strongly opposed to such a plan.

Yet among policymakers and operators alike, the sense of futility is palpable, writes Coll. If "Directorate 5" has a unifying thread, it's this: Policies formulated on the basis of trial and error aren't likely to work as long as they fail to take

critical factors into account, one book reviewer stated.

In Coll's telling, two such factors in particular stand out. The first is an absence of trust between Washington and Kabul. The longer the Americans stayed the more difficult it became to persuade Afghans that their presence was helpful and their purposes benign, the revue stated.

Over time, Karzai, the West's chosen leader of "liberated" Afghanistan, came to see the United States as an occupying power — part of the problem, rather than part of the solution. Karzai believed, not without reason, that United States officials paid lip service to his concerns, were willing to cut deals behind his back and on occasion plotted to replace him with someone more accommodating. (Tolo news)

**(9) Foreign Nationals...**

were killed and six others including a Tajikistani militant were wounded.

In the meantime, the Shaheen Corps said the Afghan forces discovered and defused a barrel bomb planted on a roadside in Baharak-district.

The anti-government armed militant and terrorist groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

This comes as counter-terrorism operations involving airstrikes both by the Afghan forces and the US military are underway in Badakhshan and other provinces in the North and Northeastern parts of the country. (KP)

**(10) NUG Committed...**

women are often governed by very traditional practices. In rural communities wives are strong figureheads in their households, but it is still taboo for women and girls to go to school or work.

Forced marriage, often of young girls, is still common in some rural areas where traditional and religious ways of settling disputes are still practiced where the government is weak.

CE Abdullah emphasized that no development process will be made without the gender equality in Afghanistan.

"The National Unity Government supports women rights. Women had 40 percent role in the previous elections and we believe that the percentage will become more in the upcoming elections," he added.

More than hundreds of programs affecting women have been implemented since the previous government was put into power following the invasion and ousting of the Taliban.

The constitution reserves many seats for women; access to education has improved drastically, and many women are now working outside the home. At least in Kabul. (ATN)

**(11) Trump Proposes...**

against the US homeland, citizens overseas or allies and partners.

The budget proposals for the fiscal year 2019, beginning October 1, 2018, include funding to support America's partnership with Pakistan, contingent on Islamabad taking appropriate action to expand cooperation with the US.

A request for more than \$630 million in civilian assistance supports Trump's new strategy to empower the people of Afghanistan to take ownership of their future.

In addition, the budget strengthens and sustains improvements in education, health, governance, and other sectors that are essential for securing a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, the White House said.

It allows the United States to honor the pledge made at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, which anticipated gradually declining assistance levels.

It requests \$256 million for Pakistan in economic and other assistance to help increase stability, promote economic growth and create opportunities for US businesses. (Pajhwok)

**(12) Tehran to Host...**

Iranian investors to invest in different sectors in Afghanistan," ACCI spokesman Seyam Pesaraly said. Meanwhile, a number of economic experts said Iran is one of the countries that Afghanistan can increase its exports to and also use it to reach other countries.

According to them, Chabahar is a

good alternative for Pakistan's Karachi Port and government must maximize Chabahar for the benefit of Afghan traders and businessmen.

"Iran can become a good economic partner to Afghanistan because Iran's industries now are professional and also the standards that are being practiced in Iran are good standards in Asia," economic analyst Qais Mohammad said.

ACCI statistics show that currently the trade volume between Afghanistan and Iran is over \$2 billion USD a year which shows a big increase against the previous solar year. (Tolo news)

**(13) 43 Taliban...**

added 43 Taliban rebels were killed, 20 other wounded and several weapons and motorbikes seized by security forces, who suffered no casualties.

But Qar iYousuf Ahmadi, the Taliban spokesman, rejected the security forces' claim. Only four rebels suffered casualties in the gunbattle, he said.

He claimed the fighters had captured two security check-posts and inflicted casualties on a large number of security personnel. (Pajhwok)

**(14) Robberies, Drug...**

blocked my way and threatened me with death if I did not give them my cell phone."

A public representative, Niamatullah Sidiqi, believed robberies had 50 percent increased compared to last year. He said the level of crimes had gone also up with detective and security organs paying no attention.

"Stealing incidents and the number of drug addicts in Nimroz have reached an alarming level and seem beyond the control of security officials," he added.

One security official confirmed robbery incidents were increasing day by day in the city and linked the situation to the increasing number of drug addicts.

But police spokesman Gulam Mohammad Omer, rejected claims that robberies had increased and said several robbery groups had been arrested and 20 stolen motorcycles recovered as well.

Abdullah SherAnzi, crime branch chief, told Pajhwok that crimes had considerably decreased during the past three months and Nimroz ranked first in decreasing crimes and robberies on the national level.

He added around 13 cases had taken place in the province and all the perpetrators had been arrested by security organs. People who were buying stolen things had also been detained.

"A hakim for whom about 40 to 50 drug addicts worked has been detained by police and is currently under police custody," he informed. (Pajhwok)

**(15) Five Insurgents...**

the operations."

"The forces launched 11 clearing operations, 21 special operations in eight provinces while the air forces carried out 33 support operations," the statement said.

However, no further details were provided. (Tolo news)

**(16) Russia Given...**

military nature of the US strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia."

"It is also regrettable that it fails to reflect properly the danger emanating from the Afghan wing of the Islamic State terrorist organization [Daesh], and the problem of Afghan narcotic drug production is fully ignored," Mantytsky stressed.

He said the growing anti-Russian rhetoric in Afghanistan is aimed at distracting global attention from mistakes on the part of the US and NATO in this region.

"Unfortunately, we are seeing a growing propaganda activity in Afghanistan directed against Russia and its policy in the region," he said.

Mantytsky said rejected all claims of Russia supporting the Taliban and said "a staged campaign to discredit our country" is behind these "absurd fabrications."

"This is being done not just to shift responsibility, but to distract attention from multiple mistakes made by the US and the NATO members in more than 16 years of their military presence in Afghanistan," Mantytsky added. (Tolo news)