

(1) Lack of Spending...

The report says that the security sector assistance mission in Afghanistan lacked an enduring and comprehensive plan to guide its efforts. Critical aspects of the advisory mission were not unified by a common purpose, nor was there a clear plan to guide equipping decisions over time. A former CSTC-A commander described the ANDSF as a "collection of compromises," and compared looking at the ANDSF to "a cross-section of sedimentary rock [with] each year's US budget priorities and 'good ideas' layered across older ones."

The report says that the dual-hatted US-NATO commander did not have absolute authority over how the ANDSF was trained and advised in different parts of Afghanistan. "This created asymmetries in ANDSF development and impeded the standardization of security sector assistance programs," the report adds.

SIGAR says in its report that security sector assistance efforts in Afghanistan have been hindered by the lack of clear command-and-control relationships between the US military and the US Embassy, as well as between ministerial and tactical advising efforts. It says that this has resulted in disjointed efforts to develop ANDSF capabilities.

The report mentions that the United States has not adequately involved the Afghans in key decisions and processes. As a result, the United States has implemented systems that the Afghans will not be able to maintain without U.S. support. As one former CSTC-A commander told us: "The Afghans were informed and directed, not asked or consulted..."

According to the report, most pre-deployment trainings did not adequately prepare advisors for their work in Afghanistan. Training did not expose advisors to Afghan systems, processes, weapons, culture, doctrine, and history.

The report says that NATO nations provided unique capabilities that the US government used to fill voids in US security sector assistance programs. However, problems with coordinating command-and-control hindered the United States' ability to make the most of coalition support.

As per the report, the ANDSF were unable to fully leverage the benefits of US-based training efforts due to high AWOL rates, repurposing trained personnel to unrelated tasks once deployed back into Afghanistan, and ANDSF policies that conflicted with US-based training program deadlines. Because of these issues, the United States plans to stop all US-based aviation training for the Afghan Air Force by December 31, 2020, the report says.

And, the report also says that the US-based training of Afghan pilots and maintainers is routinely considered successful and a best practice. A DOD official stated that US-based training for the Afghans is "head and shoulders above aviation training in Afghanistan", the report adds. (Tolo news)

(2) Afghanistan ...

had many attacks but could not score a goal.

The match ended 3-1 in Japan's favor. Japan has won the title two times in its history.

The two teams played a friendly match before the start of the AFC Championship, in which Afghanistan defeated Japan 4-3.

"The players are in a good condition and the good news for the final match is that Ali Jafari, a good member of the team, has recovered and will join us in the match against Japan. We all have good morale," the national team's coach said. Mamrak is coaching the U20 futsal team since 2013 and so far the team has scored 10 goals in the AFC U20 Championship. The national futsal team member Sayed Hussain Musawi has scored six goals in the championship.

"We will appear better in the final match and we will be the champions," said Jawed Safari, the national team's member.

Kabul residents welcomed the success of the national team in the tournament. "I request all the Afghan people not to forget the national [futsal] team in their prayers. Afghanistan should win the championship," said Humayun Danish, a Kabul resident.

President Ashraf Ghani also appreciated the team's victory and had a telephonic conversation with the head coach on Thursday.

Ghani has sent a government delegation to Iran to support the national team in the final match.

The U20 futsal team has so far defeated Hong Kong, Thailand and Indonesia in the AFC Futsal Championship. (Tolo news)

(3) Qureshi Calls ...

and common interest," the minister continued.

Qureshi noted after the Afghan nation, no one had suffered more than the people of Pakistan due to persistent instability and conflict. Advancing the cause of peace in Afghanistan, therefore, was in Pakistan's national interest, he argued.

He wished to see a friendly Afghanistan, governed by an elected leadership, representative of the aspirations of all Afghans. The minister acknowledged the vicious circle of mistrust, often fed into by common enemies of the neighbours, had long affected their relationship. The blame-game has not helped either side. It is indispensable to move away from this negative paradigm.

He said it was incumbent upon the leadership of the two countries to take practical steps to build mutual trust and confidence.

He stressed the two countries must not allow their respective territories to be used by anyone to the detriment of their interests.

