

(1) US Post-Peace...

"First R was to regionalize the approach, you did not start with Afghanistan, come up with a strategy, say, 'well I guess now we'd better look at the countries around it and see what we do as far as their inclusion?' We started outside and worked our way inside," Mattis said.

"Next we recognized we had to put more troops in. But the reason we had to reinforce it, the second R. Was for the third reason, realign those troops to supporting the Afghan security forces, directly by training, advising and assisting," he said.

"What we had done was created an army, and then we pulled the training wheels off too early, and in that I mean that only the Afghan special forces had mentors from NATO nations with them. And every time they went against the enemy, the Taliban, they won against the enemy," he said.

But spread out in penny packets around the country, were Afghan security forces that US had pulled all mentoring away from. "So we were going to look at this as a regional problem, reinforce the troops and realign them so that more Afghan forces had our mentors with them, with NATO air support," Mattis said.

With NATO air forces overhead, no longer prohibited from supporting the Afghan army would be able to always own the high ground. "And that changes the tactical situation. It is protection of the people is what we are trying to do there so in some cases, we surrendered ground where few if any people lived since it's not a matter of militaries holding ground," he said.

The Afghan Security Forces, he said, has prevented the Taliban from doing what they said they were going to do, which was to take and hold district and provincial centers, also disrupt an election that they were unable to disrupt.

"But the most important R was the fourth R, reconciliation. And on that, you saw Ambassador Khalilzad has been presented with the portfolio. Those of you who know him, know him as a force of nature," Mattis said.

"He is hard at work on this, on an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation effort. So this is the approach we're trying to sustain right now. It is working from our perspective, but it is heartbreakingly difficult to accept in the progress and violence can be going on at the same time," said the Defense Secretary. (Pajhwok)

(2) Taliban...

generation, which means the Taliban have not changed their thinking or their leadership," said Haroun Mir, political analyst in the Afghan capital. "What we are more worried about is if tomorrow the Taliban say 'we are ready to negotiate,' who will represent Kabul? That is the big challenge because the government is so divided, not just ideologically but on ethnic lines."

Efforts to find a peaceful end to Afghanistan's protracted war have accelerated since Washington appointed Afghan-American Zalmay Khalilzad as envoy to find a peaceful end to America's longest war, which has already cost the U.S. more than \$900 billion.

But Mohammed Ismail Qasimyar, a member of a government peace council, warned Washington against negotiating peace terms with the Taliban, saying Khalilzad's only job is to set the stage for direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, something the insurgents have so far refused calling the government a U.S. puppet.

Taliban officials reported meeting with Khalilzad in Qatar earlier this month, calling the exchange preliminary but pivotal. Washington neither confirmed nor denied the meeting, but Khalilzad was in Qatar at the time.

A Taliban official familiar with the discussions told The Associated Press that talks ended with an agreement to meet again. Key among the Taliban's requests was recognition of their Qatar office, said the official, who spoke on condition he not be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

In an unexpected development, Pakistan also bowed to a long-standing Afghan Taliban demand that it release its senior leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who had been in jail in Pakistan since 2010. At the time, Baradar was reportedly jailed after bypassing Pakistan to open independent peace talks with Hamid Karzai, who was then Afghanistan's president.

Baradar's release followed Khalilzad's first visit to Pakistan since being appointed Washington's peace envoy.

Baradar issued an audio message after his release to the Taliban. The Pashto-language message, heard by an Associated Press reporter, seemed to indicate he was preparing for a role in the insurgent movement moving forward.

Hakim Mujahed, a former Taliban member who is now also a member of the Afghan government peace council, said the presence of the five former Guantanamo prisoners in the Taliban's Qatar office is indicative of the Taliban's resolve to find a peace deal. He said the stature of the five within the insurgent movement will make a peace deal palatable to the rank and file, many of whom have resisted talks believing a military victory was within their grasp.

"These people are respected among all the Taliban," said Mujahed. "Their word carries weight with the Taliban leadership and the mujahedeen."

But there are some among the five who have a disturbing past.

Human Rights Watch accused Mohammed Fazl, the former Taliban army chief arrested in 2002, of overseeing the deaths of thousands of minority Shiites in 2000. The massacre outraged the world and followed the killing the year before of an estimated 2,000 young ethnic Pashtuns in northern Afghanistan by Taliban rivals.

