

(1) World Faces...

"Without collective and coordinated global efforts, people will simply starve to death. Many more will suffer and die from disease. Children stunted and out of school. Livelihoods, futures and hope will be lost." He called war-ravaged Yemen "the largest humanitarian crisis in the world," with two thirds of the population, or 18.8 million people – three million more than in January – in need of assistance and more than seven million with no regular access to food. The conflict in Yemen has left more than 7,400 people dead and 40,000 wounded since an Arab-state coalition intervened on the government's side against rebels in March 2015, according to UN figures. (AFP)

(2) Parliament to ...

the incompetent security officials that security situation cannot be worse than it is in Kabul now. How did the terrorists enter the hospital? If someone had not helped them from inside, they would not have been able to enter," said Nazifa Zaki, MP.

A number of MPs believe that parliament should put pressure on security departments to do their jobs properly. "Terrorists carried out a cruel attack on the hospital. Security officials, will you be unresponsive until they take Arg (presidential palace)?" MP Abdul Rahim Ayubi said.

"Security departments meet with representative of Taliban and Daesh, while daily hundreds and thousands of people get killed here," MP Amanullah Paiman said.

Parliament members blasted security officials for their failure in doing their jobs while election of parliament administrative board is still not finished and parliament secretariat has not been fully elected yet. (Tolonews)

(3) SIGAR Warns ...

vacuum created when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to oust the terrorists responsible for plotting the 9/11 attacks, Washington and aid agencies pumped money into the poverty-wracked nation to help install a new government and start a development plan to overcome the poverty that breeds extremism.

While there were successes, the strategy also fed corruption in a country where it already was endemic.

"The U.S. did contribute to the problem, unintentionally," Sopko said. "The U.S. and its allies probably gave too much money too fast to too small a country, such as Afghanistan, with too little oversight."

"When that happens, corrupt Afghans, corrupt Americans and corrupt contractors will steal money and then bribe officials. The blame is two-sided; it takes two to tango. The United States could have done a better job in overseeing the billions of dollars that were sent to Afghanistan," he said. SIGAR was created in 2010. Sopko, a former Justice Department prosecutor who fought organized crime at home, was brought aboard two years later. He discovered that while some money was lost to sheer waste, corruption ate up a large chunk of what was left. And not all of it went to line Afghan officials' pockets.

"We've arrested over 100 contractors, U.S. government employees, U.S. military employees, and they are serving time," Sopko said. "We've recovered about \$1 billion in fines and restitution."

SIGAR also is working with the Afghan government to turn around a long tradition of corruption in its ministries.

"Many of the generals have paid to get their jobs, many of the police have paid to do their jobs," Sopko said. "Many of the former ministers have put their friends and cronies in these agencies."

"This is the difficulty that the Afghan government has. They have to ferret out those corrupt elements. Collaborating together, we can fight corruption better that we can do alone or the Afghan government can do it alone. We may have helped create the problem. Now we have to help the Afghan government stop the corruption and basically take a knife and cut out the cancer that is corruption."

While he wishes the current Afghan government would do more, he has found them a more willing partner than the previous administration.

"They have to have a willing partner. Up to now they have, and we hope that continues," Sopko said.

Still, mistrust of the government is pervasive. SIGAR has set up a confidential hotline for citizens to report corruption.

"Many of our best cases come from brave Afghans who have contacted this hotline," said Sopko.

Getting rid of corruption is also key to fighting Afghanistan's drug problems. And both are critical to fighting terrorism.

"The drug trade supports the insurgents and the extremists," Sopko said, quoting Gen. John Nicholson, the head of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, as

saying insurgents get about 60 percent of their funding from the drug trade. "The corruption supports the insurgents. We have evidence of that."

Sopko said President Ashraf Ghani warned, years before he became the country's leader, that Afghanistan had the potential to become a narco-terrorist state.

"And it's trending that way because no one is seriously addressing the narcotics problem," Sopko said. "We hope the Afghan people and the new American administration will be more aggressive." (VoA)

(4) Ground Conditio...

and not just focus on the timeline. Commanders were frustrated by the timeline-approach..."

