

(1) Kabul Committed...

financial and equipment support to the terror groups. President Ghani said practical steps must be taken to eliminate the sources funding and supporting the terror groups, including the opium trade.

He also warned regarding the instrumental use of terror and said those countries which use terrorism for political motives must understand the menace not only endangers the region but will put the security of their country at risk as well.

In his turn, the UNSC sanctions committee chief thanked President Ghani and the Afghan people for their regional supportive role and vowed to help the country in ensuring peace and stability, according to the Office of the President, ARG Palace. (KP)

(2) Confrontation...

supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and believes "reconciliation" is the way forward to end the war.

Tillerson last week visited Pakistan and met with the top Pakistani officials, including Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and reiterated President Trump's message regarding the increased efforts needed by Pakistan to eradicate the militants and terrorists from its country.

"The Secretary reiterated President Trump's message that Pakistan must increase its efforts to eradicate militants and terrorists operating within the country," the Department of State said in a statement.

The statement further added "To address those concerns, the Secretary outlined the United States' new South Asia Strategy and the vital role that Pakistan can play in working with the United States and others to facilitate a peace process in Afghanistan that can bring stability and security to the region." (KP)

(3) Rula Ghani Drums ...

sector, for the uplift of their country.

She urged all donors to invest more in women's development at the provincial level to ameliorate their situation. Efforts should be stepped up at increasing the number of female teachers, she suggested.

Ms Ghani said Afghanistan had been harmed enormously during the past four decades of war but its women continued to be brave and resilient.

Afghan women were meeting their family needs, but more efforts should be put in to promote their handicrafts and other products, she continued.

The first lady was hopeful about the future of Afghan women. At the same time, she underlined the need for increased efforts to help the females utilise their skills and talent. (Pajhwok)

(4) Kazakhstan Offers ...

Tolo News report, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense and Aerospace Industry (KMDAI) has announced it will help Afghanistan in different sectors.

The Afghan government statement said that KMDAI Minister Beibut Atankulov met Dr. Abdullah and told him that his country is ready to cooperate with Afghanistan in business, on energy development, on building of a railway line, and in the military and security (sector).

He also said that agreements regarding military assistance, satellite image capturing and cyber security will be signed soon with Afghanistan.

Dr. Abdullah said common security threats in the region need to be met head on through defence and security cooperation between countries. (ANI)

(5) Power Projects ...

meeting include construction of vicinity wall of the military academy of the ministry of defense, procurement of medicines for the ministry of defense, and procurement of fuel for Ariana Afghan Airlines.

ARG Palace also added that the members of the commission held in-depth discussions regarding the design and construction of the Machlaghoo dam and Shebarghan-Andkhai power project.

According to ARG Palace, the ministry of energy and water was instructed to take necessary measures and work hard for the proper implementation of the projects. (KP)

(6) Nationality and ...

and that everything is finalized.

"The decree was rejected by the MPs and no department including the president's has not the right to implement it," MP Ghulam Farooq Majrooh said.

But Afghanistan's Lawyers Union secretary head Ainuddin Bahaduri said: "The last decision on the legislative decrees are being made by the MPs. They can approve or reject the decrees."

Afghan people however said the electronic National Identity Cards should be rolled-out without considering any political perspectives being factored in nor any political interference.

"The tension between government and parliament should be resolved as soon as possible," a Kabul resident said.

From here, the decree on population regis-

tration law will go to Meshrano Jirga (the Upper House of Parliament) and if senators approve the amendment to the law, then a committee comprised of the two houses will decide on the fate of the law. (Tolonews)

(7) Chabahar Could...

established at Chabahar for loading and off-loading cargo from ships, India nonetheless shipped 15,000 tons of wheat in aid to Afghanistan on Monday to Chabahar.

According to the ministry, the port will play a key role in decreasing transit costs and improving trade volumes between Afghanistan and other countries - especially with Iran, India and Turkey.

"Unloading and loading wheat in Chabahar and transferring it to Afghanistan indicates that capacities have increased in Chabahar and it encourages our traders to start doing business through Chabahar, which is the closest port to us," said MoCI spokesman Musafir Quqandi.

According to MoCI officials, goods currently being shipped in through Karachi port will in the near future be redirected through Chabahar.

"Chabahar is a better route and in future, it will take the place of Karachi port. But work still needs to be done there. An international airport is needed, infrastructure should be established and we need to build a railway line from there to Afghanistan," ACCI spokesman Seyam Pesarlay said.