Another of the five is Khairullah Khairkhwah, a former governor of Herat province, who was close to both Taliban founder Mullah Omar and al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. Khairkhwah also had a friendship with former president Hamid Karzai.

The others include Abdul Haq Wasiq, deputy intelligence minister, Mullah Norullah Nori, once described as the most significant Taliban leader held at Guantanamo Bay because of his particularly close relationship with Mullah Omar, who fought U.S.-led coalition forces in northern Afghanistan's Mazar-e-Sharif and Mohammad Nabi, a Taliban communications officer.

All five are from southern Afghanistan, the Taliban's heartland.

The five Taliban were released in 2014 in exchange for Bergdahl, who had been held in Taliban custody since 2009 when he wandered off a U.S. army base. Last year he was given a dishonorable discharge last year and fined \$1,000 on charges of desertion and misbehavior. (Tolo news)

(3) Election Bodies...

process and matched the voter lists would be declared valid.

The second point says voters cast through manual registration under biometric system would be matched with the database and would be declared validated if matched.

According to the third point, ballot boxes of polling stations would be declared trustworthy with approval of the head of the polling station, observers and other staff.

Article third of the agreement says non-biometric votes, without voter list, manually registered without observers and election staff would be invalidated. The fifth point says the election commissions would arrange joint meetings to take joint decisions and define the conduct of work proceedings. (Pajhwok)

(4) UAE Asked...

to the AGO and they had assured clearing their debts.

The Kabul Bank suffered financial crisis in 2011 after \$900 million were illegally withdrawn from the bank. The Central Bank then interfered and supported the private bank and changed its name to New Kabul Bank. (Pajhwok)

(5) Army Helicopter...

the Taliban in the battle for the city of Farah which the militants besieged and threatened to take over in May.

The Taliban are seeking to remove the government and reimpose strict Islamic law after their ouster by U.S.-led forces in 2001.

A suicide bomber blew himself up near the gate of Afghanistan's largest prison on Wednesday, killing at least six people, officials said, but there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The sprawling Pul-e-Charkhi prison in Kabul houses hundreds of inmates, including scores of Taliban.

Interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish said the attacker detonated his explosive near a vehicle carrying prison employees. Six people died near the gate of the prison on the eastern outskirts of the city and eight were wounded, another government official said.

"The attacker walked towards a vehicle that was parked at a gate for security clearance. He blew himself up before the vehicle could enter the prison premises," the official said.

An Afghan news website said women security officials were in the vehicle at the time of the attack. (Reuters)

(6) Tucker Carlson...

have almost nothing to show for what we spent there the lives and the money. The Taliban remains strong. The U.S. backed government controls barely half of that country. This spring the DOJ described Afghanistan as "largely law-

less, weak and dysfunctional."

Most depressing of all, we're no longer even aiming at any kind of military victory. The best we can hope for is the sort of stalemate that keeps the Taliban partly in power. So, what is the point of all of this. Well, some people are getting rich from it.

Drive through the DC suburbs some time and see for yourself. But most Americans derive no benefit at all. Some families are paying the highest possible price. Two years in, it's not too late for the President to deliver on a campaign promise, he once made and end this disaster. Tomorrow might be a good day to start with that. (Agencies)

(7) Construction...

start there," said Ghalib.

Ghalib also said the main agreement - or Master Agreement - of the power project has been signed between the countries involved.

Based on this agreement, Afghanistan in addition to having the right to buy power and receive transit duties, also has the right to sell its extra power to other countries.

"If the project is implemented and Afghanistan get its share from it, not only will the provinces, where the line runs through, benefit, but their neighboring provinces will also benefit. We not only benefit financially, but also will be able to activate our heavy industries by using the power. These two benefits will cause our economy to grow," economic affairs analyst Samim Saram said.

Based on the schedule, CASA-1000 power project should be fully operational by 2020.

Overview of CASA-1000:

The CASA-1000 project will include:

- 500 kV AC line from Datka (in the Kyrgyz Republic) to Sugd-500 (477 kilometers away, in Tajikistan)
- 1,300 megawatt AC-DC Converter Station at Sangtuda (Tajikistan)
- 750-kilometer High Voltage DC line from Sangtuda (Tajikistan) to Nowshera (Pakistan)
- 1,300 megawatt DC-AC Converter Station at Nowshera

CASA-1000 project will start from Kyrgyzstan and it will reach Afghanistan through Tajikistan and onward to Pakistan's Peshawar city. The length of the project in Afghanistan is estimated to eventually run for 562km.

