

(1) US, Pakistani...

while urging Pakistan to stop cross-border attacks into Afghanistan if it wants better relations with the US. According to a statement released by the Pakistani embassy in Washington after the Tuesday meeting, Pompeo and Qureshi "agreed that the time was ripe for the Afghan Taliban to avail the opportunity for a political settlement by seizing the opportunity for dialogue."

Another statement, issued after Qureshi's meeting with Bolton, said that "Pakistan would continue to support the efforts for an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan."

The statement also underlined Pakistan's desire to revive a structured dialogue with the US that has remained suspended since February 2016.

"Going forward, a broad-based and structured framework for dialogue would best serve the two countries' shared interests," Qureshi reportedly told Pompeo.

"He reiterated Pakistan's support for a political settlement in Afghanistan, noting that the use of force had failed to deliver results," the official statement added. US wants more on Afghanistan

While the US acknowledges Pakistan's verbal support for the Afghan peace process, Washington complains that Islamabad does not match its words with action and allows militants - particularly the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network - to launch cross-border attacks into Afghanistan.

Qureshi said that peace in South Asia, which is a common goal of both the US and Pakistan, "would remain elusive until all disputes, including the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir, were resolved."

The US acknowledges the need for a peaceful resolution of all India-Pakistan disputes but says that Washington can only play a role in promoting peace between the two nuclear-armed states if both ask it to do so. India rejects any external mediation in its disputes with Pakistan. According to the Pakistani statement, at the end of the meeting, Pakistan and the US "agreed to remain engaged with a view to achieving their shared bilateral and regional objectives."

Diplomatic circles in Washington interpreted this as indicating that both sides have agreed to continue with talks but that key issues remain unresolved after Tuesday's meetings.

"Qureshi's body language showed that he was under pressure," said Faiz Rehman, a former head of Voice of America (VOA) Urdu, who now contributes to various think tanks as a South Asian affairs analyst. Rehman also noted that while Americans had not yet commented on the meetings, the Pakistan Embassy "issued a very routine and probably just a re-hashed statement from a previous meeting."

In previous statements, US officials have indicated that they want Pakistan to support their efforts to ensure the continuity of the current setup in Kabul. To ensure this continuity, the US has invited the Taliban to participate in this setup through the Afghan peace process and wants Pakistan to persuade the Taliban to do so.

Regional issues

The Americans also believe that there can be no peace in Afghanistan as long as India and Pakistan continue to fight for influence in that country. According to some sources, China's role in South Asia, particularly its growing influence in Pakistan, was one of the topics discussed at the two meetings. The new Pakistani government headed by Prime Minister Imran Khan is believed to have reassured American negotiators that they do want to play a positive role in Afghanistan and would do whatever they could to persuade the Taliban to join the Afghan reconciliation process. But Pakistani officials also think there is the need for the US to address their concerns too, particularly about India's growing

influence in Afghanistan.

The US can play a role in restarting India-Pakistan talks, although pressure on the eastern border could dilute Pakistan's focus on the western border, where it has deployed hundreds of thousands of troops for combating the Taliban and other terror outfits.

Pakistani officials also explained why the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a Beijing-led multi-billion dollar initiative, was important for Pakistan's progress. (DW)

(2) MoFA Fears of US...

Afghanistan's foreign policy at Afghanistan Law and Political Studies Organization in Kabul on Tuesday.

"The tensions are slowly moving from Ukraine toward Afghanistan. It will be a bad situation for Afghanistan when the tensions officially begin in Afghanistan," said Karzai. "Our goal should be to once again strengthen the consensus that Afghanistan's stability should be important for Russia even now," he said.

Karzai has been a main member of Afghan delegation's visits to Pakistan under the National Unity Government. He said Afghanistan should not expect Pakistan to help the Afghan peace process.

According to him, Kabul should not expect Beijing to put pressure on Pakistan to help the Afghan peace process.

"We should not expect China to put pressure on Pakistan 'automatically', because such an expectation is improper. We should recognize China's benefits (for us). China has invested \$48 billion in CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) only. How much it has invested in Afghanistan? What is the difference between China's benefit in Afghanistan and Pakistan? We should recognize this," said Karzai.

Addressing the event, India's Ambassador to Kabul, Vinay Kumar, said the international community needs to put pressure on the countries which support terrorism so that they can stop supporting these groups.

"The first thing that everybody has to agree on is to stop all support for terrorism. Unless that is done, you cannot have regional cooperation, you cannot have regional integrity," said Kumar.

Addressing the event, Massoud Treshtwal, a spokesman for the Council for Protection and Stability in Afghanistan, criticized the National Unity Government's policies on the war and peace in the country. "Peace has changed into a mirage for the Afghan people," said Treshtwal. "Our sacrifices for peace have increased every time that we chanted the slogan of peace." (Tolo news)

(3) Atta Noor Warns...

presidential elections and that help the commission in the parliamentary election process.

