

Quote of the Day

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.

Mark Twain

Trump Told Ghani He'd Consider Sending More Troops

WASHINGTON - President Trump would consider beefing up the US military presence in Afghanistan, according to a report.

Trump "said he would certainly continue to support Afghanistan security forces and will consider a proposal for more troops after an assessment," an official told The Wall Street Journal about a phone conversation between the president and Afghan leader Ashraf Ghani last month. The US has been at war in Afghanistan since the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 - with an end now where in sight. The US now has 8,400 troops in Afghanistan. Trump, who condemned US military interventions during the heated campaign, also threatened



to go back to war in Iraq in remarks Saturday, his first full day in office, at the Central Intelligence Agency. "To

the victor belong the spoils," the president told the intel agency. "So we should have kept the oil. But, OK,

maybe you'll have another chance," he added. Despite the comments, the White House has not officially announced military interven-

tions anywhere since the newly-sworn in president came into office. (NYP)

Uzbekistan, Afghanistan Keen to Boost Trade Turnover



TASHKENT - Uzbekistan and Afghanistan signed a bilateral trade and economic road map on the results of an official visit of the Uzbek delegation to Afghanistan, the Uzbek Foreign Ministry's press service said in a message. The road map's implementation will allow increasing the two countries' trade turnover up to \$1.5 billion in a short period of time. Moreover, several intergovernmental documents aimed at boosting the bilateral cooperation have been signed dur-

ing the visit, according to the message. During the visit, the delegation was led by Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov, said the press service. During the meeting with Afghanistan's President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, the Uzbek foreign minister presented personal message of Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in which the Uzbek head invited his Afghan counterpart to pay an official visit to Uzbekistan. ... (More on P4)... (1)

US Awards \$9.3 Million Contract in Support of AAF



WASHINGTON - The United States has awarded a contract worth \$9.3 million support of the Afghan Air Force (AAF), the US Department of Defense (DoD) said.

"AAI Corp., doing business as Textron Systems, Hunt Valley, Maryland, has been awarded a \$9,352,070 predominantly firm-fixed-price contract for contractor logistics support and maintenance training services," according to a press release by DoD.

The statement further adds "Contractor will provide these services for 24 aircraft to Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air in support of the Afghan Air Force."

"Work will be performed at Kabul, Afghanistan; and Kandahar, Afghanistan, and is expected to be complete by Jan. 31, 2018," the statement said, adding that "This award is the result of a competitive acquisition with four offers received."

According to Defense Department "Fiscal 2017 Afghan Security Forces funds in the amount of \$9,352,070 are being obligated at the time of award. Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, is the contracting activity (FA8617-17-C-6218)."

This comes as the close allies of Afghanistan have stepped up rehabilitation process of the Afghan Air Force in a bid to boost the capabilities of the Afghan forces counter the threats posed by the terrorist networks and groups.

The Afghan Air Force received several fixed-wing aircraft as well as combat helicopters from the United States and India late in 2015 and earlier last year. (KP)

Riyadh-Based Firm's Head Invited to Visit Afghanistan

KABUL - Afghanistan's ambassador has invited the chairman of a major Saudi investment holding company to visit his country. Saudi Arabia Syed Jalal Syed Karim extended the invitation to Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, chairman of Kingdom Holding Company (KHC).

They discussed a number of social and economic issues, according to the Saudi Gazette. The ambassador also extended an invitation to Prince Alwaleed to visit his country. (Pajhwok)

Ghani Asks UN to Hold Conference on Regional Issues

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has urged the United Nations (UN) to hold a conference on important regional issues, his office said on Wednesday.

Ghani met UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča in the morning, a statement from the Presidential Palace said. He congratulated Jenča on his new assignment and wished him success.

Jenča conveyed the newly-appointed secretary general's best wishes to Ghani. The visiting dignitary also referred to important issues such as cooperation on fighting terrorism.