Reaching Karachi port, trucks travel either through Nimroz province - Zaranj city - which is an 872 km journey and takes at least 10 hours by road.

From Nangarhar's Torkham gate, the distance is over 1,416km and takes trucks 28 hours at least to reach the port.

According to ACCI, the distance is not the only problem, but truck drivers face numerous challenges while on route to Karachi including regular border closures and the need to often pay bribes along the way.

But India has indicated it is prepared to help develop Chabahar especially as it hopes to open up trade routes to Afghanistan and other Central Asian markets.

Currently, Pakistan has the monopoly in terms of trade routes to this region.

"If we can join Afghanistan's ring road which is from Ghor up to Maimana, it is a good option for Chabahar that will connect the eastern, south-eastern and also the northern and central regions - it will be cheaper and closer," said university lecturer Nazir Ahmad Najaja.

Concerns however have been raised over the current tensions between Iran and some Western countries and that some of these countries will not ship their goods through Chabahar. (Tolonews)

(8) Senate Blasts ...

the president okayed amendment to Article 6 of the law about the distribution of electronic ID cards. Based on the decree, nationality and tribe were mentioned in identity cards.

The Meshrano Jirga session took up the issue. Zalmai Zabuli, a senator from southern Zabul province, said: "Wolesi Jirga acted against its commitment and public demands. We are Afghans and those living in Afghanistan are called Afghans under Article 4 of the constitution."

He alleged the lower house had not paid attention to people's protests and requests for the electronic ID cards over the last three years.

Mohammad Hassan Hotak, another member of the Meshrano Jirga, also criticised the lower house and said those living in Afghanistan and accepting the constitution should not oppose the word Afghan in identity cards.

In coordination with parliament, the government issued a decree putting an end to problems in distribution of computerised ID cards. The Wolesi Jirga should not have rejected it, he believed.

A number of other senators also hit out at the lower house action.

Chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar also said the Meshrano Jirga would approve the amendment for resolving the issue of electronic ID cards.

Controversial points would be referred to the joint commission of the two houses if the Meshrano Jirga approves a law that has been rejected by the Wolesi Jirga. (Pajhwok)

(9) US Military ...

"Exact assigned strength, progress toward authorised strength, attrition and casualty data are critical for understanding ANDSF performance, readiness and mission success," SIGAR said.

Data on attrition rates and casualty figures for Afghan security forces has also been concealed by US Forces-Afghanistan, arguing that the information belonged to the Afghan government.

"The Afghans know what's going on; the Taliban knows what's going on; the US military knows what's going on," John F. Sopko, the special inspector general, said in an interview. "The only people who don't know what's going on are the people paying for it."

The US forces did not provide SIGAR with

performance assessments on the Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Interior. The US military told SIGAR it was moving away from tracking Plan of Action and Milestones to assess progress of Afghan institutions.

Instead it will focus its assessments on the MoI and MoD through the new Afghan road map instituted by President Ashraf Ghani this year.

The Afghan government's control of territory and population is at its lowest point since SIGAR has been reporting district and population control figures in 2015, according to the report. (Pajhwok)

(10) Govt. to Consider ...

"Transparency and supervision of development projects is a priority of the government and focus on this issue is increased." The CEO asked elders and influential figures to cooperate with the government in implementation of development projects and addressing their problems.

"If the public share their suggestions about developments with the government, we would consider them in next fiscal year," Abdullah concluded. (Pajhwok)

(11) Russian Businessmen ..

time a large number of Russian businessmen visited Kabul to investigate opportunities to start companies in this country and most of the businessmen are interested in transport, agriculture and manufacturing plants in this country," said Dmitry Antonov, the chairman of Russia's chamber of commerce and industry.

In addition, Antonov said Russians have already invested in the field of construction and manufacturing in Afghanistan, but they also want to invest in the areas of electricity production, railways, and road construction among others.

"Establishing a home trade for Afghanistan and Russia will provide a platform for the development of trade and investment between the two countries and we are trying to increase our efforts in this regard," said Atiqullah Nasrat, the Chief Executive Officer of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Meanwhile at a meeting with Transcapitalbank representatives (Russian commercial bank), an agreement was signed with Azizi Bank for banking services.

A number of economic analysts said however that in light of strengthening Russian business relations with Afghanistan, Russia is attempting to highlight its role in the economic sector as well as its presence in the political arena in Afghanistan.

They said government should provide the necessary resources for Russian investment in the country.

