

**(1) Negotiations ...**

determine their future," she said in response to a question on Afghanistan. But this does not mean discounting the military option, she said. "Of course, the military option is a piece of it. But the Secretary of State is not going to advocate or is not going to work Mr. McMaster's behalf or on General Mattis's behalf. That is their piece of it to decide at the Department of Defense and as the National Security Advisor. Our piece of it to work on is more from the diplomacy standpoint and humanitarian assistance," she said.

Referring to the recent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Nauert said that the Taliban has become more dangerous and more deadly and has been involved in the kinds of attacks that perhaps previously they have not been involved with. "That remains a major concern of ours," she said.

Nauert said that it is premature to say that the State Department is optimistic about peace process with the Taliban. "But when we can get to the point where we might be able to help facilitate along with Afghanistan to get people to sit down and talk together, then that would certainly be a step in the right direction. Until then, we will continue to support our Afghan partners," she said.

The State Department spokesperson refuted reports that the Trump Administration has closed down the Office of the Special Representatives for Afghanistan and Pakistan. "I know people are obsessed with, 'Are you shutting down this bureau? Are you shutting down that bureau? Are you shutting down the global office of whatever, whatever?' All of those functions will still remain here at the State Department. That is not changing," she said.

"A different person may handle it. In some instances, it may get combined with an existing bureau. That doesn't mean that the priority goes away and that doesn't mean that the functions of that job or its duties will go away. I want to be very clear about that. There's been a lot of reporting on that. Those functions will still remain here at the State Department," Nauert said. (Pajhwok)

**(2) UK Suspends ...**

have recently witnessed direct interference and pressure from external Afghan sources seeking to undermine our independence," Harakat said on their website. "Continuing under this interference would mean compromising the values that we are so thoroughly committed to. Thus, we have no alternative other than to resign and to give Harakat partners the opportunity to re-evaluate."

The board of Harakat recently appointed a new Chief Executive Officer - a move that was challenged by the transitional CEO Malalai Wassil, a former board member. Her complaints allegedly led to the resignation of the board and reportedly triggered an investigation by a DFID - Department For International Development - assigned third party auditor.

The Swedish government is also a minor donor to Harakat.

"All members of the Harakat board have resigned because the independency of an independent organization is affected by a government official who sought to interfere," said Qadeer Bahman, head of the Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce.

Commenting on this issue, the Finance Ministry spokesman Ajmal Hameed Abdulrahimzai denied interference in the activities of the organization by the MoF. However, he said the ministry would favor the appointment of a woman.

"The selection of the CEO of Harakat is the authority of the organization (Harakat); the Ministry of Finance does not have any role in it. And if we were asked to have a role in the appointment of the selection (of the organization), we would have supported one of an experienced and educated woman according to the policies of the Afghan government," he said.

Harakat is in its second phase and the new funding was pledged last year to help boost businesses in Afghanistan and ease the environment for both domestic and international investments through reforms in procedures and legal affairs.

The UK Embassy in Kabul has admitted that it has suspended the funding after the resignation of the board members.

"Funding has been temporarily suspended to Harakat following the resignation of the members of the Board. DFID takes allegations and claims made against our delivery partners seriously and will thoroughly investigate," the embassy said in an email sent to TOLONews.

"The UK is committed to investment climate reform in Afghanistan, to facilitate private sector led growth. Harakat remains a key delivery partner for our Afghanistan Investment Climate Programme and we plan to resume activity as soon as possible." Commenting on the report, Sayed Jawed Andish, an investor, said: "Government has many other works to concentrate on. The organization (Harakat) is a good organization in Afghanistan and there is a need for a refocus on the resumption of its activities at a much needed time."

Harakat Afghanistan Investment Climate Program is a non-profit organization working to make it easier to do business in Af-

ghanistan. The organization works closely with government, civil society and private sector partners across four key areas. Harakat follows on the successes of Harakat Afghanistan Investment Climate Facility, a program funded by the UK Department of International Development (DFID) from 2009-2015. (Tolonews)

**(3) Experts Urge ...**

ministry would need an extensive budget to build dams.

"We have our own plans which will help us to take sufficient advantage of our water resources in the north, but you know that we need huge amounts of money to build dams," said Basir Azimi, deputy minister of water and energy.

The MoWE was planning to build several water canals from the Amu River to five provinces including Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan and Bamiyan provinces - in the country's north and northeastern - within the next five years, he said.

Nearly half of Afghanistan's rivers flow into the Amu River. But most of the water flows on to other Central Asian countries.

This comes after Iranian President Hassan Rouhani criticized Afghanistan for its plans to build dams.

The remarks were met by harsh criticism by members of the public. (Tolonews)

**(4) Pakistan Offers...**

quoted as saying by Pakistan Army's media wing, Inter-services Public Relations (ISPR). More than 30 people were killed in a deadly blast in Kabul hours before the suicide attack in Lahore on Monday.