Curtis added the US public opinion was different than it was six-seven years ago. However, several top leaders of the administration including the defense secretary and the national security advisor understand the importance of investment in the region.

Former special representative Daniel Feldman agreed with Curtis. "Once our troop levels went down, the casualty rate came down, and as such there is not much public opinion on it in the US."

Shamila Chaudhry of the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies noted: "Luckily for Pakistan, they seem to be good Muslims... But things could change." Pakistan's relationship with the Saudis could have something to do.

But she argued that in reality generals would be taking most of the policy decisions. "There would be a militaristic approach to the relationship," she believed, saying the old strategy of carrot and stick might come out.

She was of the view that Pakistan was not on the top of the agenda of the American leadership under the Trump administration.

Jack Gill of the National Defense University said the governance issue in Afghanistan should not be lost sight of.

Feldman asserted diplomacy had to be on an equal footing with the military. "There has to be an empowered State Department presence here," he said.

"Diplomacy plays a critical role in this region. We would be surely mistaken (thinking) that military would drive the process. It would be absolutely incorrect," Curtis said, adding Russia was trying to assert its role in Afghanistan.

"They (Russians) are trying to take advantage of our presidential transition. I don't think they would be successful. They do not have a lot of leverage in the region. They don't have a lot of support among the public," Curtis concluded. (Pajhwok)

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(5) Islamabad ...

it had been forced to close its borders temporarily, it had reopened them on purely humanitarian grounds.

"Singling out Pakistan and pinning the blame on it for everything that goes wrong in Afghanistan is neither fair nor accurate," he said, underlining his country's sincere engagement in the work of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group.

Pakistan also remained open to the repatriation of refugees, and deserved praise for having hosted more than three million Afghans for some 40 years, the envoy added.

He continued Pakistan remained committed to regional efforts to combat terrorism and drug trafficking. He hoped other partners would share its zeal on the issues.

During the open debate, several speakers expressed deep concern over heightened tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan charged the recent attacks had generally been plotted across the Durand Line in Pakistan.

Sima Samar, chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, said Pakistan's closure of their common border had an adverse effect on the people.

Indian Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said terrorism in Afghanistan had grown enormously in its intensity, brutality and scope in the last few months. Terrorist groups had been able to capture and hold territory, he added.

"The Taliban have tried to expand their influence to territories in north and northeast along with southwest where they traditionally were not so strong," he said.

"The nexus between terrorist networks and criminal groups has further strengthened," he noted, saying the unimpeded brutal attacks, territorial gains by terrorist groups with support from outside Afghanistan and the emerging grave humanitarian crises were portents of dreadful times. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghanistan ...

inconsistent with our desire to live in a peaceful and prospering region. In earlier statements to this Council, we have emphasised, time and again, on Pakistani actions that sustain terrorist

activities in our country," he said. Saikal quoted leading Pakistani officials as acknowledging their support to terrorist groups. General Pervez Musharraf proudly commented in a 2015 interview that "Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had given birth to the Taliban to counter Indian action against Pakistan".

Last year, the envoy recalled, Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz went on record to say that Taliban leaders resided in Pakistan and that they had influence over them. A couple of weeks ago, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, former ambassador of Pakistan to the US, Russia, China, and India wrote in the Herald Magazine: "After the Soviet defeat and withdrawal, we (wittingly or unwittingly) unleashed a ruinous civil war and imposed a barbaric and medieval Taliban upon the hapless Afghan people."

Saikal said Qazi's words were but a confirmation of the truth that Pakistan talked one policy, but walked the other. Husain Haqqani, another former ambassador, categorised in an article the links between state apparatus and the Taliban.

In the context of peace talks, Haqqani wrote: "The Taliban and their Pakistani mentors have hardly changed their arguments or their tendency to fudge facts".

Saikal said the quotes and admissions were not "rhetoric from Kabul" or "blame game" as often claimed by a known member state. It was Pakistan talking, he observed.