"At the moment, the expansion of Afghanistan's trade relations with Russia, including other countries in the world, is important and government should work in this section to provide better opportunities for the Russians to invest in Afghanistan," said Sayed Qeyas Sayedi a Kabul university lecturer.

Currently Russia's investment is the country is nominal but the trade volume between Afghanistan and Russia is around \$200 million USD a year.

Officials at ACCI said trade between Afghanistan and Russia will increase as trade and transit relations improve between Central Asian countries and Russia. (Tolonews)

(12) Hekmatyar Throws ...

leadership members of the council were also present at the meeting, the statement said. It quoted Khpalkwak as calling the HIA's signing of peace pact a 'bold step' by Hekmatyar.

He said under the HPC new strategy, former jihadi leaders and political figures would be consulted on implementation of the strategy and achieving peace.

Khaiili said the meeting was aimed at having consultations and attracting support from the HIA leadership.

About the new strategy, he said it was designed to be more inclusive and ensure participation of Afghanistan people in the peace process.

HIA leader Hekmatyar announced his party's full support to the new strategy, saying he was ready for any kind of assistance to the peace process in order to bring to a complete halt to the war and violence in the country.

He said most of the insurgents were in favor of peace but a handful were hell-bent on war. "Fighting never wins and all should know except peace, there is no other choice." However, he added: "Peace is possible if justice is ensured and insurgents are convinced about the justice." (Pajhwok)

(13) Think-Tank ...

to the study, the explanation for these unprecedented levels of opium poppy cultivation in Helmand lie, at least in part, with the socio-economic and political processes that were accelerated by the Helmand Food Zone (HFZ).

The study was launched in the fall of 2008 and its goal was to bring about a rapid and significant reduction in opium cultivation. The initiative was funded directly by the UK and US governments to the tune of be-

tween US\$12 and \$18 million per year between the autumn of 2008 and 2012. The program ran alongside a massive increase in the number of international and Afghan military forces fighting in Helmand and rises in the amount of development assistance known as "the surge."

"Over the course of the HFZ and the surge, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) helped the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) extend its writ across central Helmand; security bases were placed on every junction, access to government services including health and education improved substantially and the level of opium poppy cultivation fell dramatically from 103,590 hectares in 2008 to 63,307 hectares in 2011," the study says.

But where do things stand now, five years since the end of the HFZ and three years after the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Helmand? The study draws on in-depth fieldwork and high-resolution imagery taken between 2008 and 2017 to reveal how unsustainable the HFZ and the surge have been.

The HFZ plan was designed to be straightforward; communities in central Helmand would be offered incentives in the form of development inputs as well as threatened with disincentives of law enforcement to dissuade them from opium poppy cultivation. Those farmers that received agricultural inputs - typically a package of wheat seed and fertiliser - did so on the proviso that they sign an agreement to cease poppy cultivation altogether.

In terms of disincentives, the initial plan was for the HFZ to incorporate a range of law enforcement efforts that included action against traffickers and processing facilities as well as crop destruction. However, it proved difficult to coordinate and target what was largely a separate interdiction effort under the auspices of Afghan and foreign law enforcement officials. This left those with the responsibility for the management of the HFZ with crop destruction as their only tool for discouraging opium production.

To tie these different components of the HFZ together an information campaign was launched in the fall of each year by the provincial governor. The intention of the initiative was to raise awareness of the HFZ and its objectives among farmers and rural communities in the hope of deterring cultivation, primarily by increasing the perceived threat of eradication in the spring if farmers did not comply.

According to the study, the ban on opium in the canal command area imposed by the HFZ, along with the focus on replacing poppy with wheat, created a mobile labor force skilled in poppy cultivation in search of a livelihood and a place to live.

"While farmers had already begun to settle the former desert lands north of the Boghra prior to the HFZ, rates of settlement and the intensity of poppy cultivation both increased following the imposition of the ban in the canal command area," the study adds.

"Perhaps of even greater concern was the dramatic rise in cultivation in the Food Zone itself in 2017. In late 2016 the ANDSF was routed and the insurgency gained the upper hand in the canal-irrigated parts of Central Helmand," the study states and adds: "This established the conditions that allowed increasing numbers of farmers to commit their land to opium poppy. And while cultivation did not yet reach the peak that were seen in 2007 and 2008 there was significantly more opium in districts like Nad-e Ali, Marjah and even in the district of Lashkar Gah, than had been seen for many years."

