

(1) Ghani Wants...

insisted proper standards were needed for construction of the country's roads. "We should no longer depend on others to plan, design and implement projects for us."

Ghani asked the ministry officials to evolve an effective project management system and their financial sources to reduce construction costs. (Pajhwok)

(2) Stable Afghanistan...

Afghan border had dismantled terrorist networks and their infrastructure.

Advisor on foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz, special assistant on foreign affairs Tariq Fatemi, political secretary to the prime minister Dr. Asif Kirmani, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Senator Afrasiab Khattak and member National Assembly Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao were present at the meeting.

During the meeting, Afghan lawmakers condemned the attack on a school in Peshawar. They said peace and stability was in larger interests of both the countries.

The lawmakers also invited Sharif to visit Afghanistan at his convenience. The Afghan delegation was jointly led by Chairman International Affairs Commission of the Wolesi Jirga Abdul Qader Zazai and Senator Baz Mohammad Zormati.

The delegation is in Islamabad to attend the 12th session of the Dialogue between parliamentarians of both the countries. (Pajhwok)

(3) Afghanistan...

He said a "formal" end to the conflict does not mean it's actually over. "Has President Obama not learned from his mistakes in Iraq?" Boehner asked in a statement which was carried in a report by local newspaper Politico.

The statement further added "No one wants to see our military men and women in harm's way, but as we've seen in Iraq with the rise of ISIL, arbitrary, political deadlines on war are rarely observed or honored by our terrorist enemies committed to enslaving religious minorities, raping women, beheading journalists and slaughtering Americans."

The remarks by the Ohio Republican comes as the US and NATO formally concluded the combat mission in Afghanistan after 13 years, during an event on Sunday in Kabul.

The US President Barack Obama has called the conclusion of the US combat mission in Afghanistan a "milestone" for the country, saying that the American people and nation is more secure.

In a separate speech to American troops during a Christmas Day visit to Marine Corps Base in Hawaii, Obama said Afghanistan will not become a source of terrorist attacks again.

He said Afghanistan has a chance to rebuild its own country because of the extraordinary service of the men and women in American armed forces.

Around 10,800 US troops are expected to remain in Afghanistan as the NATO-led combat mission in Afghanistan ends by the end of this month.

The Obama administration said earlier this month about 10,800 troops behind for at least the first few months of 2015 to help provide support to Afghan security forces. (KP)

(4) ANSF Prepared ...

Launched by the United Nations Security Council in December 2001, ISAF was conducting operations

in Afghanistan aimed at fighting the insurgency. It was also directly involved in the development of the ANSF through training and equipping.

On December 28, NATO officially ended its ISAF mission in Afghanistan. On January 1, the alliance is set to launch the Resolute Support mission there, which does not envisage any combat operations for NATO. The bloc will continue to provide training and financial assistance to Afghan forces. The new mission will bring some 12,000 personnel from NATO member states as well as 14 partner countries.

Belcher explained that the rotation process will be ongoing throughout the first several months of 2015 as troop contributing nations bring their service members into Afghanistan and service members from various nations depart at the end of their rotations there. "We don't foresee any issues with troop rotations at this time," he added. "We all are interested in an Afghanistan capable of providing security and stability for its own citizens."

NATO's mission in Afghanistan has been the Alliance's largest and one of its longest-running military operations, with 50 coalition countries contributing a peak of 140,000 troops over a 13-year campaign, according to the White House.

As of October, more than 34,000 troops from NATO and partner countries were deployed in Afghanistan under the ISAF mission, with the United States accounting for nearly 70 percent.

According to the NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg, the ISAF mission has been a success, as strong security forces have been built up from scratch in Afghanistan and the alliance's own member states have become safer as international terrorists have been denied a safe haven. (Sputnik)

(5) NATO Has...

"It is clear that over the thirteen years ISAF has been present in Afghanistan its activity has failed to bring about stabilization in that country," the Russian Foreign Ministry said. It said that "the multi-dimensional threats to security, such as religious extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking, which the mission has fought against since 2001 are not only still there, but tend to increase." Under the UN Security Council's Resolution of December 12, 2014, backed by Russia, NATO will deploy its Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan as of January 1, 2015, the Foreign Ministry said, adding although the officially declared tasks are exclusively instruction and consultative assistance to Afghanistan's national security force "we regard Resolute Support as the ISAF's 'heir at law'."