The ambassador said while terrorist attacks in Pakistan were strongly deplored by Afghanistan, the world was surely witnessing blowback effects of using violent proxies as instruments of foreign policy.

"In other words, the chickens are coming home to roost! We have reminded our Pakistani counterparts on many occasions that "you reap what you sow". We say once again, it is time to change that failed policy for your own sake, desist from using radical terrorists as a foreign policy accessory, and genuinely join the international fight against all forms and shades of terrorism," Saikal said.

By bleeding Afghanistan, he alleged, Pakistan was not only trying to create a stalemate on the battlefield but was also hindering the political track. In order gain legitimacy for groups such as the Taliban, Pakistani decision-makers continued to use plausible deniability and shifting blame, as part of their defensive tactics while manipulating geo-political fault lines to their advantage, he said.

"They forget that legitimacy in my country flows through the people and a constitutional order, not through acts of terror, intimidation, and forced imposition of extremist thinking and radical behavior by misinterpreting and misusing our sacred religion," Saikal concluded. (Pajhwok)

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simply unacceptable, he observed, saying UNAMA stood ready to move the process forward and to help generate momentum for peace.

Pursuing an inclusive peace process and economic growth against the backdrop of an intensifying insurgency is a major challenge to the Afghan government, says the top UN diplomat in the country.

"Fortunately, the ground is being prepared to make Afghanistan a success. Internationally, Warsaw and Brussels set the stage for steady progress," the UNAMA head told the powerful UN body.

On the domestic front, he said, the government had introduced programmes to improve social services and promote growth and development. He called for delivering concrete outcomes to improve Afghan lives.

He highlighted three areas where the Ashraf Ghani administration – half-way through its constitutional term – had initiated visible steps forward: Anti-corruption, the electoral process and women's economic empowerment.

A range of institutional reforms, such as efforts to restore integrity to the management of public services, had been introduced, he noted. "We need, however, to acknowledge that much remains to be done, including addressing corruption in security institutions."

Yamamoto believed political leadership and strong determination was needed to deal with the problem. UNAMA will launch its first anti-corruption report, titled "Afghanistan's Other Battlefield: The Fight against Corruption".

He referred to the government's commitment to holding fair, inclusive and transparent parliamentary elections. The commissioners of the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission have already been appointed. (Pajhwok)

(10) Ghazni: 5 ...

of Ajristan district, Rahmatullah, said: "We don't know if we have an administrative chief. If there is any legal work, our people go to Ghazni City to resolve it"

Rashidan and Zankhan districts are in a similar situation. Residents of the districts want the authorities to address the issue on a priority basis.

Governor Abdul Karim Matin confirmed administrative heads for the five districts could not discharge their duties due to insecurity. "They are civilians and cannot go to work. And we also don't force them to do so."

Matin said the issue had been shared with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and the problem would be resolved soon. Pajhwok couldn't obtain comments from IDLG officials despite efforts.

On the other hand, Giro district chief, Abdullah Khairkhwah, said he was not permitted to go to the district centre due to insecurity. Abdullah said he lived in Ghazni City and resolved people's problems from there.

"We face threats traveling to the districts from the provincial capital. But recently we were promised to be airlifted soon to the district," he added.

Pajhwok tried to seek comments from other district heads, but failed to establish contacts with them.

Ghazni is a southern province, having 18 districts. In addition to the five districts, residents of Jaghori, Malistan, Nahwar, Jaghatu, Khwaja Omari, Gilan, Qarabagh, Maqur, Aab Band and Deh Yak districts also complain of similar problems.

They say districts chiefs stay absent from their offices most of the time. (Pajhwok)

(11) Gov't Officials ...

Nadiri said bringing about reforms is a difficult task and insisted the commission itself needed to be reformed. "The office needs more qualified staff and has to be reformed. The necessary staff should be recruited based on their merit and free of any discrimination," Nadiri said.

Ahmad Mushahid, the former director of the commission also said reforms in the civil service offices is a need.

"I hope that by the appointment of Nadiri, new actions and plans will begin for the civil service in Afghanistan," Mushahid said.