With the implementation of the project, 1300 megawatts of electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will be transmitted to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan will receive 300 megawatts of power and the remaining one thousand megawatts will be transmitted to Pakistan via Afghanistan territory.

The CASA-1000 Project is an important step in building a functioning, efficient electricity system across Central Asia and South Asia. By facilitating clean power export revenues for the Central Asian countries and by alleviating electricity shortages in the South Asian countries, this project will enhance growth prospects across both regions.

This project demonstrates landmark cooperation among the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The modern and efficient CASA-1000 electricity transmission system will help transform the region and signify an important step toward realizing the planned Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM). The CASAREM initiative will help not only these four countries but also improve the electrical systems and develop inter-regional cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia.

Afghanistan will receive between \$40 and \$50 million in transit duties from the project annually. The project will also enhance the economic connectivity between the contributing nations and will boost Afghanistan's transit reputation in the region and entire Asia. (Tolo news)

(8) Wolesi Jirga...
Aziz Ahmad Azizi, governor's spokesman, Gen. Nabi Ilham, commander of 404 Maiwand Zone, Gen. Imam Nazar Behbod, commander of 205th Attal0020 Military Corps and Miller were wounded in the attack.

The attack was claimed by Taliban militants. National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief, Masum Stanikzai had said that the assailant with fake identity card was hired as the governor's bodyguard. The Wolesi Jirga or lower house of the parliament again today discussed the Kandahar attack.

Lawmaker Mohammad Naim Lalai Hamidzai from Kandahar province at today's session criticized the way such attacks were probed.

"Had the last year's attack in Kandahar governor's house that killed Arab diplomats been properly investigated, such incidents would not have occurred," he believed.

He said the assassination of Gen. Raziq and Gen. Momin was a complicated issue and it needed further investigation.

He asked the house administrative board not to keep mum over statements of security officials and appoint a delegation for a thorough investigation of the incident.

Lawmaker Sakhi Mashwani from Kunar province also said Afghan security officials' information about the Kandahar attack was unsatisfactory; stressing the issue should be critically investigated.

"Superficial review of this incident is not acceptable to us," he said. He also demanded the appointment of a parliamentary delegation for investigating the incident.

Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim also said the Kandahar attack needed further investigation as information shared with them was unconvincing.

He tasked the lower house internal security, defense and judicial commissions to travel to Kandahar and investigate the October 19 incident and then share its report with the house. (Pajhwok)

(9) AGO Receives...

He said investigation into election criminal cases belonged to the AGO while election complaints were being looked into by the IECC.

Punishment

Election crimes are identified in the election law and punishment for these crimes is embodied in chapter six and article 224 and 534 of the law.

According to the criminal penal code, punishment for bribe, intimidation, threatening and influencing voters, observers, watchdogs and media men is five years in jail.

While for misplacing documents without legal permission, seeking illegal financial assistance from State, people, foreign institutions is sentenced up to five years in jail.

The penal code also explains if someone tries to hide election related forms, results or ballots to hide reality would be jailed for up to three years and if someone tries to change, hide, sell ballots or other documents in order to give advantage to a specific candidate would be jailed for three years.

Election violations
If a government servant gets involved in campaigning for a candidate, he/she could be fined from 1,000 to 10,000 afghanis. (Pajhwok)

(10) ADB Provides \$75mn...

between agro-business enterprises and farmers.

This will help boost growth in the sub-sector, which is mainly constrained by a large number of geographically scattered small-scale producers that lack access to finance as well as proper agriculture infrastructure and inputs.

For agro-business enterprises, the project will help provide pre-cooling rooms; packhouse, sorting, or grading buildings and equipment; storage facilities; processing equipment and machinery; a quality control accredited laboratory; tissue culture laboratory; and an introduction to international best practices for horticulture processing plants. As part of the risk-sharing mechanism and sustainable financial management of the project, selected enterprises will have to contribute 50% of subproject costs and implementation.

Eligible farmers, meanwhile, can benefit from the project through assistance for modern greenhouses; planting material; on-farm storage for onions and potatoes; facilities for growing grapes; on-farm processing, drying, and grading equipment; and on-farm water sources and distribution systems. A nongovernment organization will be engaged as the facilitation partner to promote linkages between enterprises and farmers.