"We are ready to help Afghanistan to eliminate terrorist safe heavens in their border areas as we have done on our side," he added, referring to a series of operations against the Taliban since 2014 the army launched in the restive tribal belt, along the border it shares with Afghanistan.

In an indirect reference to Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) he said that some "regional actors and hostile intelligence agencies were fully involved to use terror as a policy tool".

Islamabad maintains the Indian intelligence agency is operating from Afghanistan to destabilize Pakistan.

Last month, the army chief had called for joint border management and security co-operation against terror group Daesh, an offer which received a lukewarm response from Kabul.

Kabul and Islamabad have long been accusing each other of providing sanctuaries to the militants in their respective border areas. A series of terrorist attacks in both countries, for which both sides blame each other, has put a further strain on the already frosty relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan in recent months.

Pakistan had brokered the landmark first round of direct talks between the fragile Afghan government and the Taliban in Islamabad in July 2015, but the process broke down after Taliban announced the death of their long-term leader Mullah Omer, triggering a bitter power struggle within the militia.

Chances for resumption of the stalled process were further dimmed, following the death of Mullah Omer's successor Mullah Mansur in a US drone strike last year, on Pakistan's side near its border with Afghanistan.

Several attempts aimed at resuming the halted process have been made since July 2015 by a four-nation group comprising of Pakistan, Afghanistan, U.S. and China but failed one after the other. (AA)

**(5) Threats: SCA ...**

scope of clinics."

SCA, however, could not make the changes, as it is guided by national health policies based on objective criteria such as the number of population.

After several weeks of efforts to reopen the clinics with the mediation of local communities, 20 of the facilities reopened, while 20 others are still closed in Alishang, Alingar and Mehtarlam.

Threats have increasingly been directed toward some SCA staff, leading to the "unfortunate decision" of closing the Health Management Office.

"Should the threats escalate or be materialized, not only will all health services have to be frozen but also our education, disability and rural development activities in the province," Madeleine Jufors warned.

"The threats can thus have a devastating effect on the residents of Laghman who will be the ultimate victims, and this is of greatest concern to us."

SCA urged all parties to the conflict to follow humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention by respecting the sanctity of clinics and medical staff and safeguarding access for all to health services.

Through its provincial office, SCA manages the provincial hospital in Metharlam and 54 health clinics across Laghman, serving about 460,000 people.

SCA is a neutral development organization, working along humanitarian principles for and with the people of Afghanistan for 35 years.

As many as 70,000 Afghan children go to the schools run by SCA and over two million Afghans receive medical care each year at SCA-run clinics and hospitals. (Pa-

**(6) U.S, EU Pledge t... jhwok)**

Government should ensure the security of the process from now so that the people can participate in the elections," said Sediqullah Tawhidi, a member of the electoral reform commission.

"Technical capacity within the commission is another concern and it involves the commission's technical abilities and whether it is able to manage and lead the elections properly from a technical perspective," said Naem Ayoubzada, head of Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's parliamentary and district council elections are scheduled for 7 July next year. (Tolonews)

**(7) Preserving ...**

ensuring their continued use by future generations of Afghans. These projects, undertaken in coordination with Afghan authorities and local communities, provide a means for additional investments in access improvements, infrastructure upgrading, and vocational training, which contribute to improving quality of life and provide socio-economic opportunities for local residents.

The Afghanistan Outlook report met with the Ambassador of the Aga Khan Development Network, Mrs. Nurjehan Mawani in the exhibition. She stated that AKTC projects are to restore cultural heritage and they are carried out with people of Afghanistan and for people of Afghanistan.

Historic sites, she said, are Afghan people identity and they should be restored. She also added that developing and revitalizing culture has been facilitator of development and it can contribute to sustainable peace process, which is very much needed in Afghanistan.

The AKDN has been working in Afghanistan from 90s and has been contributing to social and economic development in Afghanistan. AKDN founded by His Highness the Prince Karim Aga Khan, who has long commitment to the development of Afghanistan. This year His Highness is marking his 60 years of his Imamate and celebrating his Diamond Jubilee. (PR)

**(8) MoD Criticizes ...**

ones that the Afghan government considered as a threat."

Pakistan launched a military operation ten days ago - Khyber-IV operation - close to the Afghan border "which was supposed to be monitored by the U.S and China."

On Saturday, the Pakistan Army announced that it had completed the first phase of Operation Khyber-IV in the Rajgal area of Khyber Agency after gaining control of a key mountain top called Brekh Top.

Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the valley associated with Brekh Top is now cleared adding that the mountain top had been cleared on Friday night by the Special Services Group (SSG).

