

(1) Taliban, Afghan...

Afghan soil would not again be used to launch terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies. Those talks, also held in Doha, paused for the two days of the "intra-Afghan dialogue," and are expected to resume Tuesday with the hopes of finalizing an agreement.

In a sign that U.S. officials saw progress on the Afghan-Taliban discussions as crucial to moving all the pieces of a comprehensive peace deal forward, Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. special envoy leading the negotiations with the Taliban, was a regular presence on the margins of the intra-Afghan discussions. He attended both the opening and closing sessions and appeared to chat with participants during some of the breaks.

"There was a very friendly atmosphere and sincere atmosphere and everyone shared their views," said Sher Mohammad Abas Stanekzai, the most senior member of the Taliban delegation and their chief negotiator. "When we finalize our negotiations with the Americans and get a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops, then we will enter direct negotiations with the Afghan side for the internal matters of our country."

Nader Nadery, head of the Afghan government civil service commission and one of the participants, said the conference had provided an important platform for sharing grievances.

"I think the two days of discussions has helped our realization of who the Taliban are, what they want, and they know who we are and what we want," he said.

The war has grown particularly violent in recent years, with the death toll rising for Afghan forces, Taliban militants and the civilians stuck in between. Just as the delegates filed in for first morning of discussions, a Taliban bombing on an intelligence facility left 14 people dead and about 170 people wounded. Most of the wounded were civilians, who included schoolchildren.

The joint Afghan-Taliban declaration calls for assuring security for public institutions like schools, hospitals and residential areas. The participants "committed to respect and protect the dignity of people, their life and property and to minimize the civilian casualties to zero," the declaration read.

The statement also called for trust-building measures, like the "unconditional release of elderly, disabled and ill inmates," before the direct negotiations.

"This will help us get to direct intra-Afghan negotiations, but we need to know that 18 years of war cannot be resolved in two days," said Anarkali Honaryar, an Afghan senator and part of the delegation from Kabul. "There were differences of opinion, but both sides displayed great patience in how they shared those opinions. That's a big thing."

Germany and Qatar, the co-hosts of the event, welcomed the declaration, with officials from both countries appearing pleased with how the discussions had turned out. Qatar had tried in April to host the event, but the effort collapsed at the last minute after disagreements over a list of participants.

"We hope that this event will mark the beginning of a meaningful process which will lead to a comprehensive and sustainable peace for Afghanistan," the organizers said in a joint statement.

The two days of dialogue represented the first time the Taliban had engaged in substantial debate on issues, breaking with the former practice of mostly reading prepared statements.

Many of the sessions were tense and emotional. Several of the participants from the Afghan delegation had lost family members to suicide bombings and Taliban attacks. On the insurgents' side, many had spent years in detention.

While the delegation from Kabul challenged the Taliban on their at-

tacks resulting in civilian casualties, the insurgents pushed back by highlighting civilian harm caused by operations of Afghan and U.S. forces. One of the most heated exchanges was over who gets to interpret Islam. When the discussion turned to basic rights like women's education and freedom of press, the Taliban couched their support with the caveat that those rights must be granted within the restrictions of Islam. Skeptics see that stance as allowing them future leverage to restrict freedoms.

One of the Taliban speakers argued that those restrictions would not be an issue for most Afghans, as the modern values propagated by a few urbanites are a product of the West. The debate carried over to a lunch table where Ershad Ahmadi, a former deputy foreign minister, engaged with the Taliban speaker.

"The only way out of this is if you accept the diversity of this country - that I respect your way, and you respect how I live my life," Ahmadi said he told the Taliban official. (Agencies)

(2) Iran Fully ...

Afghanistan but such moves would never be allowed.

He said victims of the conflict in Afghanistan were only Afghans. He reaffirmed that Iran would stand with Afghanistan like a brotherly country in every situation.

Meanwhile, some experts believe Afghanistan should pursue a policy which protects its own interests in the region.

Shokour Najafzada, a civil society activist in Balkh, said the Afghan government should adopt policies which could protect its own interests in the region.

He said the Afghan government policy of regional connectivity was the best one and said no one should be allowed to use the Afghan territory against any other country. (Pajhwok)

(3) Finance Ministry ...

He added that there are some governmental institutions such as the ministry of education that have spend less amount from their budget.

According to the Finance Ministry, there is a 14 percent increase in the national revenues compared to the previous year due to the anti-corruption efforts undertaken by the government.

However, critics doubt regarding the remarks made by the Finance Ministry's spokesman.

"It is interesting. They are spending the budget but poverty is also increasing," said Ghulam Farooq Majroh, a lawmaker from western Herat province. (ATN)

(4) MoFA Counts ...

the Taliban fighters until the group enters direct talks with the government.