The project will also improve the quality and scope of Afghanistan's horticulture exports, particularly through research, incorporation of international best practices in the subsector, and the promotion of national marketing strategies for uniquely Afghan horticultural produce.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2017, ADB operations totaled \$32.2 billion, including \$11.9 billion in cofinancing. (Wadsam)

(11) Doing business...

The latest reforms were in the Doing Business areas of Starting a Business, Getting Credit, Protecting Minority Investors, Paying Taxes, and Resolving Insolvency, the report said.

"Improving the business environment is essential for Afghanistan to stimulate domestic investment and create jobs. Given the exceptional challenges of conflict and violence in the country, the government's resolve to improve the business climate for private enterprise is doubly commendable," said Shub-

ham Chaudhuri, World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan. "We look forward to continuing to record Afghanistan's successes in years to come."

During the past year, Afghanistan made Starting a Business less costly by reducing the fees for business incorporation. As a result, the cost for an entrepreneur to start business in the country has significantly been reduced from 82.3 percent of the income per capita to only 6.4 percent.

Afghanistan focused on enhancing the legal framework for businesses. Minority investor protections were strengthened substantially, making Afghanistan one of the economies advancing the most in this area.

A new law on limited liability companies made noteworthy progress toward mitigating the risks of prejudicial conflicts of interest in companies and strengthening corporate governance structures.

In addition, the Commercial Procedure Code was amended to grant greater powers to shareholders to challenge related-party transactions.

Protecting Minority Investors is an area of strength for Afghanistan. The country scores 9 out of 10 in this indicator's three indexes, which measure access to evidence and allocation of legal expenses in shareholder litigation, shareholders' rights and role in major corporate decisions and governance safeguards protecting shareholders from undue board control and entrenchment. Afghanistan has a global ranking of 26 in the area of Protecting Minority Investors.

Afghanistan also adopted a new insolvency framework in 2018. Secured creditors are now given absolute priority over other claims in insolvency proceedings. Afghanistan also made resolving insolvency easier by improving the continuation of the debtor's business during insolvency proceedings and granting creditors greater participation in the proceedings.

Paying taxes was made easier with the adoption of a new tax administration and law with clear rules and guidelines on tax audit, and by automating the submission of tax returns.

The time spent by businesses to pay their taxes in 2017 was reduced by 5 hours, to 270 hours, less than the South Asia regional average of 275 hours.

Moreover, the time to comply with a corporate income tax audit has been halved from 207.5 hours to 111 hours. Afghanistan performs well in the area of Starting a Business with a global rank of 49.

However, it lags in areas such as Registering Property (with a global rank of 186), Dealing with Construction Permits (184) and Enforcing Contracts (181). For example, it takes 250 days to register the transfer of a property in the country, which compares poorly with the South Asia regional average of 114 days.

Kawuon Kakar, head of the Kakar Advocacy Group (KAG), said the Afghan government took some steps for the development of trade.

The exploration of transit routes and air corridors, business-friendly legislation and support for investment opportunities are some of the steps taken by the government to support trade and investment in the country.

He said all these steps were the reasons that Afghanistan improved in global business ranking.

Pajhwok strived to get the viewpoint of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries but Musafir Quqandi, the spokesman, said he was unaware of the WB report and was unable to comment on it. (Pajhwok)

(12) Balkh Disabled...

as inferior should come to an end.

She added disabled women were clear examples of human rights' violations and the photo exhibition might help people learn and try their best to end the ongoing conflict in the country.

She further said in wars all human rights were trampled on and a civilized and educated society could be developed only in peace.

Samadi said so far the government had paid no attention to problems being faced by disabled women who suffered from difficulties in their lives.

She said there were 100 disabled women in their union, with some holding bachelor's degrees, but they were discriminated jobs.

A number of other disabled women expressed similar views and urged the government to pay strongly attention to their problems. (Pajhwok)

(13) Moe Announces

He said more information about the posts could be seen on the ministry's website.

According to the MoE, the posts at teacher training departments are related to Laghman, Herat, Badakhshan, Ghazni, Punjshir, Nimroz, Jawzjan, Farah, Badghis, Kandahar and Takhar provinces. (Pajhwok)