

(1) Afghan Government...

rejected the proposal and on Thursday his national security adviser issued a statement condemning what he called a "destructive and divisive debate".

"Under no circumstances will the Afghan government and people allow the counterterrorism fight to become a private, for-profit business," the statement said.

In August, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis also rebuffed the idea, saying: "When Americans put their nation's credibility on the line, privatizing it is probably not a wise idea."

Afghan officials say that any move to replace U.S. military advisers with private contractors would further undermine government legitimacy and fuel Taliban accusations that the war was being conducted for the benefit of foreign interests.

Speaking half seriously, one senior security official said recently: "If they did that, even I would join the Taliban".

Prince, a former U.S. Navy SEAL whose sister Betsy De Vos serves as Education Secretary in President Donald Trump's administration, would have retired Special Forces troops from the United States and allied nations embed with Afghan forces, replacing U.S. and NATO military advisers.

The plan was originally broached last year as Trump was considering a new strategy for Afghanistan but it was not adopted and instead, Washington ordered thousands more U.S. troops to be sent to boost existing forces.

The United States currently has some 14,000 troops in Afghanistan, serving in the NATO-led Resolute Support training and advisory mission as well as in separate counterterrorism operations against militant groups like Islamic State.

Under the strategy announced just over a year ago, the extra troops and greatly increased air strikes against the Taliban are intended to force the insurgents to the negotiating table.

A brief ceasefire in June raised hopes of a possible breakthrough with the Taliban but progress towards any kind of peace deal has since been slow and fighting has continued with increasing Afghan military casualties, raising questions about the success of the strategy.

Trump has since been reported to be unhappy about the lack of progress, prompting fears among some diplomats that he could reverse course and order U.S. troops out of Afghanistan, a move that would risk a collapse of the Western-backed government. (Reuters)

(2) Azerbaijani FM Meets...

Mohammad Taqi Khalili expressed his gratitude for the support provided to run his diplomatic activities and noted that he spared no efforts to enhance bilateral relations during his diplomatic mission.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov wished Ambassador Mohammad Taqi Khalili every success in his future activities. (Trend)

(3) U.S. Government...

and accountability in partner municipalities. Ambassador Bass spoke at the closing ceremony of the Third National Mayors Conference, sponsored by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The October 1 to 4 Mayors Conference gathered mayors and deputy municipal advisory board heads from 33 provincial municipalities. Eight district directors from Kabul Municipality and the Executive Committee of the newly established National Network of Afghan Women in Urban Governance (NAWUG) were also present. Conference participants also included staff from the office of the IDLG Director General, the Deputy Ministry of Municipalities, and SHAHAR. During the event, the mayors presented their achievements, challenges, and recommendations in improving governance and service delivery in their municipalities.

Abdul Baqi Popal, Deputy Minister of Municipalities said, "Adequate revenue is the foundation of good governance, because it makes it possible to hire more qualified staff, provide the infrastructure necessary to support economic development and job creation, and increase citizen satisfaction and confidence in the legitimacy of municipal government."

Humaira Saqib, Head of the Executive and Steering Committees of NAWUG, added, "The history of other countries has demonstrated that nothing will foster government transparency and responsiveness, improve service delivery, promote economic development, and achieve stability and security more quickly than the full engagement of women in civic affairs." (PR)

(4) EU Ramps...

situation in Afghanistan shows little sign of improvement. Conflict has intensified since the beginning of the year and a severe drought is taking hold," said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides.

"The most vulnerable communities are hardest hit so the EU is stepping up support to help those most in need. Our new aid package aims to reach 400,000 people in need of assistance," said Stylianides.

The EU humanitarian assistance announced on Friday it will support communities affected by the drought, civilian war casualties, and displaced populations.

The EU said in a statement that humanitarian organisations will address the most pressing needs on the ground, ranging from emergency shelter to food assistance, water and sanitation, protection, and health care.

Part of the assistance will be channelled through the EU funded Emergency Response Mechanism, which ensures emergency assistance to vulnerable displaced communities, the statement said.

Several years of low rainfall, combined with low levels of snow-fall last winter, have led to a drought in 20 provinces, where nearly 15 million people rely on agriculture, the EU said in the statement. In some of the hardest-hit districts of the country's western region, agriculture and livestock production is 50 to 60 percent lower than in 2017.

An estimated two million people are affected by the drought, with 1.4 million in immediate need of food assistance.

Chronic underdevelopment and ongoing violence compounds the effects of the drought, which is depleting household assets and significantly increasing displacement within the country. (Tolo news)

(5) US Failed in...

which is turning out to be a menace for the region," he said.