Pakistan and Afghanistan had the same objective of long-term peace and prosperity in the war-torn country and the region at large, he told the audience.

While others believed in a military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan, Pakistan always thought that a politically negotiated settlement was the only way forward, he said. It was gratifying to note that others had also reached the same conclusion, he said.

Pakistan had wholeheartedly facilitated the Afghan peace process in good faith and as a shared responsibility and would continue playing its due role, he assured. "Our support has been crucial in overcoming the political stalemate that looked impossible to break just a year ago," Qureshi claimed.

The minister said in addition to playing its role in the peace process, Pakistan also remained committed to Afghanistan's reconstruction and development.

He said Pakistan stood ready to help Afghanistan through trade, investments, connectivity and capacity-building of the Afghan people.

"We are committed to enhancing people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges," he said, adding Pakistan wished to work with Afghanistan and the world community to help create conditions that enabled a dignified, safe and voluntary return of Afghan refugees to their homeland. (Pajhwok)

(4) Activists Barred ...

in the city of Lashkargah last year in March 2018 against an attack that killed around 16 people that month. About a month later, the activists left Helmand and marched on foot towards Kabul.

The activists walked through towns and villages, crossed provinces and met with local residents along the way. For 38 days, they walked and as they progressed, so their numbers grew.

About 700kms later, the group of eight had grown to an estimated 100. They arrived in Kabul on June 18 and handed over demands for a ceasefire and peace to both the Afghan government and the Taliban.

During their stay in Kabul, they held sit-in protests outside diplomatic offices in Kabul. They also met with President Ghani on a Kabul street where they asked him to accelerate the peace efforts.

The activists, whose ages ranged from 17 to 65, came from all walks of life and include students, athletes and farmers among others. It was these and other activists that then extended their walk from Kabul to Balkh. (Tolo news)

(5) US-Taliban Talks ...

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(6) 2,000 Tons ...

provinces of the country the price for each Kilogram of watermelon reduced unprecedentedly to one Afghanis.

"Dozens of the Afghan watermelon will

be exported to Azerbaijan to solve the farmers' current problem.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture reported that the harvests of fresh fruits have increased this year through which the farmers can earn more money.

"Although the harvests have increased, the prices are good in the markets which can influence the farmer's living condition," said Akbar Rostami, the Spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture.

At the same time, some of the lawmakers criticize the government for the absence of capacity regarding agriculture.

"The government should buy the farmers' products with a sufficient price and keep them in the fridges until exporting them to the foreign countries. This way the farmers will not lose their profits," said Habiba Danish, an Afghan MP.

Economic experts say that the government should do marketing for the country's dry and fresh fruits in the region and in the world. (ATN)

(7) Afghan Peace ...

Coming ahead of President Ashraf Ghani's visit to Islamabad on June 27, the meeting also features High Peace Council chief Mohammad Karim Khalili, Jamiat-Islami leader Atta Mohammad Noor, Yunas Qanooni and Ismail Khan.

A statement from former President Hamid Karzai's office said that Karzai would not attend the meeting due to a limited time for preparations. He thanked Pakistan for hosting the meeting and said he would visit neighboring country in another opportunity.

The conference has been organized by the Lahore Center for Peace Research (LCPR) and the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI).

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi will also address the meeting Daily Times reported. President Arif Alvi will host a dinner for the Afghan political leaders.

Wali Masood, brother of Ahmad Shah Masood, Hezb-i-Wahdat leader Mohammad Mohaqiq, Fauzia Kofi and Pir Hamid Gilani and Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid Dostam are also in attendance. (Pajhwok)

(8) Taliban to Initiate ...

The seventh round of talks between the US and the Taliban is expected in Doha in early July. The Taliban has so far decline talking to the Afghan government until the US unveils a timeframe for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

On Friday, US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has said: "As we prepare for the next round of talks with the Taliban, (it's) important to remember we seek a comprehensive peace agreement," NOT a withdrawal agreement. (Pajhwok)

(9) Nine Taliban ...

He said, as a result, at least seven militants were killed and two others injured in the incident.