"We proceed from the assumption that the NATO continues to bear a great share of responsibility for training Afghan law enforcers and military and for maintaining security in Afghanistan in general," the Ministry said. (Pajhwok)

(6) Turkish Forces...

has accomplished fundamental jobs for restoring sustainable peace from Korea to Kosovo and from Lebanon to Bosnia. We are proud of your jobs and cooperation," Bakir told the ceremony.

The foreign forces deployed in the airport help nearly 400 flights on weekly basis along with providing other necessary services to

the domestic and foreign passengers. (Tolonews)

(7) New Role for ...

I also want to pay tribute to the 41 ADF personnel who lost their lives and those Australians who were wounded or became ill during this mission," he said in a statement.

"Our own combat role finished at the end of 2013, and since then we have been focused on train, advise, assist roles with the ANSF, and we remain strongly committed to this task as we move into Operation Highroad," Mulhall said.

Mulhall said there were still risks for Australian troops in Afghanistan.

"Our men and women continue to be exposed to danger and as such the Australian Defense Force is committed to ensuring all activities that our personnel undertake are thoroughly risk managed," he said. (Xinhua)

(8) 75 Foreign...

casualties after that time was increasing during violence and clashes with militants.

According to the iCasualties.org that tracks fatalities of foreign forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, the number of foreign forces lost in Afghanistan in 2014 was 75 personnel.

Among those killed were 50 were Americans, six British and the rests from other countries. The website also shared soldiers wounded in Afghan combats and then lost their lives in hospitals.

In 2014, at least 12 foreign soldiers were killed in February and June, which were the deadliest months for ISAF. In contrast, March, November and October saw few fatalities suffered by the coalition.

American forces' media office in Kabul told Pajhwok Afghan News it had no exact figures into casualties but offered to check the website as source of information.

Sources said that the main reason behind less casualties suffered by foreign forces in 2014 in Afghanistan was because they handed over military responsibility to Afghan forces.

The iCasualties.org listed that 3,475 foreign soldiers were killed and nearly 30,000 others wounded during the past 13 years.

The site added southern Helmand was the most violent province for foreign forces where 952 soldiers were killed followed by Kandahar where 555 foreign servicemembers died. It said that the capital Kabul stood third in that line where 183 personnel lost their lives to violence of different nature.

However, Badakhshan, Sar-I-Pul and Daikundi were the provinces where no foreign soldiers were killed during the past 13 years.

Soldiers from 51 countries took part in ISAF military mission. Most of the casualties suffered by American forces as 2,356 soldiers were killed. British was the second country losing 453 soldiers followed by Canada 158 security personnel. France lost 86 soldiers and Germany 54. (Pajhwok)

(9) 8 Journalists ...

He added 80 cases of violence against journalists were also recorded in 2014, most of them conducted by the security forces.

Tawhidi asked the National Unity Government (NUG) leaders to fulfill the commitments of supporting media and freedom of expression they made during their election campaigns. The report comes as re-

cently, a journalist and cameraman for local Metra TV, Zubair Hatami, died of his wounds after being seriously injured in a suicide attack on a French cultural center in Kabul.

Earlier on 16 of this month, the Geneva-based Press Emblem Campaign (PEC) announced that 128 journalists had been killed around the world so far in 2014.

Based on PEC annual report, Gaza is leading the list of most dangerous countries for reporters. The report ranked Afghanistan in seventh dangerous country.

Earlier this year, Sardar Ahmad, a reporter for Agence France-Presse (AFP) was killed along with his wife and their two children in an armed attack on Serena hotel of Kabul. (Tolonews)

(10) Projects worth Mohammad Arif, a cleric, said earlier the provincial government and foreign NGOs had completed some projects in the province. (Pajhwok)

(11) Karzai Meets...

Speaking at his large compound in the capital Kabul, Karzai said he still saw himself as a figure to be reckoned with in Afghan politics, despite stepping down four months ago.

"President Ashraf Ghani and I are meeting very, very often. Or, almost daily," said the 57-year-old scion of an influential Afghan family, who was handpicked by the United States and its allies to rule after the Taliban was overthrown in 2001.

