

(1) No Compromise ...

stability and making trust between the peoples of the two countries.

He stressed on communication between peoples of the two neighbors and more trips of parliamentary delegations and meetings of security officials of the two states and promised he would also travel to Pakistan at a right time. However, he said: "We lost many opportunities and we should not waste more time and reach an agreement for proper solutions, we respect independence of Pakistan and we want Pakistan to respect the independency of Afghanistan and national will."

"We cannot make deals or tolerate damage to the independence of Afghanistan, we respect reasonable concerns of Pakistan and we are ready to talk in this area," Abdullah added.

Pakistan's national assembly speaker, Ayaz Sadiq, heading the delegation, shared his country's prime minister letter with the CEO in which Abdullah was requested to visit Pakistan on an official trip.

Sadiq said it was the first ever visit of a Pakistan's highest level formal delegation to Afghanistan. "We on behalf of all political movements in Pakistan want friendly relations between the two countries and fight against terrorism, we came here with a strong will to resolve problems between the two countries as soon as possible," he said.

Sadiq said they met Afghan parliament heads, the president and a number of other Afghan officials and stressed on improving relations between the two neighbors.

"In these meetings, we heard new words and got right information about the situation, on return, we would share our opinions and understandings with the government and the people of Pakistan and follow up discussions related to national security through a special committee," he added.

He stressed a developed, independent, stable and free of terrorism Afghanistan was in the best interest of Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

(2) US Must ...

the international community to get more actively involved in resolving the Afghan conflict.

In a report released simultaneously in Europe and the United States, the group warns that "no internationally-led negotiations will work unless there is a consensus among Afghans, both those backing and opposing the government, to pursue a negotiated peace rather than continued conflict".

The first condition for restoring peace to Afghanistan is to contain the insurgency, the ICG argues, and the second is to develop a consensus among Afghan groups. "A third essential element is for Pakistan to become convinced that its interests would be better served by a political settlement in Afghanistan than by continued Taliban insurgency," it adds.

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The report points out that after the transition to Afghan security forces in 2014, the thinly stretched official Afghan forces have been battling a growing insurgency on several fronts.

Quoting from the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's observation, the ICG points out only 57.2 per cent of 375 districts were under government control or influence by Feb 2017, a 15pc decline since end-2015.

According to the special inspector general, 6,785 Afghan personnel were killed and another 11,777 wounded from January to November 2016, significant losses at a time when security forces are struggling with personnel retention. The UN Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also reported a 3pc increase in civilian casualties (3,498 killed and 7,920 wounded) in 2016 over the previous year. The number of high-profile attacks in Kabul also was higher during the first three months of 2017 as compared to equivalent periods in previous years. On April 21, Taliban gunmen and suicide bombers attacked an Afghan army base in the northern Balkh province, killing over 100 military and other personnel and injuring scores more.

The army chief and defence minister both resigned the following day. Two attacks in March targeted police stations and a military hospital, killing 73 and wounding over 240 people.

To prevent the insurgency from spreading further, the report emphasises the need for limiting the scope of ungoverned spaces that could be exploited by regional

extremists and transnational terrorist groups.

The report urges the United States and other international players in Afghanistan to address the widening internal disagreements and political partisanship in Afghanistan as these "permeate all levels of the security apparatus and have undermined the official Afghan forces command and control structures".

The report points out that intra-governmental divisions in Afghanistan have also impeded the implementation of reforms necessary to mitigate the effects of corruption, nepotism and factionalism in the Afghan National Army and particularly the Afghan National Police.

The report claims that Afghanistan's neighbours are more aggressively promoting what they perceive to be their own national security interests.

"This most notably is the case of Pakistan, whose relations with Afghanistan continue to be strained. Islamabad remains unwilling to facilitate talks between the Taliban and Kabul, and continues supporting its Afghan proxies, allowing them to recruit, fundraise, as well as plan and conduct operations from safe havens inside Pakistan," the report alleges.

"Pakistan in turn accuses Kabul of at best turning a blind eye, if not actively supporting, Pakistani tribal militants conducting cross-border attacks from Afghan territory," it adds.

The report notes that deteriorating relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have had other consequences. In 2016, Islamabad forcibly repatriated more than 550,000 Afghans as relations with Kabul deteriorated.

The report also notes that a February 2017 major terror attack on a shrine in southern Pakistan was claimed by a Pakistani Taliban faction reportedly based in eastern Afghanistan.

In retaliation, Pakistan closed its two main border crossings with Afghanistan - Torkham and Chaman - for over a month and has begun to fence the border, "a move certain to aggravate tensions insofar as Kabul does not recognise the Durand Line as the international boundary".

The report notes that Pakistan views closer ties between Kabul and New Delhi as provocative while Iran has long been suspected of providing military hardware to some Taliban factions.

