

China, Pakistan, ...

Foreign Ministry Special Secretary Tasnim Aslam and Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai held the Trilateral Vice-Ministerial Consultation on Counter-Terrorism and Security among China, Pakistan and Afghanistan in Beijing.

The three parties had an in-depth exchange of views on such topics as the current international and regional counter-terrorism situation and trilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism and security, she added.

Hua Chunying said that on the same day, Foreign Minister Wang Yi also met Pakistani Foreign Ministry Special Secretary Tasnim Aslam and Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai.

"Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are important forces of the international counter-terrorism efforts and have made great contributions to the international counter-terrorism campaign, especially the counter-terrorism campaign in South Asia," she added.

The spokesperson said that the Chinese side expressed gratitude to Pakistan and Afghanistan for constantly and steadfastly supporting China in fighting the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and other terrorist forces.

She said the Chinese side stands ready to continue enhancing security cooperation with Pakistan and Afghanistan, work together to address the threat and challenges posed by terrorism and jointly maintain regional peace and tranquility.

Hua Chunying said that Special Secretary Tasnim Aslam and Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai spoke highly of the efforts made by China to promote the improvement of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, safeguard regional peace and stability and propel regional development and prosperity.

"They said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are willing to bolster counter-terrorism exchanges and cooperation, firmly combat all forms of terrorism and earnestly uphold the security and stability of the three countries and the region at large," she added.

Responding to a question regarding understanding reached between China and the United States regarding the US South Asia Policy, she said that the US and China have reached a consensus on fighting terrorism and upholding peace and stability in South Asia.

"The two sides believe that maintaining the stable and constructive relations between Afghanistan and its neighboring countries is of great significance to the peace and reconstruction process in Afghanistan," she added.

Hua Chunying said that they support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconstruction process, call on all relevant parties in Afghanistan to achieve extensive and inclusive national reconciliation through political negotiation at an early date and stand ready to play a positive role through such mechanisms as the Quadrilateral Coordination Group of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States. The spokesperson remarked that China and the United States have important shared interests in combating terrorism and upholding regional peace and tranquility.

"China stands ready to continue stepping up cooperation in this regard with the United States and other relevant parties," she added. (APP)

(2) Defense Ministry ...

Meetings in Brussels, the member countries agreed to send in more troops to Afghanistan to train the Afghan forces. "It is positive news that the 19 other nations are ready to uphold their commitments to security in northern Afghanistan, although they are of course relying on Germany as a framework nation to continue to take its responsibilities and duties seriously," German Defense Minister Ursula Von Der Leyen said.

The new commitments were made while Afghan forces are passing through a tough year. Albeit the Ministry of Defense speaks out about progresses among Afghan forces, analysts and lawmakers said lack of equipment is still a big challenge for the country's soldiers.

American soldiers however have asked Afghan forces to be more offensive against insurgents in the next year. "The injustice, corruption and ethnic-oriented activities will continue unless government, US and NATO put an end to the war in Afghanistan," said Nadir Baluch, member of Meshrano Jirga, the Upper House of Parliament.

The United States recently announced it will send in nearly 4,000 new troops to Afghanistan. After the arrival of the new US and NATO soldiers to Afghanistan, the total number of foreign troops in the country will likely reach to over 22,000. (Tolonews)

(3) Ministry Shares...

"After this, all the contracts signed by the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum will be shared online in order to ensure reforms and accountability and also to make aware the people, the civil society and the international community about our activities," Mutfi told TOLONews. Monitoring organizations said there is a lack of observation from illegal mining in the country. The watchdog bodies urged the mines ministry to oversee the existing mining contracts as according to them, some mining projects are still ongoing despite their contracts have been reportedly cancelled by Ministry of Mines and Petroleum.

"We cannot expect that the extraction of mineral resources will stop in areas where government has not signed contracts with companies. We have seen the example of this in contracts of extraction of lapis lazuli, marble and other precious and semi-precious," said Ibrahim Jafari, member of Natural Resources Monitoring Network.

The move comes after Ministry of Mines and Petroleum outlined a roadmap for bringing reforms to the organization and for overcoming illegal mining in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(4) Taliban's Losses ...

the enemy had suffered many defeats around the country and lost almost twice as many casualties as the ANDSF," Nicholson said. "They (Taliban) got together and decided to conduct a series of suicide attacks in October to attempt to prove their relevance. These attacks did not gain any new territory while did kill some security forces, they mostly killed civilians. So these were indiscriminate terror attacks that killed civilians and attempt to show their relevance and they had absolutely no strategic purpose."