He added that the government and its partners are working to create regional and international consensus on peace to find a peaceful solution to the problem.

"Reaching a peace agreement with the Taliban is a key component of reduction of violence. We consider the US commitment to a political solution to be credible and are considering well to build the necessary international consensus with all our partners on peace. Breakthroughs, however, require regional consensus on peace and addressing the Taliban's interdependencies with their supporters," Zaman said.

He said President Ashraf Ghani's recent visit to Islamabad was effective adding that such contacts will assist in decreasing the level of violence and starting direct talks with the Taliban.

Addressing the same event, Mohammad Ehsan Zia, Country Director for Afghanistan programs of United States Institute of Peace also labeled the Doha talks a step forward.

"We are optimistic about the resolution. It is a step forward toward reaching an agreement, removing misunderstanding and trust building for the future Afghan peace

talks," said Zia.

Former president Hamid Karzai in a press release welcomed the intra-Afghan talks in Doha and emphasized for negotiations in the future.

Senate Speaker Fazl Hadi Muslimyar, however, sharply criticized Doha conference participants and questioned them that how they are going to interpret the attacks that take the lives of hundreds of the people every day.

"What answer do they have about the armed forces? Hundreds of people are killed here every day. How are they going to interpret this?" he asked.

This comes after more than 60 delegates from Kabul met with 17 members of the Taliban at Intra-Afghan Dialogue Conference on Peace in Doha where they agreed to reduce violence by stopping attacks on "religious centers, schools, hospitals, educational centers, bazaars, water dams and workplaces". (Tolo news)

(5) Political Parties ...

a presidential candidate. Political parties emphasize that they should have a role in the ongoing Afghan peace process with the Taliban in order to have an inclusive peace agreement.

Asadullah Sadati, a key member of Afghanistan's Chief Executive electoral ticket welcomed the Doha meeting.

He added that if peace efforts fail the presidential elections must be held on time.

However, Hamayoun Jarir, a member of Hizb-e-Islami party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar emphasizes that if there are satisfactory justifications, the presidential elections must be delayed for the sake of peace.

"If we want to end the war and bring permanent peace to Afghanistan, the solution is to invite the real sides of the Afghanistan issue," Jarir said. (ATN)

(6) Baghlan Residents...

Local officials confirmed the airstrike but said that there is a need for investigation about civilian casualties in the incident.

The provincial governor Ahmad Farid Basim said that "seven members of one family were killed in the airstrike".

He said that at least ten Taliban members were "hiding" close to the house which was affected in the airstrike. "I have assigned a team to probe the incident," he said.

The governor did not make it clear whether Afghan or foreign forces conducted the airstrike.

The Ministry of Defense has not commented on the report. (Tolo news)

(7) Powerful Man

for the reason, they physically beat and verbally insulted us," he said.

Ramina, a female member of the family, said they reached the district police station to register their complaint, but they were also insulted there.

"We will not return home until the incident happened to us is investigated," she said.

Javid, the powerful individual, could not be reached for comment.

However, Dasht-i-Archi district police chief Col. Niyaz Mohammad Umarkhel rejected the allegations of the family.

He called the incident as a misunderstanding and said he had summoned some of the individuals involved and kept them in the police station for hours. (Pajhwok)

(8) Doctors Among 4 ...

The ministry accused Taliban militants of hiding in people's homes and using civilians as human shield during clashes with security forces. (Pajhwok)

(9) Helmand Clerics...

gathering about peace in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, announced their backing for the ongoing peace efforts and urged the Taliban to renounce violence and arrive at intra-Afghan talks.

Speaking on the occasion, religious scholar Mohammad Daud Madaqiq said only Afghans were killed and

their homes destroyed in the four-decade-old conflict.

He said the only solution to the Afghanistan conflict was peace and the Taliban should agree to intra-Afghan talks.

Another scholar Mualvi Abdul Hai Abid said the ongoing war had no place in Islam as it was a 'foreign intelligence war.'

Abid said, "We should no more allow the government and the Taliban to continue the fight because its victims are only Afghans."

A number of other scholars urged the warring sides to announce ceasefire and enter intra-Afghan dialogue as soon as possible. (Pajhwok)

(10) Saffron Fields ...

visited Balkh to purchase saffron bulb.

"I started saffron cultivation eight years ago. It is a good business and it has improved my economy," said Qasimi, a farmer from Balkh.

Figures by Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock show that at least 200 women are busy in saffron cultivation in northern provinces who earn almost \$500 from one jerib (0.2 hectares) of land.

Afghan saffron is considered among the best in the world and has scooped international awards on numerous occasions.

The western province of Herat is famous for saffron cultivation and processing.