The report quotes senior US military officials as saying that Russia recently has upped its involvement, reaching out to the Taliban and "providing them with some military support. Russia has also proposed to lead a new negotiation process which could further complicate Afghanistan's security dynamics, the report adds.

To convince Pakistan that its interests would be better served by a political settlement in Afghanistan than by continued Taliban insurgency, the report urges the United States to condition its military support to Islamabad to working with Kabul to bring the insurgents to the negotiating table and rethinking its alleged support to the Taliban's Quetta Shura and the Haqqani network.

"While the US is best placed to pressure Pakistan to reverse its support for Afghan proxies, the EU and member states should use trade and diplomatic ties with Pakistan and financial assistance to Afghanistan as leverage to persuade them to peacefully resolve their differences," the report adds. (Pajhwok)

(3) MPs to ...

Balkh province.

The April 21 attack left 135 soldiers dead and 70 others wounded on the Shaheen Military Corps base in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of Balkh.

Some reports claim the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has suggested the government to appoint the two former officials as ambassadors to Jordan and Kazakhstan.

Abdullah Mohammadi, a lawmaker from Samangan province, told today's session that there was no need for prioritizing the suggestion. He called for a thoroughgoing investigation into the single deadliest attack before appointing the former military officials as ambassadors.

The lawmaker said the two officials should be brought to justice for their negligence to prevent the attack. Shekiba Hashemi, a representative from southern Kandahar province, said: "Awarding these two officials instead of punishing them shows the government has a soft corner for corrupt and negligent officials." She said the Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials should be tried

over their negligence and failure to prevent recent consecutive attacks in which too many people were killed. At least 49 people were killed and more than 50 wounded in March 8 terrorist attack on Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan Military Hospital in Kabul.

However, some lawmakers said put the toll at more than 170 dead and 150 wounded in the attack. The assault was claimed by Islamic State (IS) militants.

About the suggestion of appointing Abdullah Habibi and Qadam Shah Shahim as ambassadors, Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said appointments should be made on merit and those accused of duty negligence should not be appointed to new position until their cases were cleared.

Security strategy Fawzia Kufi, a lawmaker from northeastern Badakhshan province, about the fall of Zibak district in her province to the Taliban, said, "The current security strategy is causing casualties, most of the country's highways are not safe and we lose passengers every day."

She asked the government to amend its security strategy and make it effective. Zibak district of Badakhshan province fell to the Taliban on April 29.

Nazifa Zaki, a lawmaker from Kabul, also expressed concern over the growing insecurity in the country and said she had 12 times met with the defense minister last year and asked him to conduct operations against militants in Badakhshan.

Her colleague, Shekiba Hashemi said: "It was negligence of the defense minister that led to the failure of Shafaq1- and Shafaq2- Operations and Zibak fell."

Speaker Ibrahim also expressed concern over the current security situation and said the fall of Zibak showed the government lacked a clear and responsible security strategy.

He once again asked the government, particularly the president, to respect the Wolesi Jirga's regulations.

Despite many requests from the Parliament, some departments were still being headed by acting officials and the impeached ministers continued in their job, he said.

On November 2, the lower house summoned 16 ministers and impeached the ministers of foreign affairs, labour, public works, education, transport, communication and higher education in absentia.

The ministries of information and culture, mines and petroleum and border and tribal affairs are currently run by acting ministers.

Abdul Bari Jahani and Daud Shah Saba who served as information and culture, and mines and petroleum ministers have resigned.

The border and tribal affairs minister, Mohammad Gulab Mangal has appointed as governor for Nangarhar province. (Pajhwok)

(4) Hekmatyar's...

The agreement with Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin demonstrated the preparedness of Afghanistan's government to seek peace with armed anti-government elements, and UNAMA looks forward to its full implementation and to other armed actors joining a peace process.

A credible peace process must remain owned and driven by Afghans, who would build a future together.

The UN welcomed agreements that would contribute to a reduction of violence in Afghanistan and allow Afghans to live in peace with each other.

After decades of war in Afghanistan, the UN sees all steps towards reconciliation, inclusive peace and a lasting end to the conflict as positive, but remains mindful of the issues around transitional justice and the importance of upholding human rights. (Pajhwok)

(5) Talks with ...

considered its visit a favorable opportunity for building mutual trust.

Sadiq told a press conference in Kabul they were visiting Afghanistan in response to an invitation from President Ashraf Ghani. He said it was the largest Pakistani parliamentary delegation travelling to Afghanistan.

The visiting parliamentarians held fruitful and comprehensive negotiations with their Afghan counterparts, President Ghani and his predecessor Hamid Karzai. The team would meet CEO Dr. Abdullah later in the evening.