The US forces commander said albeit the United States had warned Pakistan over housing insurgent groups on its soil, but still Pakistan's behavior has not changed.

"You can see from the public statements of the US president and the US leadership a message we are delivering to the Pakistanis is they need to work with us against these terrorists who are threatening peace in Afghanistan," Nicholson said.

Meanwhile, US Defense Secretary James Mattis said at the NATO Ministers of Defense Meeting that accepting Afghanistan's Constitution is a precondition for the Taliban if they want to join the peace process.

"Reconciliation must be Afghan-led with an open door to the Taliban if they choose to stop killing and live by the Afghan Constitution," said Mattes.

This comes after on Thursday, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said 27 nations have committed to increasing troop numbers in the structure of the Resolute Support Mission in the coming months and the new commitment will increase the number of troops from 13,000 to 16,000.

He would not however give details right now on exact troop numbers.

The NATO chief also hailed the growing war capabilities of the Afghan Security and Defense Forces and said that the conventional Afghan security forces have prevented the Taliban from taking provincial capitals this fighting season. (Tolonews)

(5) 25 Injured as ...

some injured people were delivered to the hospital yesterday afternoon and other were taken to private clinics.

He said an elderly man, who had been hit in the head, was in critical condition. But the Farah governor's spokesman, Nasir Mehdi, said the ANA helicopters pounded Taliban hideouts in Nang Abad village. he said three commanders were among eight Taliban killed in the airstrike.

He said four civilians were wounded in the incident and their condition was stable.

On the other hand, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi said the fighters escaped unhurt in the Nang Abad airstrike and only civilians suffered casualties and financial losses.

Under Taliban's influence, Khak-i-Safid district is 50 kilometers north of Farah City, the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

(6) Kazakhstan Supports ...

interests and expectations of all the states of the region. Today, this process receives a new impetus, as we observe a surge of regional contacts at all levels," said Abdurakhmanov.

He added that Kazakhstan offers a comprehensive approach based on three main principles: the linkage of security to development, the regional approach, and the coordinated efforts of UN agencies and structures.

The Minister stressed that Kazakhstan intends to convene high-level debates on international peace and security, as well as the ministerial debate on Central Asia and Afghanistan within the

framework of the chairmanship of the UN Security Council. (Trend)

(7) Fresh Anti-Taliban ...

"In addition to its financial support to Afghanistan, ADB also provides extensive training to the government to ensure that staff knowledge and skills are up to international standards," said Samuel Tumiwa, ADB Country Director for Afghanistan.

"This benefits the people of Afghanistan by enabling civil servants to efficiently and effectively manage the implementation of projects so that the intended impact of reducing poverty and encouraging growth are achieved," he added.

The workshop is part of ADB's broader efforts to equip government officials and executing agency staff who implement the ADB projects in Afghanistan to record financial transactions, strengthen internal controls, prepare financial reports, and administer the bank's financed projects, the source said.

As a part of the assistance, a financial management manual was developed and launched in October 2017, the statement said, adding the manual provided guidelines, policies, and procedures to help the government effectively utilize and manage its project funds. It also helps to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of financial data.

Under the new Country Partnership Strategy, one of the three important strategic pillars that ADB operates in Afghanistan will focus on the establishment of stronger institutions and human capacities through sector-level reforms, enhanced governance, capacity building, and skills development, the source concluded. (Pajhwok)

(8) Security Agencies ...

according to documents, the level of crimes has dropped compared with the past year and the past six months," he said.

At the same event, Afzal Aman, head of the Ministry of Defense Operations, said they have started strict measures from parts of Kabul to its outskirts and districts.

"To ensure the safety of Kabul residents, we will extend our security measures towards Kabul's outskirts and districts," he said. (Tolonews)

(9) Ready to Participate...

had the intention to keep enmity.

About a media report that quoted the HIA leader as calling the conflict in Afghanistan a clash between two tribes, Hekmatyar said he had been quoted out of context.

