

### (1) Afghans Need...

the peace deal with the Hizb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), mega economic projects such as CASA, TUTAP, Chabahar port, connectivity through railway lines, TAPI and other projects were major achievements of Afghan government in recent times. The Afghan president, however, said 39 percent of his countrymen still lived under the poverty line and lacked the ability to buy bread or send their children to school.

He said his country needed international community's assistance because insecurity remained a huge challenge. He said Afghan security forces proved they were brave soldiers and stood against the atrocities of Taliban, Al Qaeda and Daesh. Referring to northern Kunduz province, the president said there was news that Kunduz would fall to Taliban but security forces repulsed their attacks and did not allow them to overrun the provincial capital. He said terrorist safe havens in the region were a threat to the entire region as terrorists knew no borders. The president said the peace deal with the HIA showed that Afghans were committed to intra-Afghan peace dialogue.

Afghan government officials have said the international community at the Brussels conferences would pledge \$3.5 billion in aid for the next four years. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Kerry Discusses...

support to the Afghan Government. "At the conference, donors will outline their commitments to Afghanistan's development linked to continued Afghan progress on political and economic reforms," Toner said. The conference sends a strong signal to the Afghan people and to the region that the international community remains committed to a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Afghanistan...

the beginning." He said that Afghans are being denied peace by only a small group of people and went on to mention the Hizb-e-Islami peace accord. He said "this is a model for what might be possible - very important beginnings." He stated that the Afghan army and police force have stood up and fought back against insurgents but "there is a path forward to peace - a political settlement is the only way to end the fighting."

Kerry said that in 2012 donors came together to pledge assistance over four years and assured the people of Afghanistan that "we will not abandon our Afghan friends."

Kerry said Afghan leaders are committed to and want a better future for their country. On the NUG, he said that Afghan leaders have made good on their promises including that of fighting corruption and also added that government "revenue performance remains strong despite the many security challenges."

On elections, he said that the right for free and fair elections is the right of every Afghan, including women, and pointed out that societies with empowered women are more stable and more prosperous.

He also said that the U.S. pledges to deepen its partnership with Afghanistan all the way through 2020.

He stated that several countries could help and urged Russia, China and Iran to think about the role they could play. Pledges made are only as valuable as the ways they are implemented," he said.

President Ashraf Ghani also addressed delegates and summarized government's achievements in recent years.

He also touched on security and said Afghanistan "is facing a threat than can also threaten the world". He also called for a minute's silence to remember all those who died in Afghanistan in past 15 years.

Ghani says what is critical is to generate regional will to fight terrorism. "Terrorism is not only a threat to Afghanistan but a threat to the entire world. Root of problem is in region, we at a national level are committed to dialogue and constructive politics and unfortunately terrorism is not a short-term phenomenon, it is a medium term phenomenon," Ghani added.

Ghani said the international community has stood by Afghanistan for many years and acknowledged there are problems in the country including poverty, education, and a high mortality rate. "Afghanistan needs the international community's help in terms of changing the lives of Afghans. More than 39% of Afghans live in poverty. Afghans know that without good education for their children, they

will not have a decent future," he said.

Ghani summarizes positive achievements that international aid has brought.

"Last year government increased revenue by 22%, despite a severe recession and in the last 3 months government has secured \$1.1 billion USD investment in the country. Over the next three years government will start building more dams," more dams than ever built in the past, he said.

Ghani ended off by saying Afghanistan will succeed. (Tolnews)

### (4) Islamabad...

Afghanistan's institution building. The Brussels Conference is being held as a sequel to the Tokyo Conference that took place in 2012 for affirming international community's engagement with Afghanistan through economic and financial assistance for Afghanistan.

Adviser Sartaj Aziz emphasized that politically negotiated settlement was the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan.

He welcomed the peace deal signed between Afghan government and Hizb-i-Islami, assuring Pakistan's continued efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan through the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG). He said their message to Taliban remained to shun violence and to join the peace process. (Pajhwok)

### (5) EU Sees...

Western-backed government in Kabul and the Taliban, but all have failed. Without the militants at the table, experts say it is hard to envisage a meaningful solution.

#### HAZARAS STAGE PROTEST

The EU and Afghanistan signed a political agreement this month to make it easier to return Afghans whose asylum requests fail.

European governments, facing increasing opposition from voters to immigration at home, have pressed Afghanistan to accept more repatriations, saying that many parts of the country, including the capital Kabul, are safe.