Sadiq said the objective behind their trip was to ascertain the views of Afghan leaders and shared them with Pakistani high-ups back home, he said. "Both sides would continue with such exchanges."

Peace and stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan was inter-linked, he said, adding Pakistan respected Afghanistan as a sovereign country. Sadiq said they had extended an invitation from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to former president Hamid Karzai to visit Islamabad. He urged both countries to work positively to improve bilateral ties.

In response to a question, he said the delegation neither represented the military nor government; they were public representatives who had come to Kabul to meet Afghan officials.

"We haven't arrived here to share concerns and problems. We have seen relations between our countries are not good and people's perceptions about Pakistan aren't positive either."

He believed their trip to Afghanistan would have a positive impact. He made clear they had forgotten past bitterness and wanted to open a new chapter in bilateral ties. (Pajhwok)

(6) Casualties

report said American taxpayers had paid 48\$ million in the last year alone to fund ammunition for Afghan security personnel, in addition to 32.3\$ billion for governance and economic development as of March 2017.

Washington has spent more than 11\$ billion so far on other weapons, communications, aircraft, and vehicles for the Afghan forces. The cost to US taxpayers might not decline over the coming years, SIGAR said.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) continues to take heavy casualties in its fight against the Taliban, something that has left the troops incapable of running the operations necessary to wrest back control of the lost territory.

"A dangerous and stubborn insurgency controls or exerts influence over areas holding about a third of the Afghan population," SIGAR noted. "Heavy casualties and capability gaps limit the effectiveness of Afghan soldiers and police. Opium production stands near record levels."

The UN recorded 5,160 security incidents between November 2016, 18, and February 2017, 14, representing a 10% increase from the same period the previous year, and a 3% increase from the same period in 2015-2014. The number of security incidents rose by 30 in January 2017 to 1,877, the highest number ever recorded for that month by the UN.

The war-torn country continued producing a massive amount of opium, giving rise to a profitable drug trade that funded the Taliban's war effort, the report said, saying traffickers were giving terrorists weapons, money, and support. Afghanistan produced roughly 4,800 metric tons of opium in 2016 alone.

In the first six weeks of 807, 2017 security forces personnel were killed, while mass casualty attacks against civilian targets also increased. The report cited an attack that killed 50 people at the Afghanistan's largest military hospital on March 8. (Pajhwok)

(7) Companies ...

some companies refuse to pay their taxes.

ACCI urged the finance ministry to reduce corruption in the ministry and increase the staff capacity.

"We want government to employ more professional employees to collect taxes more accurately," said Khan Jan Alokozay, ACCI deputy head.

Officials from the directorate of large taxpayers said they are trying to establish a new center for tax collection which will facilitate the process and will make tax collection easier. (Tolonews)

(8) US, NATO

statement said the US continued to support an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process in which armed groups ceased violence, broke ties with international terrorist outfits and accept the Afghan constitution, including protections for women and minorities.

In a separate statement by the NATO civilian mission welcomed the Afghan government's continued steps towards full implementation of its peace agreement with Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA). "This is a positive indication of the Afghan government's ongoing commitment to the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan," the statement said.

In moving forward, it is critical that all parties continue to abide by the terms of this important peace agreement which is a critical step to peace for all Afghans. It is vital that HIA stand renunciation

of violence and commitment to the rule of law be matched by action.

NATO continued to support an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process, in which armed groups cease violence, break ties with international terrorist groups and respect the Afghan constitution and human rights, in particular the rights of women and minorities. (Pajhwok)

(9) Sayyaf Warns...

Sayyaf criticized countries supporting insurgency.

"I have a message for the neighbors that enough is enough; you have hit your head with a rock and broken your head," Sayyaf said.

In his speech, he also raised concerns over the current government.

"The current government's situation is like the situation of addicts under the Pul-e-Sokhta bridge (in Kabul) with their poor health conditions," said Mohammad Omar Daudzai, a member of the council.

The congress also raised concerns over government's "apathy" towards important security incidents in the country.

"The government, instead of bringing reforms and necessary changes, instead ignored all the incidents," said Mohammad Younus Qanooni, another member of the council. Meanwhile, Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, a Hizb-e-Islami faction leader, called on Hekmatyar to follow a path of solidarity.

"We strictly request Mr. Hekmatyar to join all brothers in one rank," Arghandiwal said.

The council also however blasted government for its failure to maintain security and fight corruption in the country. (Tolonews)

(10) Pakistan Spy ...

the lists] will take place at his level," Sadiq said.

He was responding to a question about whether his delegation discussed the list of fugitive militants Pakistan recently shared with Afghanistan.

