

**(1) Pompeo, Ghani...**

working together with the United States to achieve a stable, peaceful and democratic Afghanistan free of terrorism.

Earlier in the week, Ghani had sought clarifications following President Trump's remarks that he had a plan that could win the war in Afghanistan "in a week," but he didn't "want to kill 10 million people." (Pajhwok)

**(2) Akbar Says Justice ...**

of the work on human rights," she added.

Akbar takes the leadership of the commission at a time that violence and human rights violations have increased in the country.

"I was at school in Pakistan when the Taliban were in power [in Afghanistan]. Later, I returned to Kabul and completed school here. I studied for one and half a year at Kabul University and then went to the US and studied anthropology and obtained my masters in the UK on Development Studies," she said.

Shabnam Salehi, a member of the commission, said there was disagreement among former members of the commission on certain issues.

"Working for human rights is an important duty. Therefore, we believe that we can take ourselves out of the crisis on our own," said Shabnam. (Tolo news)

**(3) Govt Forming ...**

enjoying honeymoon."

The presidential spokesman called on the United States, international allies and regional countries to put pressure on the Taliban and their leaders in Qatar to stop the war and stop the killing of innocent people. (Pajhwok)

**(4) Top US, British ...**

He said there were strong links between the military forces of the two countries following years of joint fight and cooperation.

Lt. Gen. Patrick Sanders also assured his country's continued support with the Afghan forces. (Pajhwok)

**(5) Taliban Ready ...**

the spokesman replied such allegations could not stop them from engaging with the neighbours as doing so was in Afghanistan's interest.

On Tuesday Khan said in his speech to the US Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington that he planned to meet Taliban leaders to persuade them to hold direct talks with the Afghan government.

After a meeting with Khan, Trump said Pakistan would help the US extricate itself from Afghanistan. There was tremendous potential in the relationship between Washington and Islamabad, he added. (Pajhwok)

**(6) China Pledges...**

schemes would cost 219 million Afghanis, he said.

Aqa said 353 people were killed and 397 others injured, 18,000 houses were destroyed and 22,497 houses partially damaged in floods triggered by heavy rains this year.

He said China this year provided assistance in two phases which included 126 tons of rice and 816 tons wheat -- worth \$13 million -- which helped more than a million people in 34 provinces.

Chinese ambassador to Afghanistan, Liu Jinsong, about his country's support to Afghanistan, said, "Both the countries are trying to predict natural disasters in Afghanistan by using Chinese satellites and systems in future."

He said whenever Afghanistan needed emergency assistance, China had always responded in time. (Pajhwok)

**(7) Efforts Underway ...**

Peace Council.

Critics also stressed the need for the formation of an inclusive team.

"There is a question because when the government wants to create a ministry, it is created very soon, but it has not managed to form a delegation. I think the reason is that the government leadership has no confidence even in their close aides," political analyst Wahid Muzhda said. Meanwhile, the US chairman of the

Joint Chief of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford arrived in Kabul on Wednesday for consultations with US, NATO, and Afghan officials, US Department of Defense reported.

Dunford said negotiations with the Taliban have not changed the military mission in Afghanistan.

"Day to day, the mission hasn't changed for General Miller and the team, and they are still taking the fight to the Taliban and supporting the Afghan military," Dunford said. He said he wants to ensure Army Gen. Austin S. Miller, the commander of the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan, has all he needs. (Tolo news)

**(8) Hekmatyar ...**

Hekmatyar said that peace is the demand of every Afghan and that his party is ready to support the efforts for peace in the country.

Hekmatyar called on his supporters to join hands to leave "no excuse" for foreign forces to remain in Afghanistan.

Hekmatyar mentioned that all legitimate demands of the Taliban should be addressed in the peace process.

"We call on the US not to impede the release of Hizb-e-Islami prisoners," he said, referring to a peace deal with the Afghan government based on which all Hizb-e-Islami prisoners should have been released within two months after the agreement.

He said attacks against civilians should stop.

Hekmatyar condemned in strongest words US President Donald Trump's remarks on Afghanistan who said he could wipe Afghanistan off the Earth if he wanted to

"If you [US President Donald Trump] want to test your power, test it on [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, not on innocent Afghans," he said.

Afghanistan is a "fully occupied" country, Hekmatyar said, adding that the Afghan government is not independent in decision making on major issues, including elections and peace. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Pro-Govt Forces ...**

members surrendered to the Taliban. "The clash in our village continued for nine days. Then we understood the reinforcement and ammunition will not arrive and then we left the district," said Zafaruddin, a member of public uprising forces in Keran Wa Manjan.

"People left the district as they did not have other option," said Mohammad, member of public uprising forces in Keran Wa Manjan.

The lapis lazuli deposit in Keran Wa Manjan district in Badakhshan fell to the Taliban on July 17.