That policy has faced sharp criticism from aid groups and others who point to the widening Taliban insurgency across the country and the frequent suicide attacks that hit Kabul. Several hundred members of Afghanistan's mainly Shi'ite Hazara minority, which has been targeted by Taliban and Islamic State militants, protested outside the conference venue.

"(President) Ashraf Ghani and his government is here for European and other countries' aid and assistance in return for accepting a deal to send us back to a war zone," said Ali Reza, holding a banner with the words: "We Will Not Go Back".

While the West wants more social, political and financial reforms from Afghanistan, EU migration aid is not linked to the Brussels conference, but was raised by European ministers including Hungary and Bulgaria.

"I hope that the newly signed repatriation agreement with Afghanistan will be implemented in practice," German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told reporters.

#### TALIBAN PEACE TALKS?

Two people briefed on Mogherini's dinner, attended by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon among others, told Reuters that Chinese and Indian officials were willing to consider peace talks.

Pakistan continues to harbour Afghan Taliban, the United States says. India is unconvinced the militants have changed, judging by the way they rule the 10 percent of Afghan territory they control, one official said.

"There are several countries that actually can help come together, and I urge Russia, China, Pakistan, India and Iran to think about the special role that they could play in this region in order to make a major difference ... in reaching peace with the Taliban," Kerry told the donor conference.

But there remain divisions about if, or when, to include Taliban militants. Even if they were invited, it is unclear whether the movement would take part.

Hope was briefly raised in 2015 when Taliban officials met the Afghan government in neighbouring Pakistan, but that process was short lived, and the Taliban insist that foreign forces must leave Afghanistan before peace talks can begin.

They are also on the offensive, and battlefield successes have exposed the defensive limits of Afghanistan's NATO-trained armed forces which are supposed to number 350,000 personnel but which have been heavily depleted by casualties and desertion. Militants briefly reached the centre

of the northern city of Kunduz on Monday, and they are testing the defenses of two other provincial capitals in the south of the country.

Still, U.S. and EU officials have been encouraged by a smaller peace agreement last month between the Afghan government and a local warlord.

Though largely symbolic, the deal grants amnesty to the warlord and his militants in return for an end to violence and respect for Afghanistan's constitution.

"This a model for what might be possible ... I think the message from every person here would be to the Taliban: take note," Kerry said. (Reuters)

### (6) 20 Injured...

and evacuated the wounded to hospital and security forces cordoned off the area, not letting anyone use the road, the eyewitnesses added, saying the mini-bus was partially damaged.

There has been no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. (Pajhwok)

### (7) Kunduz MP...

"We have evidence that prove there are people inside the security forces that sell weapons and checkpoints to the Taliban and let their fellow (colleagues) be arrested by insurgents. These is the type of betrayal that exists among the security forces, especially the local police," said Jawid Kohistani, a military analyst.

"Disagreements, poor management, political crisis, removing people, poor war management, and financial corruption in the civil and military departments are the reasons that such problems occur," said Mirdad Nijrabi, head of parliament's internal security commission.

But the MoI rejected the claims. "When the local police and the national police report to us, we immediately take action. We cannot tolerate people among our security forces that will prepare conditions for the fall of even a district to the Taliban," said Sediq Sediqi, spokesman for the MoI. (Tolnews)

### (8) Ghani Vows ...

have proved tenacious, waging an increasingly powerful insurgency around the country. Afghan forces battled Taliban fighters in the northern city of Kunduz for the third straight day on Wednesday and American helicopters provided air support to troops on the ground in the wake of the multipronged attack on the city launched by insurgents this week.

Acknowledging the many setbacks that Afghanistan has faced, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that he still has "an enormous sense of confidence about the future."

"Year by year our shared effort, one of the largest international coalitions ever assembled, and maintained over a sustained period in time, is in fact yielding encouraging dividends," Kerry told the representatives.

Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said the Brussels conference would give his government an opportunity to present its reform blueprint. He stressed its commitment to fighting corruption and advancing women's rights.

"Our achievements are many and Afghanistan is advancing on a positive trajectory," Rabbani said. "Yet our challenges remain formidable." Afghanistan has been mired in conflict for decades. At the height of the 15-year U.S. and NATO intervention, billions of dollars flowed into the country, creating a false economy with double-digit growth. But the drawdown of troops in 2014 led many aid workers and international agencies to depart or scale back their operations, causing the economy to all but collapse.