Pakistan's ISPR said in a press release last week that "the information about Operation Khyber-IV has been shared (twice verbally and in writing) with Afghan Forces as well as Resolute Support Mission".

But Waziri rejected the claim and said that the operation was "not coordinated with the Afghan government."

"This operation is not coordinated with Afghanistan. It was decided that we give Pakistan the target areas which need to be cleared," he said.

In the meantime, a former Afghan military official said that "U.S and China should not be careless over this operation."

"UN, NATO and US must ask Pakistan why they launched this operation arbitrarily," Mohsen Mukhtar, a former Afghan military officer said.

Mirza Mohammad Yarmand, the former deputy minister of interior said that "they (Pakistan) have to stop Madrassas. They must destroy the insurgency education centers and their teachers must be punished. Their leader must be handed over to Afghanistan." (Tolonews)

**(9) Nearly 2,000 ...**

"These artifacts go back to the seventh and eighth centuries. This was from when the ancient Aynak copper site had an active Buddhist temple," Rahimi said.

Nearly eight large archeological sites have been identified around the Aynak copper mine while smaller sites number in the hundreds.

Meanwhile, government agencies have also released statistics on tourism in Afghanistan.

"From 2012 up to 2015 more than 90,000 people visited the provinces in the country, especially Bamiyan province," said Ramin Atiqzada head of the tourism department at the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Afghanistan's income through tourism last year was said to be 25 million Afghans.

This comes after President Ashraf Ghani said two days ago that Afghanistan has the ability to host five million foreign tourists in a year and stressed that tourism should be used against terrorism in the country. (Tolonews)

**(10) Taliban Rout ...**

the attack and killed or injured about 80 insurgents.

Having captured most of neighbouring Helmand province in recent months, the Taliban have launched a number of offensives in Kandahar and other provinces including

Kunduz in the north-east and Faryab in the north-west.

There have also been a string of deadly attacks claimed by the Taliban and Islamic State militants, many in the capital Kabul.

In May the Taliban overran an army outpost in Shah Wali Kot in Kandahar, the Taliban's seat of power in the 1990s.

In April about 170 soldiers are reported to have died in a Taliban attack on an army base outside Mazar-e Sharif in the north.

It was the deadliest single attack on a military installation since 2001 when US-led troops ousted the Taliban from power.

Afghan forces now control just under 60% of the country, according to the latest report by US watchdog Sigar.

The Taliban and other insurgents saw areas they control increase from about 10% to 11% and the rest of the country is contested, the report said. (BBC)

**(11) US Purchases ...**

equipment, field service representatives, operators to provide technical services, site surveys, site activations teams, and program management to sustain and operate the ScanEagle UASs within Afghanistan.

"Work will be performed in Afghanistan (95 percent); and Bingen, Washington (5 percent), and is expected to be completed in April 2018. Afghan Security Forces funding in the amount of \$19,611,424 is being obligated on this award, none of which will expire at the end of the current fiscal year," the statement added.

This comes as efforts are underway by the Afghan government and the international allies of Afghanistan to increase the air power of the Afghan security forces.

The commander of the United States Central Command General Joseph L. Votel requested the US Congress to approve the budget for the Afghan forces Blackhawk program.

The Afghan defense officials said the Air Force is expecting to receive the first Blackhawk helicopter from the United States in the month of October. (KP)

**(12) Drug Convicts ...**

all the prisoners in the country's jails while more than three million people were currently directly and indirectly involved in growing narcotics.

Drugs seized during the past four months of the ongoing solar year included 830 kilograms of opium, 944 kilograms of heroin, nearly 47 tons of morphine, more than eight tons of hashish, 10 tons of alcoholic beverages, around 37 kilograms of shisha and more than 43 kilograms of chemicals used in heroin production, he added.

More than 70 kilograms of hemp seeds and raw seeds were part of the seizure. Bakhtyar said 136 vehicles, 82 weapons and 240 mobile phones and walkie-talkies were confiscated and \$140,000 in accounts of drug smugglers were frozen under the law on money laundering.

Nineteen drug production and processing factories were destroyed during operations nationwide, he said.

Bakhtyar said the narcotics seized valued at \$292 million inside Afghanistan and could fetch \$900 million abroad, calling it a huge blow to the illicit trade.

He said two counter-narcotics policemen were killed and a third wounded during the operations. (Pajhwok)

**(13) Moscow Calls ...**

Taliban movement are groundless... We reiterate, Russia does not support the Taliban movement, and only maintains contacts with the Taliban to ensure the safety of Russian nationals in Afghanistan and to incentivise this group to join the process of national reconciliation," the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry stressed that it is impossible to trace the country of origin of the weapons demonstrated in the video, as they were common and manufactured by many countries.