At least 20 security force members were deployed to protect the deposit. Many mineral deposits are located in disputed areas between the security forces and the Taliban in different parts of the country. Reports indicate that the Taliban receive a big amount of income from illegal mining.

"Some members of local police and public uprising forces unit have come to Nuristan," the Nuristan Police Chief Saber Aryan said. (Tolo news)

**(10) US Pushes Toward...**

terrorism, Morell said the Taliban would welcome al-Qaeda back into the country after a US withdrawal.

In a twitter post, Morell said he is not arguing the US should stay in Afghanistan. "I'm arguing we need to be clear-eyed about what will happen there when we leave and have a plan for how we can keep a close watch on Afghanistan from an intelligence perspective and how we can degrade them militarily if we need to do so," he said.

"This argument I'm making -- that the Taliban is going to take over, al-Qaeda is going to have a safe haven -- is exactly the argument the president made to stay in Afghanistan two years ago," Morell said as quoted by Axios. "But we all know... [then-Defense Secretary] Jim Mattis kind of dragged him kicking and screaming to that, and the president wants out." This comes as the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke with Presi-

dent Ashraf Ghani by phone on July 24 and both sides insisted that it is the time to accelerate efforts for ending the Afghan war through negotiations, the US Department of State said in a statement.

Pompeo assured Ghani that US President's South Asia strategy, including the US commitment for a condition-based drawdown has not changed, and that all the efforts of US officials, including the US Special Envoy for Afghan peace Zalmay Khalilzad, is going in that direction.

Ghani welcomed US involvement in Afghan peace and added that Kabul will work side-by-side with Washington for bringing a durable peace in Afghanistan to ensure terrorism will have no place in it, the statement said. (Tolo news)

**(11) Govt Criticized ...**

Taliban claimed responsibility of the car bombing near an industrial park in police district 9 of the city of Kabul, which surrounds areas such as Pul-e-Charkhi and Dispichari roads. The group claimed that they targeted a convoy of the foreign troops.

"What was the result of Doha talks? We saw its result today," Sharifa, a Kabul resident, said.

The attack was condemned by President Ashraf Ghani, who said the Taliban are conducting talks on one side, but are repeating their "crimes" on the other.

He said that the Taliban will not leverage the peace efforts by such attacks.

The US Embassy in Kabul, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Qatar's government in separate statements condemned the blasts in Kabul. (Tolo news)

**(12) Security Personnel ...**

the Taliban confirmed they attacked the district centre and security checkpoints. Zabihullah Mujahid, the group's spokesman, claimed killing 21 policemen, including the acting district police head. (Pajhwok)

**(13) Afghan ...**

at Czech soldiers at the Shindand air base in western Herat province, killing Tomáš Procházka and wounding two other Czech soldiers.

The Czech Republic has 345 soldiers stationed in Afghanistan. So far, 14 Czech soldiers have been killed in the wae-torn country. (Pajhwok)

**(14) North Korea...**

fighters from the US. And despite North Korea's relative rapprochement with both the US and the South, the allies plan to hold their annual military drills in August.

North Korea resumed its short range missile testing activity earlier this year after the Hanoi Summit between President Donald Trump and Chairman Kim Jong-un in Vietnam failed to produce any clear roadmap to peace. The latest tests were conducted despite the impromptu meeting Trump had with Kim at the Korean Demilitarized Zone last month, where they agreed to revive stalled denuclearization talks.

Pyeongyang's leadership has long maintained that the US should provide some credible guarantees, relieve its sanctions and stop military drills with the South for any viable peace to take hold on the Peninsula. Washington in its turn insists on full denuclearization before any concessions are made. (RT)

**(15) Turkey Ready...**

had always maintained that it is absolutely free to choose who it buys weapons from and vowed to retaliate against any sanctions. "I hope the US will act reasonably," Erdogan said on Friday, stressing that he will not allow any "injustices" be done to the country over the S-400 deal. (RT)

**(16) France Tells...**

"We want to work with him. Work," de Montchalin told public broadcaster France 2.

One of the main areas of contention between Britain and the EU over the terms of Brexit has been the Irish backstop - an insurance policy to provisionally keep Britain in a customs union with the EU and prevent the return of a hard border between

the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said this week there would be no withdrawal agreement or subsequent trade pact with Britain if it did not accept the backstop.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker also told Johnson this week that the divorce deal agreed by predecessor Theresa May last November was the best and only deal with the EU. Oct. 31 was not an immovable deadline, de Montchalin said, adding red lines "only created tensions in diplomacy". But she reiterated that Britain must have good reason for any further delay should it eventually want one. (Reuters)

**(17) Istanbul Hosts...**

An international photo contest, traditional, modern and contemporary dance competitions and several other cultural events top the agenda of the festival, organized by the district of Buyukcekmece.

Hasan Akgun, the district's mayor, said the festival is now recognized as a significant international event in Turkey.