"It is premature to talk about the presidential elections. They should let the parliamentary elections to be held in the country and then the political parties should also support us," said Abdul Aziz Ibrahim, Deputy Spokesman of the IEC.

This comes as 18 days left for the upcoming parliamentary elections to be held across the country, followed by presidential elections which are scheduled on April 20, next year. (ATN)

(4) Privatizing War in...

undermine what fragile justice systems exist.

During a televised interview in Kabul last week, Erik Prince, billionaire businessman and brother of US Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, pitched a plan to an Afghan audience to privatize the fighting. Prince said he could end the war in "six months after the program is fully ramped," using "contracted veteran mentors" to support Afghan forces. Private contractors, including employees of Blackwater, who have made up a large proportion of US forces in Afghanistan since 2001, do not directly report to the military.

While they can be prosecuted for crimes in US courts under the Mili-

tary Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act, they rarely are. Prince said his forces would be subject to Afghan law.

Prince's company, Academi, formerly known as Blackwater, has been implicated in serious crimes in Iraq. On September 16, 2007, Blackwater employees opened fire on Iraqi civilians, killing 17. Although five Blackwater employees were indicted on murder and manslaughter charges on December 31, 2009, a federal judge threw out the indictment. The case was reopened in 2013. On October 22, 2014, one Blackwater employee, Nicholas Slatten, was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison, and three others were given 30-year sentences for involuntary manslaughter. However, an appeals court threw out Slatten's conviction and called for a retrial in 2017. On September 6, 2018, that trial ended in a mistrial.

Afghanistan already has a poor track record prosecuting members of its security forces implicated in serious human rights abuses, including killing civilians. Given the impunity already enjoyed by the security forces, placing them under the command of private security contractors could further undermine accountability.

US Defense Secretary James Mattis rejected Prince's proposal, as has Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. They recognize Afghanistan doesn't need foreign contractors operating as a law unto themselves. President Trump should listen. (HRW)

(5) UN Mission in...

the lower house of parliament, underscored the widespread violence gripping the country 17 years after the US-led invasion toppled the Taliban.

"This violence, including today's reprehensible attack in Nangarhar, is an assault on the constitutional rights of the people of Afghanistan," said the UN's Mr Yamamoto.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but both the Taliban and ISIS are active in the province and opposed to elections. "Most of the people killed or wounded are elders who had gathered for the campaign rally," said Attahullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the provincial governor. He said some of the wounded were in critical condition, indicating the death toll could rise. (Agencies)

(6) Election Campaigns...

Some staff are also benefitting as they have had salary increases.

According to one publishing company owner, Zakria Sherzai, their work load and profit margin has increased substantially due to the increase in printing of posters and billboards for candidates.

"Twenty thousand posters, business cards, brochures, flyers, and booklets are being published daily for the election," said Sherzai.

Merajuddin, a 32-year-old, said he has been unemployed for months and was the only breadwinner in a family of eight. But with the start of the campaign, he and 20 other men have been employed by one of the election candidates and will be paid 15,000 Afghanis this month.

"In the fifteen days that I have been working, it is good, I am earning something for home," said Merajuddin.

Meanwhile, the Kabul Municipality says that in the first few days of the campaign, government earned about two million Afghanis directly from candidate advertising revenue. The municipality said this comes from the cost of erecting billboards and hanging posters.

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) said each parliamentary candidate in provinces, with a large population, can spend between 2.3 million and 2.6 million AFs on their campaigns.

In less populated provinces candidates can spend between 800,000 and 920,000 Afghanis.

The commission said that ten staff members at the commission will monitor the process.

"All campaigns, their expenses will be under supervision and they (candidates) will report to the Commis-

sion," said Sayed Hafizullah Hashimi spokesman for the commission. More than 2,500 people including 400 females will compete for 249 seats in parliament on 20th of October. Almost nine million people registered to vote. (Tolo news)

(7) Afghan War Vet...

Tuesday.

Kander posted a letter on his campaign website and Facebook page explaining his mental health struggles. He hopes that being forthcoming will help veterans and others who are working through mental health issues, he said.

"I wish I would have sought help sooner, so if me going public with my struggle makes just one person seek assistance, doing this publicly is worth it to me," he wrote.

Kander, 37, was an Army intelligence officer in Afghanistan in 2005. When he returned home, he became involved in politics and won a seat in the Missouri House of Representatives in 2008. In 2012, he was elected to be Missouri Secretary of State, becoming the first millennial in the country elected to a statewide office. He was 32 at the time.