The independent administrative reforms commission has been managed by an acting director since National Unity Government was established. (Tolonews)

(12) Afghan-Pak ...

the closure of borders with Pakistan and the hike in flour price in Kazakhstan were reasons behind the increase.

Pakistan has closed transit ports with Afghanistan since three weeks.

However, the prices of rice and tea also remained steady. Fazal Rahman said 24.5 kilograms of Pakistani rice cost 1,600afis.

Haji Rahmatullah, a tea seller in Kabul Mandavi, said a kilogram of Madina green tea cost 240afis and the same amount of African black tea 260afis, the same rates as of last week's.

Ahmad Sharif, who owns a grocery store in Taimani neighborhood, said, 49kg of Kazakhstani flour was sold for 1,300afis, 49kg sack of Pakistani sugar for 2,800afis.

He sold 16-litre tin of Khurshid ghee for 1,250afis, 24.5kg sack of Pakistani rice for 1,800afis, a kilo of Madina green tea for 280afis and the same quantity of African black tea for 300afis – higher than wholesale prices.

The price of Russian gold also decreased. Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold cost 2,300afis. But he said the price of one gram of Russian gold decreased from 1,850afis to 1,800afis due to its low demand.

According to moneychangers' union in Sara-i-Shahzada, one US dollar was accounted for 68.30afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 630afis against last week's 67.70afis and 625afis.

Haji Khan Mohammad, deputy head of moneychangers' union, said the afghani's value decreased after Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) invalidated old banknotes in late August.

The DAB had announced exchanging old banknotes until the end of Assad month of next solar year or late August. (Pajhwok)

(13) Bamyan ...

Local officials say the 012 Police Unit has the responsibility of security of all historical sites in Bamian.

"The number of the police is not sufficient for this purpose. They are 20 police members who have the responsibility of keeping all the historical sites in Bamian. They cannot take care of all the sites," said Mohammad Isa Azizi, Cultural and Tourism Manager of the Directorate of Information and Culture in Bamian. (Tolonews)

(14) Taliban Training ...

motorcades of Mullah Nangialai and Mullah Niazi of a splinter Taliban group led by Mullah Rassoul.

The group developed differences with the Taliban leadership after the death of Taliban's founder and long time supreme Mullah Mohammad Omar.

The two Taliban commanders have been active and fighting against security forces in Shindand district, according to Ismail Khan, a former water and energy minister.

However, the Shindand district chief rejected Khan's claim that the government was supporting the two Taliban leaders as baseless. He said Mullah Nangialai and Mullah Niazi were the enemies of security forces.

Hikmat said the Shindand district had been divided into five administrative units, including Zirkoh, Qasaba, Posht Koh, Zawal and Kohzawar.

Meanwhile, Jilani Farhad, the Herat governor's spokesman, said about 20 to 30 percent area of the province was under Taliban's control. (Pajhwok)

(15) 32 Taliban...

killed in the airstrikes and their weapons and vehicles were destroyed.

Nad Ali district council member Haji Kula Khan said hundreds of families along the Nad Ali-Lashkargah highway had been displaced due to the clashes between security forces and insurgents.

Meanwhile, Taliban's spokesperson Qari Yousuf Ahmadi tweeted that 17 security personnel were killed and wounded in Bolan area of Lashkargah and Nad Ali district on Friday.

The Taliban are in control of 13 districts of Helmand, making the province the most insecure. (Pajhwok)

(16) 4 Feared Dead, ...

with nine passengers onboard was en route to the centre of Nusay district on Friday when it fell to the Amu River.

He said five passengers injured in the incident had been evacuated to the hospital in Nusay district but three others and the vehicle remained missing.

A woman among the missing persons was rescued from the river but she succumbed to her wounds on the way to hospital.

The three others were yet to be located but efforts were underway to find them as soon as possible, Anwari said. (Pajhwok)

(17) Afghanistan's...

spellbinding display against Ireland, taking five wickets in nine balls to turn the game around in an eventual 17-run win.