"It is hardly possible to seriously perceive the video materials, in which old, small arms of unknown and untraceable origin are demonstrated. [The weapons are] not stamped by the manufacturer, serial numbers are knocked down. In addition, the shown weapons are typical. As it is known, such samples were produced not only in Russia, but also in other countries, including [those in] Eastern Europe, from where the Americans imported them massively to Afghanistan in the early 2000s. Recently, the Taliban attacked the Afghan national security forces' base in Helmand province using American Humvee armored vehicles. What conclusion can be made based on this information using the logic of the CNN?" the statement read. (Sputnik)

**(14) HIV/AIDS ...**

treated here free of cost," he said.

Provincial public health director Dr. Habib Shah Ansari called the facility a big achievement for Khost and said many people in the province carried hepatitis-B and C viruses.

"Sixty-three cases of HIV/AIDS have been registered in Khost and six of them were recorded in the past six months, this center would help us a lot in eradicating the virus," he said.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 6,900 HIV/AIDS cases have been registered in Afghanistan.

Dr. Ehsanullah Ehsan, head of national HIV/AIDS control at MoPH, said they had

registered 2,290 HIV positive cases country-wide.

"HIA virus cases are on the decline in the country, but its treatment is a little difficult. Fortunately facilities that can treat the disease is available in the country and the treatment has somehow simplified," he said.

There are five HIV/AIDS virus treatment centers in the country including the one opened today in Khost. (Pajhwok)

**(15) 145 Taliban Suffer..**

the killed and injured.

Afghan forces pushed the Taliban assault back and there were no casualties among civilians, Rahmati said.

He added the assault was led by foreign intelligence officers. Two Afghan soldiers were also killed and 15 others wounded during the battle.

Governor Hafiz Abdul Qayum also confirmed receiving reports that foreign military officers were spearheading the Taliban assault.

The Taliban targeted Want Wigal district for its strategic importance because the district shared border with many districts of Nuristan and Kunar provinces, he said.

Qayum said 30 militants were killed and more than a hundred others wounded in the clashes that left three security forces wounded

The clash took place away from civilian residential areas so no local people were unhurt, he added.

Provincial police chief Brig. Gen. Ghulam Muihuddin Sarwari said he had no exact figures for militant casualties, but claimed large number of the rebels had been killed and wounded.

He said the militants had a serious plan to capture the district but they faced a strong reaction from Afghan security forces and were pushed back.

A resident of the area, who wished to go unnamed, said only one woman was injured by Taliban militants in the battle.

A tribal elder, Hazrat Sayed, said a woman who asked the Taliban to stop firing was shot dead by the rebels.

The Taliban claimed attacking Want Wegal district center, police headquarters and the special military unit. The group's spokesman said the fighters captured many security posts and inflicted heavy casualties on Afghan forces. (Pajhwok)

**(16) Zakhilwal ...**

He extended financial support to the elderly singer, with injuries to her face and hands. "Zarsanga rules the hearts of many people with her melodious voice. She has done a great service to Pakhtun culture and music. We are here to show her our support," the diplomat told reporters at the hospital. (Pajhwok)

**(17) 20 Baghlan..**

were killed and security forces managed to clear over 20 villages by Tuesday night.

In addition, nearly 70 other insurgents were wounded.

"The Taliban are on the run from the district after suffering heavy casualties," Gen. Shoar Gul, deputy minister of defense said during a visit to Baghlan.

This comes after the Taliban attacked the district eight days ago and got close to the center of the district.

Local officials said that civilian houses were also destroyed in the clashes as the Taliban "used them as shields."

The Afghan Air Force is also supporting ground forces in the ongoing operation. Taliban suffered most of the casualties in the air operations, officials said.

Over 1,000 residents have been displaced from the district after the Taliban attack but TOLONews reporter, Hamid Shirzai, who is currently in Baghlan-e-Markazi, said the families are returning to their homes as security forces clear their villages. (Tolonews)

**(18) 2 Health...**

were underway to rescue the abducted officials but no development has taken place so far.

Public Health Director Faridon Habib was unaware about the incident but said the nature of the abduction should be investigated by security organs.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid rejected the abduction of health officials by the Taliban and said the group did not target health officers. He, however, said sometimes armed criminals kidnap government officials and then the responsibility was charged on Taliban. (Pajhwok)

**(19) Kunar Female...**

He said the Attorney General Officer (AGO) had introduced one female attorney officer to the Kunar attorney's office. "The presence of female attorneys helps in investigation of women inmates."

Jamaluddin, head of the provincial judicial courts, said there was woman judge or defence lawyer in Kunar courts.

He said an NGO worked for women's rights in Kunar but its employees were male. "The NGO provides help to violence-affected women and defend their cases."

Women employees:

Due to local customs and traditions, most women in Kunar decline to work in government institutions, but the cultural restrictions issue has been somehow resolved recently. (Pajhwok)