This study is based on in-depth fieldwork and high-resolution imagery undertaken in April and May 2017 in 20 research sites in central Helmand. In total 300 interviews were conducted with rural households, 180 interviews in 12 research sites within the Helmand Food Zone, and 120 interviews in 8 research sites to the north of the Boghra canal. Supplementary data collection was also gathered from those providing services to these communities, including those trading in herbicides, solar panels, and diesel. This paper also draws on a body of fieldwork in these same research sites that dates back to 2008 and consists of over 3,000 detailed household interviews.

Furthermore, high-resolution, remote sensing imagery was integral to the research design. Geospatial data was used to identify research sites based on their histories of poppy cultivation, crop destruction and development assistance, including the wheat seed and fertiliser provided under the Food Zone Initiative. To capture how responses to the Helmand Food Zone vary by location, socio-economic, group and resource endowments, geospatial data on vegetative index, proximity to markets, and cropping seasons was also used in the selection of research sites.

The study highlights the role the HFZ played in what are unprecedented levels of opium poppy cultivation in Helmand in 2017 and shows how difficult it will be for the Government of Afghanistan to wrest

back control of central Helmand, in part as a consequence of the HFZ and its attempt to ban opium production. (Wadsam)

(14) Kabul Gathering ...

for this country, so people on both sides should be credible," he said.

Stressing the importance of local influential figures' involvement in peace efforts, he said the HPC had not been helpful and the process must be transferred to local elders.

The NIP also said Pakistan's cooperation in ensuring peace was helpful. Peace could not be ensured in Afghanistan without honest cooperation of Pakistan.

Farhad Azam Maruf, a participant of the gathering, said most of the HPC members could not go to hometowns due to insecurity. "Such a council cannot be helpful in bringing peace and it should be dissolved."

"The government should pave the ground for peace talks in vulnerable and conflict areas and figures advancing the peace process should be selected from conflict areas," he said.

Addressing the militants, Maruf said, "Stop insurgency, do not kill your brothers with others incitements, let choose a beautiful life."

At the end of the gathering, the NIP in its resolution letter asked the government, politicians and local influential figures to work jointly for peace.

It also called on the Taliban to choose the path of negotiations instead of killing civilians and destroying their own country. (Pajhwok)

(15) Death Toll ...

happened close to their building but they said they were not the target.

The explosion happened at about 4pm local time when many government officials and embassy staff were leaving the area for the day.

The suicide bomber reportedly entered the area through a park bordering the diplomatic zone and was able to penetrate the layers of security and gain access directly into the highly-fortified area that houses numerous embassies, some government offices, guesthouses and a few private companies. (Tolonews)

(16) 11 Police, 18 ..

Elsewhere in Uruzgan, militants shot two civilians dead and injured a third in Gezab district Monday night, the governor's spokesman, Dost Mohammad Nayab, said. (Pajhwok)

(17) Explosion Among ...

as Mullah Ahmad Shah and Mullah Bari were among those killed.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

The anti-government armed militant groups frequently use explosives materials for the roadside bombings and car bombings to target the government staff and security personnel.

However, in majority of such incidents the ordinary civilians are targeted besides such bombings incur casualties to the security personnel and in some cases the Taliban militants themselves are killed or wounded. (KP)

(18) Three Suicide ...

out an attack in a crowded area in the city and the second planned to attack minutes after the first attack while the people gathered at the scene," according to officials.

"They were arrested by NDS forces after driving out of a parking area in PD3 of Jalalabad city," officials said. (Tolonews)

(19) Laghman Prosecutor...

Batikat district. A reliable security source, who declined to be named, said the victim supplied food items to Achin district as well. (Pajhwok)

(20) 14 Rebels ...

to shun violence and join the peace process. There has been so far no word from insurgents about the ongoing clash in Burka district. (Pajhwok)

(21) Bergdahl Apologises...

the 31-year-old soldier told the court in North Carolina's Fort Bragg, according to Reuters. "Saying I'm sorry is not enough." Captured by Taliban after deserting his combat outpost in southeastern Paktika province, he spent at least five years in captivity.

The soldier was freed in 2014 under Taliban prisoner swap brokered by the Barack Obama administration.

He testified that the Taliban had locked him in the cage after a brief escape and was given little food, water or sleep. He was allegedly forced to watch beheading videos.

"I would like everyone who searched for me to know it was never my intention for anyone to be hurt, and I never expected that to happen," he said. "My words alone can't take away their pain."

After pleading guilty to desertion and misbehavior before the enemy, the soldier faces life in prison. (Pajhwok)