About the UN's role in Afghanistan, Ghani suggested the world body should hold a conference



at the regional level on key issues. Jenča said the UN was ready for cooperation in dealing with regional matters. The UN official said he would share Ghani's suggestion for holding the regional conference

with the secretary general. On fighting against terrorism, Ghani stressed close relations among governments and said it was a matter of concern that some states contacted non-governmental groups. (Pajhwok)

Sartaj Receives British Ambassador to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD - Adviser to the Pakistani Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz Wednesday received the British Ambassador to Afghanistan, Dominic Jermy.

According to a foreign office announcement, he was accompanied by the British High Commissioner to Pakistan Thomas Drew. The two sides discussed the peace and security situation in Afghanistan.

Sartaj shared with the ambassador, Pakistan's success in counter terrorism and its willingness to engage with the government of Afghanistan to improve relations and promote peace and stability



in Afghanistan.

The British ambassador stressed that the United Kingdom looked forward to play a facilitative role to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Both sides agreed on the need of ... (More on P4)... (2)

Afghanistan Improves the Most in Global Corruption Index



KABUL - Afghanistan improved the most in 2016 as its score on the Transparency International index rose four points, the anti-corruption watchdog group said in its latest report released on Wednesday.

However, still Afghanistan was ranked 169th, just ahead of Libya, Sudan and Yemen and perceived the world's seventh most corrupt nation among 100 countries.

The national unity government in Kabul has made more than 50 commitments to address corruption and improve people's living standard.

Earlier, Afghanistan had been the world's first or second most corrupt country but in 2014 Afghanistan jumped to 3rd position and in 2015 to 4th position.

Ghani since taking charge as the president has been fighting against corruption; however, the Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) in a report claimed that Afghan people annually paid \$3 billion in bribes.

Political analyst, Javed Ahmad Ghafoor, said the government had taken some bold steps against corruption. Transparency has been observed in big contracts of ministries including the Ministry of Defence (MoD). But the government should take more serious steps, he said.

According to him, the National Procurement Commission headed personally by President Ghani, had also played a vital role in reducing corruption.

The unit government has also ... (More on P4)... (4)

Concerns Raised over Illegal Mining in Badakhshan



FAIZABAD - Badakhshan's mining and petroleum department on Wednesday raised concerns over the illegal extraction of gold and lapis lazuli by insurgents in the province.

Badakhshan's mining director Mohammad Akbar Anwari, who raised the matter, said terrorists and groups of armed men have

accelerated the extraction of gold from mines in Raghistan district and lapis in Karan-o-Manjan districts.

"After lapis mines, the Raghistan district's gold mines are the second biggest source of income for the Taliban, who are using the money to finance and equip themselves to fight ... (More on P4)... (3)

Taliban Earn \$4.8 Million Annually from Kajaki Dam

LASHKARGAH - The Taliban militants group earn around \$4.8 million annually from Kajaki dam located in the restive southern Helmand province of Afghanistan.

The provincial council officials have said the group earns almost 90 per cent of the income of the dam on yearly basis.

Majid Akhunda, deputy provincial council chief, told RFE/RL that the group has formed a special

unit to collect the income generated from the dam.

He said the 90 per cent income of the dam is almost equal to 500 million Pakistani Rupees which is equivalent to \$4.77 million.

The Taliban militants group has not commented regarding the report so far.

This comes as reports emerged in mid-2016 suggesting that the group has formed a special military unit, ... (More on P4)... (5)

Half of Helmand Population Deprived of Health Services

LASHKARGAH - Local officials on Wednesday said healthcare services in southern Helmand province were short in supply as only half of the province's population accessed such facilities.

Addressing a press conference here, provincial public health director, Mawladad Tobagar, said the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) was providing healthcare services to about a million people in Helmand.

"Helmand has 2.5 million populations and the MoPH provides health services to only 980,000 people, which is not enough," he said.

Tobagar said a number of organizations were also offering healthcare services in Helmand but they were too insufficient.

"These organizations offer high-quality medicines which are very effective, but people still need more services," he added.

The public health director said he had launched a serious campaign against corruption in the department had so far removed 12 graft-tainted officials.

There are a total of 65 healthcare centers in Helmand but the center in Kajaki district has been closed and another one in Washir district was semi-functional, he added.

Three mother-child mortality cases ... (More on P4)... (6)



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