A number of Taliban's weapons were also seized by Afghan forces in the incident, Ahmadzai added.

The Taliban militant group has not made a comment about the incident yet.

Logar is among the insecure provinces in eastern Afghanistan where the Taliban militants are actively operating in Sarkh, Kharwar, Baraki Barak and Azrah districts. (ATN)

(10) NATO Defence ...

The ministers are expected to exchange views on deterrence and defence, with focus on progress on burden-sharing. They are also likely to address Russia's continuing violation of the INF Treaty, as well as the security implications of emerging technologies; with respect to the latter topic Finland, Sweden and the European Union are expected to join the discussion.

The alliance would reiterate its full support to US efforts to reach a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan and its continued commitment to the further development and sustainment of the Afghan security forces and institutions. (Pajhwok)

(11) Afghan Expat ...

Pajhwok released the report about him. "We have already assisted him and will continue to help him. I also thank Pajhwok for setting store by highlighting facts," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(12) Not You Too...

has had little luck talking Ankara into giving up on the S-400. Turkey has repeatedly snubbed threats of sanctions and even warnings that it would be kicked out of the F-35 program if the deal with Moscow goes through.

Last September, the US used the CAATSA legislation as a justification to sanction China's defense ministry over their S-400 purchase. However, it has yet to sanction an existing - or prospective - ally, such as India.

While Washington has desperately tried to entice countries to purchase the MIM-104 Patriot system instead, it appears that

for many countries the market has already spoken. (RT)

(13) It's Odd That...

will now face a party-wide vote involving up to 160,000 conservatives. The result of the final vote is due by late-July.

Whatever the result may be, Russia "will respect it," Putin stressed, adding that "we will work with anyone who wants to work with us."

UK leaders seem reluctant to repair ties with Russia but British business circles are not, he pointed out. "Their business people want to enter and expand their presence in Russian market," Putin revealed, telling the news channel he hopes that the next UK government will bear that in mind. (RT)

(14) Great Game ...

potential for maritime transportation through, and economic and trade development in, the region.

The lawmakers then scrupulously listed the sizeable quantity of Arctic natural reserves. The polar circle is home to 13 percent of the 18 world's undiscovered oil and 30 percent of its undiscovered gas. Last but not least, the "abundance of uranium, rare earth minerals, gold, diamonds, and millions of square miles of untapped resources" is worth competing for.

The US has long had its sights set on the Arctic, where it hopes to benefit from climate change, which is gradually turning ice-bound territory into passable waterways. As Mike Pompeo said this year: "Arctic seaways could become the 21st century Suez and Panama canals."

Earlier this month, the US Navy urged the expansion of Arctic operations, mostly by sending additional destroyers to the region. Russia, which has more than 11,000km (7,000 miles) of coastline in the Arctic, has not sat idle in terms of exploring the high seas.

In the past few years, the Russian military has built a most modern base, dubbed the 'Northern Clover,' and renovated an array of abandoned airfields in the area.

Defense installations aside, Moscow is also reckoning on huge economic projects within its maritime borders, and even hopes to facilitate tourism in the Arctic Circle. (RT)

(15) US-China...

to be issued by the host, Thailand's junta leader and newly proclaimed Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, would commit ASEAN to conclude the negotiations for the massive trade pact within the year.

The draft statement urging economic ministers "to exert relentless efforts to reach this target" was seen by The Associated Press.

"We remained concerned over the unabating tide of protectionism and anti-globalization sentiments that continue to plague the global economy and put multilateralism under threat," the statement said.

Many of the leaders fear the rise of protectionism could have a devastating impact on the regional and global economy.

Trade tensions between the U.S. and China over Beijing's technology policy and other market access issues have added to strains within the region, especially since President Donald Trump took office in early 2017 and declared his "America First" preference for bilateral trade deals and distrust of international institutions. The two sides have imposed tariffs on billions of dollars of each other's products in a standoff that has shown no sign of abating.

ASEAN member states and six other Asia-Pacific countries have been negotiating the market-opening pact, called the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP. The accord includes giants such as China and India but not the U.S. and is expected to encompass nearly half the world's population and 40% of world trade.