Kander entered the 2016 U.S. Senate election and won the Democratic primary, but he was defeated in the general election by Sen. Roy Blunt, the Republican incumbent. He entered the Kansas City mayoral race in June. (Monitoring Desk)

(8) NSC Reviews...

No further details were given regarding the details of the report regarding the deadly attack on the hotel.

In the meantime, ARG Palace, said a report regarding the activities of the ALP forces was presented in the meeting.

President Ghani instructed the officials to establish a single Command for the ALP forces and strengthen the security in key effective areas, ARG Palace added.

The planned reforms and betterment of conditions in the prisons were also discussed during the meeting where the relevant authorities were instructed to implement reforms in the administrative leadership of the prisons, pay attention to the rights and privileges of the inmates, ARG Palace said, adding that President Ghani also emphasized that the authorities should deal with the prisoners in line with the human rights norms and enforced laws. (KP)

(9) Abdullah Leaves... that the two sides discussed the upcoming religious scholars conference in Jakarta and the post-Kabul Process plans. The High Peace Council said the Indonesian vice president said his country will fully support the peace process in Afghanistan. (Tolo news)

(10) Afghanistan Election...

"Islamic State" (IS) militants. Islamist insurgents control at least 14 percent of Afghan districts and are battling with security forces to gain control of more territory.

Apart from an increasing threat from the Taliban, the militant outfit that ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, the sudden rise of IS in parts of Afghanistan is posing another big challenge to Afghan authorities in holding elections in many areas.

The country's Independent Election Commission (IEC) called off the polling in Ghazni province, whose capital was recently overrun by the Taliban.

"At present, the biggest challenge for the government is to improve the security situation and thwart Taliban attacks," Attiqullah Amarkhail, a Kabul-based security expert, told DW.

Islamists are not the only security threat in Afghanistan; former warlords remain influential in the country. They have forced the IEC to shut down their offices in certain areas until their demands are met by election officials. These warlords, experts warn, could use their local militias to stop people from voting.

IEC offices in southern Kandahar, northern Balkh and western Herat provinces have remained closed for

several days due to protests by local powerbrokers.

Concerns over voting fraud Previous elections in Afghanistan have been much criticized for rigging, voting irregularities and fraud allegations.

A coalition of political parties accused Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and the IEC of maneuvering the election process in a manner that ensures the success of pro-government candidates. Both Ghani and the IEC have denied these accusations.

Rights groups also complain that the government has not guaranteed an independent oversight of the October 20 election.

Yusuf Rashid, a member of the non-governmental Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan organization, says Afghan civil society groups are yet to receive the government support to deploy thousands of election observers across the country.

"We will try to deploy volunteers to polling stations, but it will not be a proper monitoring system," Rashid told DW.

Rashid fears the election could even be postponed if the government fails to take necessary measures to ensure free and fair elections. (DW)

(11) Local Firm to Invest...

the role they would play in this project," said Nehan.

Iron melting factories process used iron as the only source of raw materials. Industry owners said this source will finish within the next two years and that if they do not gain access to a sustainable source, they will suffer heavy financial losses as their activities will stop.

Khan Steel officials said so far, they have invested \$50 million in the factory and have 1,000 staff members. (Tolo news)

(12) Acting Mayor...

Mayor of Kabul Abdullah Habibzai announced his resignation almost a month but did not elaborate further regarding the circumstances surrounding his resignation.

However, reports had emerged earlier suggesting that Mr. Habibzai has sacked from his position by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani. (KP)

(13) Herat Forces...

forces will know their places where they will be deployed," said Gen. Noorullah Qadiri, the 207 Zafar Corps Commander.

The forces will be deployed to all provinces in the west of Afghanistan, Qadiri said.

"This parade will not be the first one; there will be more parades in three other provinces including Ghor, Farah and Badghis," said Mohammad Juma Adil, Commander of 606 Zone of Police in the province.

"Our top priority is the electoral process and I hope that security forces will be able to ensure a safe environment for the elections," said Herat Governor Mohammad Asif Rahimi.

Reports indicate that security threats are on the rise in some parts of the west zone including Farah and Badghis provinces. However, the 207 Zafar Corps commander said they continue their efforts to remove all security threats in the west zone. (Tolo news)

(14) Afghan Refugee...

he said, referring to the murder of his brother in Afghanistan in 2007. All five of Mr Sadat's children live in New Zealand and are independent. He says his "biggest dream of life" was to give them a higher education, and all of them have now completed their studies and are working.

Because of Western culture and its emphasis of "individuality", he says, "every one [of his children] has their own life," wish has left him feeling lonely.

"I'm not blaming New Zealand," he told Newshub. "New Zealand is still my country, I'm proud to be a New Zealander, but I need a break from what I'm going through." Newshub. (newshub)