The top pick at the draft was Lendl Simmons, the second-highest run-getter in the tournament's three-year history with a tally of 1238 from 39 matches. Also a two-time World T20 winner, he went to Jamaica Tallawahs for USD 160,000 having represented Patriots in 2016.

Tallawahs, the defending champions, needed the muscle at the top of the order after they traded their captain Chris Gayle and top-scorer in all of CPL to the team that finished bottom last season, the Patriots. West Indies T20 captain Carlos Brathwaite might also turn out for the Patriots provided he does not have any WICB commitments at the time. (Tolonews)

(18) Daesh Behead 3 ...

expressed concerned over the incident and directed security organs to investigate the incident seriously.

Earlier, Daesh militants had beheaded and even exploded civilians in Nangarhar in the past. The group has not commented about the incident yet. (Pajhwok)

(19) Helmand Refugee...

on Friday evening, police chief for Bolan area, Maj. Haji Wasi, told Pajhwok Afghan News.

A source at the Emergency-run hospital in Lashkargah said Shah succumbed to his wounds at the hospital.

Haji Wasi said security forces controlled the Bolan area which was located near the frontline where an operation was under way. Zmaryal confirmed his father's death. (Pajhwok)

(20) 'Illegal Armed...

i-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province, said the number of illegal armed groups had increased five times.

He said members of uprising groups and Taliban militants who had joined the peace process but still toted guns were also among the illegal armed men.

Manan said the Afghan Local Police (ALP) also acted like illegal armed men instead of ensuring security.

Citing an example, he said once there were only 50 illegal armed men in Aqcha district of Jawzjan province, but now their strength had reached 2,000 in the name of uprising against the Taliban.

"We believe illegal armed gangs have been providing weapons to the insurgents," he said. (Pajhwok)

(21) Khost Airport ...

from the dead assailant. Investigations into the incident are underway, he added.

The military airport serves as a base for the special forces. No group has so far commented on the incident. (Pajhwok)

(22) Work on ...

can make them self-sufficient."

He welcomed the initiation of establishing 500 new orchards in Jawzjan, but complained farmers in Jawzjan faced irrigation water shortage. He said if the irrigation water shortage was resolved, it would help thrive gardening in the province. (Pajhwok)

(23)UNSC Hopes...

country's six-year war. "They further welcomed the announcement by Special Envoy de Mistura of a clear agenda for future negotiations" as indicated by Security Council Resolution 2254, focusing on governance; constitutional issues; elections; and counter terrorism, security and confidence building measures, the statement said. (Xinhua)

(24)Syria Urges...

allied rebel groups were closing in on Manbij to dislodge the MMC from the city.

Ankara has recently said it has no problem with the Syrian army taking over Manbij as long as the Kurdish-supported groups are not involved. (Xinhua)

(25)Tusk Urges ...

of continental Europe's biggest economies who back the idea of differentiated integration for EU member states. (Xinhua)

(26)Putin, Erdogan...

leaders also discussed bilateral affairs including cooperation in trade, energy, investment and infrastructure. (Xinhua)

(27)EU Summit ...

refused to accept the summit's conclusion to reappoint Tusk, saying "Poland doesn't agree with this. And I definitely won't accept any document from this summit."

Instead of the traditional conclusions by the European Council, there were merely conclusions "by the President of the European Council." As such, the summit ended without the customary accord on a final document. (Xinhua)

(28)Trump to ...

the administration so far have been strong and consistent, that all allies need to be making progress towards this two percent goal," said the official. "So I expect that will be definitely a topic of their conversation for the concrete plan to meet this commitment." (Xinhua)

(29)Modi Wins...

as 312 of 403 seats in the state assembly, the biggest majority for any party in the state since 1977.

Almost four in ten voters backed Modi's party, the election commission said, close to the party's vote share in Uttar Pradesh in the 2014 general election when it won the biggest national majority in three decades. (Reuters)

(30)EU to Take...

Investment flows into ASEAN states in 2015 with 23.3 billion euros. (1 euro=1.06 U.S. dollars) (Xinhua)