Following the Karzai's speech, Haiyan Wang, Managing Partner of the China-India Institute, spoke in a public session, "Disrupting the Established Order: The Rise of the Global South"

"We must bear in mind that China is not yet a superpower and will not be for quite some time to come," Wang said.

"If you look at the military power, China's military spending is one-fifth of that of the U.S. China has only one small overseas base and that is dual-use," she added.

On Wednesday, the fourth and final session of the forum discussed "The Leadership of Women in a World of Conflict".

Monique Villa, CEO of the Thomson Reuters Foundation, referred to a World Bank study, which revealed women have equal rights to men only in 22 countries out of 189 surveyed.

"If we are to progress as a human race, we cannot exclude half the population: women," the statement quoted Villa as saying.

The two-day TRT World Forum, themed "Envisioning Peace and Security in a Fragmented World", brings together over 600 participants including the world's lead-

ing opinion leaders, policymakers, academics and businesspeople from around the world. (AA)

(6) Indonesian...

"Indonesia's President also asked the Taliban and other armed group to renounce violence and to solve their issues; they should choose the reconciliation way," according to the statement.

"Indonesia's President also said that building trust between both sides was a basic need for peace. The challenges ahead of the peace process are many but we have to continue to our efforts," read the statement.

On Wednesday, Abdullah flew out of Kabul for a two-day official visit to Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia.

Abdullah, who is leading a delegation will meet with Indonesian leaders, with the Chambers of Business and Industry and with members of the country's election commission.

Abdullah was invited by Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice President of Indonesia.

This comes after the Vice President of Indonesia Mohammad Jusuf Kalla reaffirmed his country's support to the Afghan peace and reconciliation process in a meeting with the Chairman of the High Peace Council Mohammad Karim Khalili in Kabul earlier this year. (Tolo news)

(7) Moph Confirms...

threats, adding that it makes efforts to limit the insurgent groups' access to government services.

This comes as the MoPH provides health services through 2,700 medical centers across the country - the centers which even treating the Taliban being wounded in the battlefields.

"This act of the health ministry treason against the soldiers and people who are not getting proper treatment," said Abdul Hadi Quraishi, a former military officer.

The MoPH figures indicate that about 40 percent of the citizens are deprived of health services across the country due to a number of reasons including insecurity. (ATN)

(8) Afghan Teacher...

world in at least one of the following areas - peace, environment, education, food and nutrition, health, and culture and heritage.

"I was happy to be invited here because the world doesn't know what is going on with the children who are in war zones, who are in refugee camps, who lost their parents, who lost their homes, who don't have the environment to quietly sit and read and write or draw a picture ... who every time they hear a sound think a bomb is exploding," Yacoobi said in her speech at the event.

"To work with these traumatised children is joyful. When you look in their face, when they smile and then they play, it is another world," she said.

Yacoobi paid tribute to her dedicated staff at the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) and said the Educator Award is "for children and women in Afghanistan and around the world who are suffering".

Three other humanitarians received World Citizen Awards for their work.

Yacoobi, founder and Director of AIL, also won the WISE Prize for Education in 2015.

She started working in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan in the early 1990s, training teachers, opening schools for children and learning centers for women.

Established in 1995, AIL now serves 350,000 people each year - 70% of them girls and women.

Sakana Yacoobi pioneered a ground-breaking approach that empowered women and communities to bring education and health services to girls living in rural and poverty-stricken urban areas.

In a film shown at the event on the first day of the TRT World Forum, Yacoobi said: "Education has a direct link with living a better life, with transforming civil society, with getting out of poverty. Education can do all these things." (Tolo news)

(9) Musharraf Warns...

used proxy forces in Afghanistan to counter its larger neighbor India.

"You can expect a proxy war in Afghanistan if the U.S. leaves Afghanistan, definitely, 100 percent," Musharraf said in an interview at his penthouse apartment in Dubai, where he now lives in self-exile.

War-ravaged Afghanistan has long been a battleground for the broader geopolitical rivalry between India and Pakistan. Musharraf's comments underscore the fear of Indian encirclement that motivates Pakistan and its powerful military, which has ruled the country for almost half of its 71-year existence. U.S. President Donald Trump has stoked those concerns by pushing for New Delhi to take on a larger role in Afghanistan as Washington looks to exit America's longest war.

Musharraf said "India should remain out" of Afghanistan, which Pakistan sees as its area of influence. He also warned that even if U.S. forces depart after a negotiated settlement with the Taliban, India and Pakistan would likely move in by supporting rival factions in Afghanistan.