Statistics show that Afghanistan produces 15 tons of saffron annually, most of which is produced in Herat province in the west of the country. (Tolo news)

(11) Afghanistan Opens ...

the new routes following an agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority of Tajikistan.

The Civil Aviation Authority also added that the international airliners will use the airspace of Tajikistan and Afghanistan to travel to China and East Asia.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Authority said reforms were also incorporated in West-East route which was earlier passing through Pakistan airspace. The reforms will allow flights from East Asia to West Asia via new routes.

According to Civil Aviation Authority, the two new routes will shorten the flight distance between East and West Asia and it is expected that the international airliners including Fly Dubai, Qatar Airways and others will soon resume flights via new routes. (KP)

(12) Taliban Attack on ...

said the fighters attacked a security check-post in Qaraghan Tapa area.

He claimed 28 security forces were killed, 16 wounded and 10 others captured alive. He added one rebel was killed and three others wounded. (Pajhwok)

(13) Thousands...

sheep smuggling to Pakistan on a large scale.

He said as part of their responsibility they had shared the smuggling issue with the governor's house, the provincial council and security organs again and again, but one acted to curb the smuggling.

"The figures we have show more than 3,000 sheep are smuggled to Pakistan daily," he said, calling the phenomenon a great blow to the Afghanistan livestock sector.

He said police instead of preventing the smuggling of animals used to take 1000 afghanis from each truck to allow it to proceed.

Provincial council chief Haji Syed Jan Khakrezwal said they had received complaints about the smuggling of sheep to Pakistan and the issue would be discussed in a meeting of the council.

He asked security organs to prevent the smuggling and arrest those involved. He said it had been decided to form a joint commission of representatives of the municipality, the agriculture department and other relevant organs to the smuggling of sheep. (Pajhwok)

(14) Trader's Murder: ...

days ago and wanted to sell some of

his properties.

But on July 6 his brother Sher Ajam killed Shir Daud in Dasht-i-Miakhel village mysteriously. The source said the victim had received six bullets.

A relative of the slain trader, who did not want to be named, said: "Daud had business in Dubai and he came here to sell some of his property in order to pay off his loan in Dubai."

He said Sher Ajam and two others took the trader to a garden in Bagrami district and shot him dead. He called Daud as a graceful individual and urged the government to punish his killers. (Pajhwok)

(15) Uzbek Militant ...

The Special Forces confiscated three weapons during the operation, the 209th Shaheen Corps added. The Taliban group has not commented regarding the operation so far. (KP)

(16) Experts Say...

trading system, without offering constructive proposals for reform, said Mario Telo, emeritus president of the Institute for European Studies at the University Libre of Brussels.

"If we can not solve the problem by the end of the year, the WTO dispute settlement mechanism will come to a halt. Then the WTO itself won't be functional," said Rajat Kathuria, director of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations. A crippling factor is that "one major power" is bypassing the WTO on trade issues, according to EU ambassador to China Nicolas Chapuis. "Not to judge but to state a fact: the Trump administration carries out its trade policies outside the WTO," he said.

In addition, international trade in today's world has evolved dramatically from that of the 1980s and 1990s. According to Sebastien Jean, director of CEPPI, a leading French institute for economics research, rules need to be made or revised in the WTO to cope with new realities in negotiation, enforcement as well as new technologies such as big data and e-commerce.

The WTO must be reformed, as it is an "extremely valuable public goods," providing a framework of rules to lend predictability and reliability to world trade, Jean added. (Xinhua)

(17) IFC, Ukrainian ...

Hennadiy Zubko, Ukraine's deputy prime minister and regional development minister.

In May, Zubko said the EEF was currently testing all procedures on the first 15 pilot homeowners' associations, and by the end of this year, the results of the pilot testing would come out.

In April 2018, the European Union (EU), Germany and the IFC signed an agreement on co-financing Ukraine's EEF by setting up a multi-donor fund which is designed to help Ukraine reduce its reliance on imported gas and cut its subsidies for energy consumption by citizens.

In June last year, Ukraine received the first tranche of 50 million euros (56 million U.S. dollars), and in December the EU provided another 54 million euros (60.4 million dollars). (Xinhua)

(18) Hong Kong...

were still worried the government would restart the process in the Legislative Council. Lam insisted that these concerns were groundless.

"I reiterate here - there is no such plan. The bill is dead," she pledged. The legislation in question would have allowed Hong Kong to transfer suspects for trials in mainland China. The bill's critics feared that this would expose detainees to crooked trials in courts controlled by the Communist Party. In the past month, more than a million people took part in rallies to oppose the Beijing-backed bill, even after Lam announced its indefinite suspension and apologized to the nation.

In her Tuesday address, Lam also pleaded with people to give the government "an opportunity, the time, the room, to take Hong Kong out of the current impasse and try to improve the current situation." (RT)