Islamabad provided the list to Kabul in February after a string of terrorist attacks killed scores of people in Pakistan and authorities blamed anti-state militants sheltering in Afghan border areas plotted the violence. The Afghan government accepted the list, but gave Pakistan a list of militants it said were orchestrating attacks in Afghanistan. In addition to meeting Afghan counterparts and prominent tribal elders, Sadiq said the Pakistani parliamentary delegation of representatives from all national political parties also met with President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

He said that the Afghan Chief Executive has assured his delegation he will soon visit Pakistan.

"The Afghan leadership, the people of Afghanistan and Afghan lawmakers not only warmly welcomed our delegation but our discussions with them took place in an extremely cordial atmosphere," said the Pakistani house speaker.

All of them desired friendship and an improved situation between Pakistan and Afghanistan and both sides agreed to resume contacts from where they were broken off, Sadiq noted.

President Ghani reached out to Pakistan after assuming office in 2014 to encourage the neighboring country to stop Taliban insurgents from using Pakistani soil for insurgent activities in Afghanistan and to persuade the rebels to engage in peace talks with his government.

The Ghani initiative also led to an initial cooperation agreement between ISI and its Afghan counterpart, the National Directorate of Security to fight anti-state militants taking advantage of a 2,600kilometer largely porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

But increased insurgent attacks and the Taliban's refusal to hold peace talks with Kabul have deteriorated bilateral relations during the past two years. President Ghani has repeatedly blamed Pakistan for the continuing deadly violence in his country, charges Islamabad denies.

The Afghan government says sanctuaries on Pakistani soil are helping the Taliban prolong its insurgent activities in their country. Speaking to Cabinet ministers on Monday, Abdullah, without naming Pakistan, asserted the Taliban planned and announced its so-called "spring offensive" from a neighboring country.

He said that in his talks with Pakistani parliamentarians he stressed that Afghanistan has certain expectations when "the announcement of the launch of

an [insurgent] operation is made from inside a neighboring country against its neighbor." (VoA)

(11) NAI Reacts ...

that freedom of speech in the country has come at a high price. Hekmatyar said on Saturday in his first public speech in about 20 years that the media in Afghanistan was cursed.

Now Hizb-e-Islami party in a released statement said that number of media deliberately or intentionally interpreted his remarks because the aim of Hekmatyar remarks was that media must prevent from broadcasting ethic issues. (Tolonews)

(12) Cumbersome...

that certain individuals force school certificates and flee students in this way. A number of the elements involved in the sordid business have been referred to the attorney officer for investigation.

One applicant from southern Ghazni province, who wished to go unnamed, confided to Pajhwok he had applied for a vacancy in a government institution three year back but he being a 9th grader was rejected on the ground that he was under-qualified.

Having studied at the Momin School, he said: "I had no other option but to make a fake 12th grade certificate (Shahadatnama) in return for 30,000 afghanis."

Ahmad Rafai Shams, a resident of the eight municipality district of Herat City who studied until ninth class, was referred to a man who got him a bogus school certificate for 30,000 afghanis.

Abdul Razzaq Ahmadi, Herat education director, acknowledged forgery of school certificates, saying some staffers of district schools were involved in the practice. He, however, said due to a human resource shortage in the monitoring board they were unable to keep an eye on all schools.

Certain senior government officials supported the illegal distribution of school certificates to applicants, he alleged, blasting such individuals for damaging the cause of education. The problem did not exist in Herat City, the provincial capital, he explained. Naheed Naqashbandi, director-general of results and certificates at the Herat education department, said they were striving not to issue school certificates to the students with the fake results and documents.

"We halt withhold the certificates of suspects or those having problems in their results. If forged results are provided by the school, then the department could not do anything," Naqashbandi added. Some individuals involved in making phony certificates have been introduced to the attorney office.

Pervez, a resident of Kabul who dropped out of 12th class, admitted having a crack at getting a bogus certificate. He met an individual a month back, who offered to give him a fake certificate for 35,000 afghanis, with the issue date of 2016.

The fraudster told him any date before that was not possible. As a result, Pervez (40) rejected the offer. (Pajhwok)

(13) US Forces ...

in Kabul confirmed the incident, but provided no details.

No militant group has come forward to claim the attack. (Pajhwok)

(14) Russia Registers...

ceasefire agreements, and 236 inhabited areas have been liberated by the Syrian troops from the ISIS armed formations, according to the ministry. (Xinhua)

(15) British MPs...

report says a third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, and in Britain food worth over 13 billion U.S. dollars is thrown away by households every year.

To drive efforts to reduce the food waste, the committee has called on the government to establish a national food waste reduction target.

MPs who sit on the committee say it is socially a scandal that people are going hungry and using food banks when so much produce is being wasted. (Xinhua)

(16) CIA Chief ...

a U.S. supply ship, a first-time mission under new security legislation that allows Japan's military a greater role overseas. (AP)