Although talks have gradually progressed, negotiators failed to finalize the accord last year due to remaining differences. India balked at widening its markets to imports from rival China, for example, according to participants.

The South China Sea rifts have been a longstanding security concern. But the June 9 ramming of an anchored Philippine boat by a larger Chinese fishing vessel in the Reed Bank sparked an outcry and condemnations in the Philippines, after the Chinese crew sailed away while the fishing boat sank at night. Its Filipino crew was rescued by a Vietnamese vessel. (AP)

(16) Venezuela Should...

She also spoke with relatives of people who died during the anti-Maduro protests of 2017.

Rights groups had pushed Bachelet to raise the issue of 715 people they say have

been jailed for political reasons, a claim Maduro's government rejects.

Maduro, meanwhile, said he would respect the recommendations made by Bachelet, a former Chilean president.

"I told her that she can count on me, as president, to take her suggestions, her recommendations and her proposals seriously," Maduro said, adding that people accused of human rights abuses would be prosecuted.

Bachelet also said she had appointed delegates to remain in the country with the mandate "to provide assistance and technical advice, but also, very importantly, to continue to monitor the human rights situation across Venezuela."

The high commissioner's visit came amid the country's ongoing economic and political crisis that the UN says has caused some four million Venezuelans to flee since 2015 amid collapsing government services and shortages of food.

Bachelet has previously criticized the government's response to the crisis and called for Caracas to respect "everyone's fundamental right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression."

Yet it was the Maduro government who invited her to Venezuela, saying the visit would be an opportunity to show its adherence to human rights and the "negative repercussions" of sanctions that prevent it from selling its oil to the United States. (AFP)

(17) Germany Must ...

far-right radicals, domestic intelligence agency BfV estimates, and a Civey poll showed 60 percent of Germans think the government is doing too little to oppose them.

Luebecke, the head of the district government in Kassel in the state of Hesse, was shot in the head at close range on the terrace of his home. A 45-year-old named by police as Stephan E. was arrested at the weekend after they found his DNA at the scene.

Investigators said he was a known right-wing radical in the 1980s and 1990s. (Reuters)

(18) Hong Kong ...

eroding the territory's judicial independence and, more broadly, as a sign of Chinese government efforts to chip away at the city's freedoms.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam indefinitely suspended debate on the bills a week ago, making it likely they would die. But protesters are demanding that she formally withdraw the proposed changes to the extradition laws, which would expand the scope of criminal suspect transfers to include mainland China, Taiwan and Macau. Some also want Lam to resign.

Legal and business groups in Hong Kong oppose the legislation, saying critics of China's ruling Communist Party would be at risk of torture and unfair trials on the mainland and that it further erode the "one country, two systems" framework under which Hong Kong has been governed since the handover from British rule in 1997.

The peaceful ending to Friday's protests drew a sigh of relief in the city of 7.4 million people, after police unleashed tear gas and rubber bullets last week in violent clashes that left dozens injured on both sides. Police were previously criticized for their use of force but this time waited out the protesters. Police did issue a statement at 4:50 a.m. condemning them for blocking key streets and seriously disrupting work at police headquarters.

"Police have shown the greatest tolerance to the protesters who assembled outside PHQ, but their means of expressing views have become illegal, irrational and unreasonable," the statement said in part.

Activist Joshua Wong called on police to answer demands over heavy handed tactics used during a mass protest on June 12, including the firing of 150 rounds of tear gas, rubber bullets and beanbag rounds, and the beating of unarmed protesters by police with truncheons.

"We ... urge police to apologize to the people" over the use of such tactics and their labeling of the gathering as a riot, Wong said.

The auxiliary bishop of Hong Kong's Catholic Diocese, the Rev. Joseph Ha, appealed to the protesters to avoid violence. He warned that public opinion could turn against them.

"You have already been on the roads for a long time," he said on Cable TV Hong Kong. "You've already done a lot. You have already expressed very clearly your hopes and wishes. But I am really worried about your personal safety. ... Please, absolutely, do not use violence." (AP)