"So it's a relationship that I fully enjoy and have respect for... (On) the issues that have significance to the whole of the Afghan people, I'll be there," he told Reuters in a recent interview. "That's where we meet and discuss, and it's a very good cooperation."

Nazifullah Salarzai, Ghani's spokesman, said the two men met frequently. "President Ghani meets the former Afghan president on a regular basis and seeks his consultations on most national and international issues," he said.

Karzai added that his lifestyle had changed little despite retiring, as he continued to host tribal and religious elders, lawmakers and government officials to discuss current events.

TROUBLE MAKER VS. PEACEMAKER? Once the darling of the international community, Karzai turned troublemaker with fervently anti-Western speeches in his later years in power and by resisting U.S. pressure to sign a crucial security treaty.

Ghani's leadership stands in stark contrast: the former World Bank official has proven a friend to Washington, is less prone to angry public outbursts and is blunt with staff he feels are falling short in their duties. Ghani's first major act as president was to sign the U.S. security agreement allowing a limited number of troops to remain in Afghanistan now the combat operation is over.

The bulk of NATO forces left Afghanistan before an end-2014 deadline, and Afghan security forces must cope with a vicious insurgency by Taliban militants that has killed thousands of people this year, and an economy hugely reliant on aid.

Kabul-based political analyst Bashir Bezhani said there was a risk that Ghani's strong ties with the international community could weaken if Karzai wielded too much influence.

"Our ties with the West, es-

pecially with the U.S., were deeply damaged," Bezhani said. "I think President Ashraf Ghani should move forward, not look back."

Karzai would not go into detail about what advice he gave Ghani, but he criticized the United States.

"I hope (the United States) will change and they will now focus entirely on helping and building a stronger, better Afghanistan," he said.

A senior official in Karzai's former administration who remains close to him said U.S. relations were discussed.

"Karzai tells Ashraf Ghani to be very cautious dealing with the U.S. and (that he) must react quickly and strongly when they breach the (security) agreement," said the source, who declined to be named.

KARZAI CALLS FOR UNITY

Asked whether Washington was worried by Karzai's active role in politics, a senior U.S. administration official said:

"The United States is confident that President Ghani and Chief Executive (Abdullah) Abdullah are forging an inclusive, effective government that is responsive to all Afghans."

Bette Dam, author of "A Man and a Motorcycle", a book on how Karzai came to power, said it was not surprising the former leader was still so active politically.

"Karzai will, as much as he can, represent his tribe to maintain power for them, something that might not always be in the interest of Ghani," Dam said.

"But Karzai is more powerful, and that's why Ghani needs to take him more seriously and deal with it, (whether) he wants to or not."

In his interview, Karzai urged Afghans to be patient, as Ghani and his de facto deputy Abdullah, previously locked in a long dispute over this year's election outcome and how to share power, tried to form a government acceptable to both.

"Both the president and the CEO must be given time to make their decisions and appoint the people they consider to be right for their position," Karzai said. (Reuters)

(12) Deeper Pak...

school attack, which claimed 142 lives, mostly school children.

The delegation members included members of Mehrano Jirga or upper house of parliament and Wolesi Jirga or lower house of parliament. Aziz recalled that President Ashraf Ghani to Pakistan, both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the president agreed on evolving and implementing a vision of a comprehensive and enduring partnership between the two countries.

Ghani visit, he noted had paved way for building new phase in Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral relations with a special focus on political engagement, security and counter-terrorism cooperation, deeper trade and economic foundation.

He underlined the need for more frequent people-to-people exchanges including youth, businesspersons, media, cultural and professional groups.

The Afghan delegation expressed support for a closer Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship, with focus on cooperation in the political, trade and security areas.

The Afghan delegation's visit is part of the regular Parliamentarians' Dialogue between the two countries. The delegation was led by Senator Baz Mohammad

Zurmati and MP Abdul Qader Zazai. Senator Afrasiab Khattak was also present in the meeting. (Pajhwok)

(13) 75 Norwegia...

will be replaced by a small NATO "training and support" mission.

Norwegian envoy Erling Skjonesberg, who called on First Deputy Chief Executive Officer Eng. Mohammad Khan at his office, promised his country would continue assisting Afghanistan, a statement from Khan's office said.

Skjonesberg said Norway had been supporting Afghanistan in areas of reconstruction, security and education over the past 13 years as part of the NATO's mission and his country would continue its relations and cooperation with the Afghans post-2014.