He also urged an end to influence of former warlords over security forces and said his party was not engaged in armed tussle with any party and had extended friendship hand to all.

Hekmatyar said his party condemned terrorist acts that led to the killing of innocent Muslims and non-Muslims. (Pajhwok)

(10) Pak Military ...

to address these central concerns," acting assistant secretary for South and Central Asia said.

Alice Wells made the remarks during a Congressional hearing on Afghanistan and Pakistan, organised jointly by the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittees for Middle East and North Africa and Asia and Pacific.

"We are conducting a review of our assistance, to ensure it is aligned with the level of cooperation we achieve in disrupting the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network," she said.

For 2018, the administration has requested \$344.6 million for Pakistan, including \$241.1 million for civilian assistance and \$103.5 million for security assistance. USD100 million FMF request is focused on enabling Pakistan to stabilise the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region and battle terrorism.

"However, part of the president's new strategy means we are evaluating the full range of tools that could encourage changes in Pakistan's actions, including examining the nature and scope of our cooperation with Pakistan," Wells said.

Pakistan was important to the success of the strategy, she said, adding President Trump and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had been clear the trajectory of its relationship with Pakistan would depend on its response to requests for support.

"During his visit, the secretary laid out specific expectations of how Pakistan can help create the conditions that will help bring the Taliban to the table," she said.

"No partnership can survive a country's tolerance of militants and terrorists who are targeting US service members and officials. Furthermore, Afghanistan reasonably asks the Taliban insurgents be forced to fight on Afghan soil, without recourse to safe haven or respite, and regeneration in neighboring states," she said. "We are prepared to work construc-

tively with Pakistan to move against these terrorist groups, including the Haqqani Network, Lashkar-e Taiba, and Jaish-i-Mohammed," Wells said. (Pajhwok)

(11) No Calendar ...

should be deployed to Afghanistan, the State Department official replied the previous stalemate meant the insurgents believed they could wait out the US military and win on the battlefield in its absence.

"Ambassador Wells, are we talking years or are we talking decades?" Rep. Mo Brooks asked, seeking an estimate on the timeline for success in Afghanistan.

She responded: "Sir, I can't answer that question." There was no calendar attached to the conflict in President Trump's strategy and the objective was to bring the Taliban to the table, she added.

The joint subcommittee, hearing on the \$1.1 billion budget request for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was told withdrawal timelines set by ex-president Barack Obama gave the Taliban no incentive to negotiate.

The diplomat said the US was willing to work constructively with Pakistan against terrorist outfits including Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-i-Mohammad and the Haqqani Network.

Wells added: "We remain concerned about the stability and security of the region, and of Pakistan itself." The terrorist groups operating within Pakistan posed a threat to the security of Americans in the region.

She informed the lawmakers Pakistan shared America's goal for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. "We look to Pakistan to create the conditions that will help bring the Taliban to the negotiating table." (Pajhwok)

(12) Ready to Help ...

warm reception and hospitality accorded to the Afghan delegation and called the two countries as friendly who shared many commonalities.

President Ghani, who arrived in the UAE to join Arab leaders in inaugurating the new Louvre Abu Dhabi in the capital of the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday evening, said the people and the government of Afghanistan were thankful to the UAE for aiding them in diverse fields in recent years and hoped the assistance would continue.

The £1bn newly-built museum in Abu Dhabi, built over the past 10 years, holds 600 artworks permanently and 300 loaned from France. The building boasts a latticed dome designed to allow the desert sun to filter through. (Pajhwok)

(13) SCA Launches ...

community-driven development, public and political commitment for the rights of the people in Afghanistan and organisational development of SCA.

"The plan also identifies a new target group: returnees to Afghanistan. Our focus is on the most vulnerable people in Afghan society who live mainly in rural areas and we continue with our existing core activities within education, health and rural development," Stefansson said.

"As the large number of returnees also has meant an increased need for support in the regions where we are present, we have identified this group as an additional target group besides the ones we have today," he added.

He said that rights based approach, gender mainstreaming, community governance, civil society support, synergies and conflict sensitivity were approaches applied by SCA for successful and effective implementation of activities.

"We move forward with 35 years of development work in Afghanistan. SCA has a long-term commitment for the people of Afghanistan and I am proud and inspired by our over 5,000 Afghan staff that work tirelessly for a better Afghanistan. We will stay as long as we are needed," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(14) Girls Perform ...

agreed with her decision to continue learning music.