"The situation will return to Taliban versus Northern Alliance, and in that Pakistan and India will fight a proxy war," he said, alluding to a military coalition that fought against the Taliban in the 1990s and early 2000s.

India's foreign ministry declined to comment. Indian officials, who frequently blame Pakistan for cross-border attacks in both Afghanistan and India, have long said their presence in Afghanistan is focused on development and infrastructure.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with his Pakistani counterpart on Wednesday and "emphasized the important role Pakistan could play in bringing about a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.

Pompeo "agreed that there was momentum to advance the Afghan peace process, and that the Afghan Taliban should seize the opportunity for dialogue."

However, Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah told an audience last month in New York that he's seen no change in Pakistan's policies toward the Taliban since Prime Minister Imran Khan came to power after elections in July.

Pakistan continues to wield "significant" influence over the Taliban, Abdullah said, though he added that the two countries are working together.

Frail and recovering from an unspecified illness, 75-year-old Musharraf said it was unlikely he would return to Pakistan any time soon to face what he calls "politically motivated" criminal cases.

Those include treason charges for suspending the constitution and a trial over the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, in which Musharraf was named an absconder last year. Bhutto's son Bilawal blames Musharraf for her death in December 2007. Musharraf has previously said he would return to Pakistan if his security could be guaranteed.

Musharraf has tried multiple times to reenter politics, but with limited success. Under the cloud of his legal issues, he was barred from contesting Pakistan's elections in July. When he last returned to Pakistan, in 2013, he was placed under house arrest the following year. He was eventually allowed to leave in 2016 to seek medical treatment abroad. The former general remains a divisive figure in Pakistan. Some praised him for ushering in a level of economic stability, though many others saw him as an American puppet after the Sept. 11 attacks. Musharraf also drew criticism for constitutional and human-rights violations and was blamed for fail-

ing to tackle widespread violence in the later years of his rule.

With former cricket star Khan breaking the rotational and dynastic grip of Pakistani politics, Musharraf said he backed the current government, and there was no need for him to return as a "third force." Monitoring Desk)

(10) Electoral Materials...

the country.

A per a comprehensive security plan, ANDSF have taken measures to transfer election materials safely, to ensure security of voting centers, to provide security for voters, and to maintain security of candidates' campaigns, said both spokespersons.

Spokesmen for MoD and MoI assured the people that ANDSF are doing utmost to secure elections - not allowing anyone to interfere and harm this national and democratic process.

"54 thousand defense and security forces are assigned to secure 5,100 polling centers which included 21,000 polling stations on Election Day." Nusrat Rahimi said. (KP)

(11) CSO Says...

CSO head Ahmad Jawed Rasuli said the IEC officials will therefore be able to decide on whether to keep only the legitimate ballot paper and slips or whether to keep the duplicates as well.

"If a voter registers on one device twice, then the system will register that he has already voted; if the voter goes to another polling station and registers again, it will also register as a duplication. But only when votes are counted will the IEC pick up that the votes are duplicated," said Rasuli.

Rasuli said the devices also have two options for taking pictures of voters; it has the option to take photos or to skip that part of the process. He said once again it will be up to officials at the particular polling stations to decide on whether to photograph the voters.

Rasuli said the devices also record two thumb prints, Identity Card pictures and the pictures of the stickers attached to the ID cards of the voters.

"If the commission decides that pictures are mandatory, then it can be mandatory in the devices. And if they decide pictures are optional, for example of women, then the application has the ability to support the decision," said Rasuli.

IEC officials meanwhile said so far they have not decided on whether to record the pictures of voters.

IEC secretary and spokesman Sayed Hafizullah Hashemi said the commission has decided that slips printed by the biometric devices will be pasted on to the back of all ballot papers.

"We have discussed this. Some said pictures should be mandatory, while some others said it should not be mandatory for women. We have not made any decision in this regard, but we will decide by Saturday," said Hashemi.

So far the IEC has taken delivery of 16,000 biometric units and are still waiting for the balance of the 24,000 ordered through a German company. (Tolo news)

(12) US Service...

Middle East, would say only that the casualty was a result of "combat action" and would not specify the location or the enemy combatant.

He said more details would be given after the service member's family had been notified.

The news came as the Afghan Taliban claimed on their website that Taliban fighters had detonated an improvised explosive device on a tank in Garmsir district of Helmand province.

The Taliban added that all service members in the tank had been killed or wounded. The information came from the SITE Intelligence Group that monitors jihadist websites and translates their content into English.

The Pentagon said about 14,000 U.S. troops are deployed in Afghanistan. Thursday's death was the seventh U.S. combat fatality in the country this year. (VoA)