He said 75 Norwegian troops would stay on in Afghanistan after this year as part of the NATO's Resolute Support Mission to train and support Afghan forces.

The ambassador said Norway had greatly assisted Afghanistan through the United Nations and the World Bank.

Mohammad Khan thanked the ambassador for his country's considerable contributions to Afghanistan over the past many years. He said Norway had assisted Afghanistan in areas of agriculture, education, health and reconstruction under sensitive circumstances. (Pajhwok)

(14) Afghanistan, ...

agenda in 2014.

NATO strongly condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support to separatists in Eastern Ukraine and decided to downgrade cooperation with Moscow.

At the same time, NATO pledged political and practical support to Ukraine and reaffirmed NATO's support for a political settlement of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.

In September, the Alliance's 28 leaders agreed at their Wales Summit in the UK to make the Alliance fitter, faster and more flexible, so it can meet any security challenge, and they also decided to strengthen NATO's ties with partners.

The former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen announced that "with the decisions we have taken here in Wales, NATO will remain the bedrock of our collective defence." On 1 October, Jens Stoltenberg, a former prime ministers of Norway took up his post as NATO Secretary General replacing Rasmussen.

In the Middle East, NATO condemned the atrocities being committed by ISIL but clarified that it will not take part in any air strikes against the group.

Stoltenberg met with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in Brussels in December for a discussion on security and political developments in Iraq, Syria, and the wider region. He assured al-Abadi of the Alliance's continued commitment to the NATO-Iraq partnership.

The first ministerial-level meeting of the anti-ISIL coalition of 60 nations was held at NATO headquarters on December 3 after an invitation by US Secretary of State John Kerry.

In a joint statement Coalition partners reaffirmed their commitment to work together under a common, multifaceted, and long-term strategy to degrade and defeat ISIL.

NATO also took steps to strengthen ties with its partners in the Gulf and Mediterranean region.

Stoltenberg called for deeper political and practical cooperation with Gulf partners in a visit to Doha, Qatar on 11 December.

The NATO chief and ambassadors of NATO's 28 nations were joined by the 4 partners of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, at a seminar to mark the tenth anniversary of this partnership.

At the seminar, the Secretary General set out three priority areas for increased cooperation between NATO and the Gulf region. First, Stoltenberg called for greater cooperation between military forces, raising the example of the Libya campaign as an example of NATO and Gulf partners working effectively side-by-side.

Secondly, he urged more cooperation on maritime security, and invited Gulf partners to join NATO's "Ocean Shield" counter-piracy mission.

Thirdly, Stoltenberg spoke of a need to deepen NATO's political consultations, both with individual partners and with the Gulf Cooperation Council. The NATO chief called such consultations a "solid basis for our practical cooperation".

Stoltenberg and the 28 Permanent Representatives to the North Atlantic Council discussed regional security and NATO-Jordan cooperation during talks with King Abdullah II on 10 December in Amman, Jordan.

The high-level NATO delegation was in Jordan to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Mediterranean Dialogue, and was joined by the ambassadors of the seven nations (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) participating in the partnership forum. (KUNA)

(15) NATO Awar...

operation in Afghanistan back in 2010.

Last week, parliament supported the deployment of another 20 soldiers in the new non-combat NATO-led mission called "Resolute Support", which starts in January 2015. (Agencies)

(16) Helmand ...

and children sitting on floor often fell ill.

Education Director Abdul Matin Jafar confirmed the problem, saying its victims There are a total of 383 schools in Helmand and of them, 264 are operational, where 192,000 children are studying. (Pajhwok)

(17) Engineers...

departments. In Pul-e-Khumri in Baghlan, the last workshop came to a close 30th December 2014, with 25 civil engineers from various departments and municipalities successfully completing the training. One of the main objectives was to refresh engineers' basic knowledge and skills. The workshops also aimed to enhance engineers' capabilities in the area of planning, implementation and supervision of public construction projects.

Both aim to strengthen the capacities and infrastructure of governmental authorities in provinces and districts in northern Afghanistan. (Wadsam)

(18) 5 Projects...

Hashim, the district administrative chief, said it was the first time playgrounds were constructed for the youth in the district. The 2,800 square meters grounds were inaugurated on Wednesday and they took three months to complete, he said. (Pajhwok)