"Let us not forget that the path to world peace is the friendship of nations," he said at the opening ceremony.

The festival, on the theme of "Love to each other, Peace for all," is being held in cultural centers and several historic open-air locations across the city. (Xinhua)

**(18) Germany Flirts...**

was not a foregone conclusion.

"It is now the hour for diplomacy," Kramp-Karrenbauer told reporters on Thursday, adding "there is no concrete requirement" for participation in the mission.

The plans for a defensive operation -- initially proposed by the UK, which has already begun carrying out the mission -- follow a number of confrontations between Tehran, Washington and London in the region, with the UK seizing an Iranian tanker off Gibraltar in early July, and Iran reciprocating by seizing a British-flagged vessel off its shores last weekend while detaining then setting another one free with a warning. A similar exchange of potshots has occurred between Iran and the US Navy, with both claiming to have shot down one another's drones over the Persian Gulf. Washington also pins blame for a pair of mysterious Gulf tanker attacks on the Islamic Republic, while Tehran accuses a third party --namely Israel-- of sabotaging the vessels.

Notably, the spate of incidents follows a similar proposal, coming from the US in June, to protect shipping lanes, but at that time European countries showed little interest in the idea.

In addition to the UK, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark have so far shown interest in joining the mission, with Spain, Sweden and Poland still on the fence. It is unknown whether the European mission will be managed under the purview of the EU or as a joint venture between individual countries. (RT)

**(19) Under Siege...**

unsuccessful attempt at sparking a military uprising in April but the National Assembly remains at the core of his plan to oust Maduro. Its legislation has cut off the government's access to valuable foreign assets and mustered more international support.

In February, the assembly named a new board of directors to take the reins of state oil firm PDVSA's U.S. subsidiary Citgo. This month, the assembly appointed its own central bank board to protect its "international reserves," a reference to its foreign gold holdings, which the opposition wants to prevent the Maduro government from selling off.

On Tuesday, the assembly approved a law returning Venezuela to a regional defense treaty, although Guaido warned the treaty was not a "magic" solution to secure a foreign military intervention.

Most Western nations recognize

Guaido as Venezuela's legitimate head of state but Maduro retains control of the state and armed forces. Guaido argues that Maduro's 2018 re-election was fraudulent, while Maduro says his rival is trying to carry out an illegal coup.

To approve measures, half of the National Assembly's 167 lawmakers must be present to reach quorum but the number is dwindling.

In 2015 parliamentary elections for the National Assembly the opposition secured 112 seats. But this year, 21 members have stopped attending due to arrests or security fears, leaving a buffer of only five lawmakers above quorum. (Reuters)

**(20) Broken Promise...**

the spokesman, Salvador Panelo, told reporters via a messaging app, but did not elaborate on why Duterte threw out the bill, which he had called urgent in September.

Without the veto, the bill would have become law on Saturday. To override Duterte's veto requires a two-thirds vote of the members of each house of Congress.

Labor groups said Duterte risked losing his political capital for turning away from the workers.

"It really hurts us because this is the president's campaign promise," Alan Tanjusay, a spokesman of the Associated Labor Unions-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, the country's biggest such grouping, told news channel ANC.

"He said, 'I need a law to address contractualization', and now that there is a law, he vetoed the bill'," Tanjusay added.

Both house of Congress had overwhelmingly approved the measure, despite warnings by employers' groups and business chambers that it could do the Philippine economy more harm than good in the long term.

Not only will it raise business costs, limiting the number of people they can hire, but they said the bill would drive away investors at a time when the Philippines seeks to attract foreign capital to boost economic growth and create jobs.

Foreign direct investment of \$9.8 billion into the Philippines last year is dwarfed by rivals such as Thailand and Indonesia, and the government is eager to boost the figure by slashing red tape and overhauling infrastructure.

"The passage of the bill could have a negative impact to the Philippine economy and to the workers whom the bill aims to protect", more than a dozen business groups, including foreign business chambers, said in a joint statement this month.

"The bill impinges on management prerogatives anchored on the constitution, and it excludes contract workers hired by government agencies," they added. (Reuters)

**(21) China, Philippines...**

and the Philippines and other regional countries.

China and the Philippines agreed to hold the Fifth Meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) on the South China Sea issue as soon as possible to jointly control the maritime situation and push forward joint development. Both countries will continue to work together to promote the consultation on a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea. The two sides agreed to adhere to the direction of regional cooperation and development. China always supports ASEAN's central position in regional cooperation and backs the Philippines in fulfilling its responsibilities as a coordinating country for China-ASEAN relations.

The two sides stressed to hold this year's series meetings on East Asia Cooperation, seize the key points and directions of regional cooperation, synergize the Belt and Road Initiative with the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and promote cooperation on media, smart cities and digital economy as well as to build a higher level of China-ASEAN strategic partnership to inject new impetus into East Asia cooperation, according to Hua. (Xinhua)