"AFCECO gives me lots of opportunities which Afghan girls don't have. My experience in Maihan Orphanage is a long story to tell, or better to write a book about. This was not a simple home to live, Maihan is a world to me. Here you learn equality, here you see unity of Uzbek and Hazara" Gulalai said.

Head of AFCECO meanwhile said when the orphanage was founded, it had the capacity of 700 vulnerable children, but, he said after 2014 the orphanage faced financial problem and now it can take care of only 130 children.

"We sent back those children who at least have someone to look after them and we keep those who have no one to take care of them," Palwasha Rasul, chairperson of the orphanage said. In part of the concert, Afghan-made

handicrafts were was put in display. (Tolonews)

(15) Focus on Afghanistan ..

military presence, he said: "I think that, for the time being, the US and NATO countries will have to stay in Afghanistan because the Afghan government needs the support of the international community..." (Pajhwok)

(16) Paktia Elders ...

is an elder from the Zadran tribe and that this will help them to bring the group to the peace table - if government gives them the authority.

"He (Sirajuddin Haqqani) is our elder. We will go and talk to him and will tell him that Mr. Haqqani, we will ensure your rights, we will stand with you shoulder-to-shoulder and I am sure that he (Haqqani leader) will stand with us," said Haji Zmrak, an elder from Zadran tribe.

"Government does not have the will for peace... If the Zadran tribe and Paktia people are given the authority to mediate and carry out peace talks, I am sure that they can talk with anti-government armed oppositions and will take positive steps in this respect," said Mawlawi Sardar Zadran, a tribal elder.

The elders and youth who gathered at a jirga, assembly, in Gerda Serai district in Paktia said some countries in the region are not in favor of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

"(Some) people are unhappy with government but they will be satisfied if their legal demands are addressed," said Sangin, a tribal elder.

Another tribal elder, Rasul Jan, said: "(If the authority is given to us), we will sit with anti-government armed groups and will ask them to end the war in Afghanistan. Others are not blamed, there are a number of countries in the region which are not interested to see a peaceful Afghanistan."

Sirajuddin Haqqani is a native resident of Gerda Serai district in Paktia.

This is the first time that tribal elders from a province have showed willingness to help government with the peace process in a different way. (Tolonews)

(17) Work on Uplift...

road between Baharak and Ashkasham districts and Faizabad clean water supply were other projects ongoing and would complete until the end of this solar year.

"Supervising development projects of the province and addressing problems of organizations and people are our responsibilities," he said. (Pajhwok)

(18) Traditional Loya Jirga ...

head of AYA demanded conducting a Loya Jirga and said, "We welcome the suggestion of former president, Hamid Karzai, because the current government has no will for resolving the country problems which increase with each passing day."

Hamid Karzai has also suggested that a Loya Jirga was important to discuss and find solution to problems of the country.

Ahmadullah Alizay, President Ashraf Ghani's advisor and former Kabul governor, who also attended the meeting, said, "We are not against the government, we want dignity for our people, only the traditional Loya Jirga can solve our problems."

Afghans lose their lives on daily basis which is no longer acceptable demanded the ongoing conflict to end.

Talking to people, he said, "I assure that no one should fear, we would reach a permanent peace if the traditional Loya Jirga organized."

Alizay voiced on militants to stop killing their 'brothers' who he said were victimized by the ongoing conflict.

Abdullah Mohammad who represents Samangan people in Wolesi Jirga, also stressed on holding Loya Jirga and said security situation was worsening in Afghanistan and people did not feel safe even in the country's capital.

Afghan forces' casualties have increased under the leadership of national unity government, it is a matter of concern for people, he said.

Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States should be also discussed because this agreement is proved as useless so far, Mohammad said.

Abdurahim Ayubi, a lawmaker from Kandahar province and head of Afghanistan United Party, said, "Don't worry, holding Loya Jirga is not for collapsing the government or organizing a coup, but it is for resolving current crisis of the country," (Pajhwok)

(19) 188 Greenhouses ...

100,000 Afghans which is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MALI), he said.

Ferozi said the project would help improve the economic situation of local people and create job opportunities in this province. MALI would also distribute improved seeds to farmers. (Pajhwok)