Officials estimate up to 50 percent unemployment. Deteriorating security deters foreign investment in key fields such as mining and infrastructure, and drives the country's youth onto the migrant trail to Europe in search of opportunities. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani will nevertheless argue that progress has been made since Tokyo regarding corruption and judicial and electoral reform. (AP)

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children were in school and almost all of those were boys. Today, Tusk said, more than 9 million children, nearly 40 per cent of them girls, were enrolled.

During the period, access to primary healthcare increased from 9 percent of the population to more than 57 percent. He also noted reforms in public finance management, justice, anti-corruption and human rights.

The Polish politician warned Afghanistan could easily slide back into extremism, narcotics and political factionalism in the absence of international support.

Afghanistan would overcome the vicious cycle of fragility, poverty and violent extremism only with the help and cooperation of its neighbours, he stressed. Besides financial aid, he sought support for peace efforts in the country.

"An end to the climate of conflict will bring benefits to every single country in the region, also economically. Therefore I appeal to every country to act responsibly in the interests of a stable Afghanistan."

EU countries were doing their bit to support humanitarian relief efforts for internally displaced persons besides helping host communities support refugees in the region, the European Council president continued. He urged countries to take back irregular economic migrants in line with international standards and obligations. "That is why I want to thank the Afghan government for its courage in agreeing a way forward to manage migration fairly in cooperation with the European Union.

"We will support this agreement with money and job-creation programmes to reintegrate returning migrants to the benefit of their local communities," Tusk promised.

He said the Afghans were at a crossroads, with one road leading back to violence, endemic poverty and regional instability and the other to self-sufficiency, prosperity and a new generation of healthy, educated girls and boys.

"Unlike some, I do not believe that the Afghans are doomed to repeat a troubled history over and over. As the great poet Rumi - who the Afghans call Jalal ad-Din Balkhi - once said: "Yesterday is gone and its tale told. Today new seeds are growing." (Pajhwok)

### (10) Enlightenment...

Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) shared the mission's findings regarding a deadly attack on protesters late last month.

The report was shared during a meeting with the representatives of the Hazara community, a statement by UNAMA said, adding that "As part of its good offices mandate, UNAMA invited participants for an open discussion, chaired by Pernille Kardel, the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan."

The statement further added " A broad range of issues were discussed, including the tragic 23 July suicide attack in Kabul claimed by Daesh against peaceful demonstrators, which resulted in the deaths of at least 85 civilians and injured more than 400 others."

UNAMA said it has produced a report on the attack as part of its mandated, and internationally respected, work on human rights in Afghanistan and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The report will be released shortly.

Participants included Members of Parliament, representatives of civil society groups, including the Enlightening Movement, as well as Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

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statement by Atmar was released three days after the incident and amid deteriorating security situation which resulted into the fall of Nawa district and Kunduz city being on the brink of collapse.

The party further added that the publishers of the statement surely knows those involved behind the incident during Burhanuddin Rabbani's death anniversary, emphasizing that Jamiat-e-Islam has long been striving and fighting against the stooges of the regional and international spy agencies.

Jamiat-e-Islami also stated that the National Security Adviser must immediately disclose those involved behind the incident, warning that failure to do would mean that the statement by Atmar was unnecessary and was reflecting racism from a national institution.

This comes as the prominent security official General Abdul Razaq earlier reacted towards the move against Karzai with angry remarks.

Gen. Raziq took some further steps not only to react towards the insulting steps against Karzai but to denounce the so called allocation of privileges of jihad to some specific groups.

Expressing his strong opposition for the event and offering privilege to certain Mujahideen leaders, Gen. Raziq warned that the people of Kandahar will not remain silent, insisting that supremacy of jihad is not limited to a particular ethnic group.

He went on to say that 'no one is allowed to label a thief to her' emphasizing that the real Mujahideen like Mullah Omar and the group's slain military commander Mullah Dadullah have no properties or businesses left behind them. (KP)

### (12) EU, Afghanistan

awareness among Afghans of the risks of irregular migration, breaking the smugglers' models and providing sustainable reintegration for those who return to Afghanistan.

According to the agreement, "both sides will explore the possibility to build a dedicated terminal for return in Kabul airport."

The agreement stipulates a limit of 50 non-voluntary returnees per flight in the first six months on "scheduled or non-scheduled flights to Kabul airport and any other specified Afghan airports," but does not state a limit on the number of flights.

It also states: "Prior to returning Afghan nationals, the EU side will give fair consideration to humanitarian aspects in accordance with international law to unaccompanied minors, single women and women who are head of their families, family unity, elderly and seriously sick people. Special measures will ensure that such vulnerable groups receive adequate protection, assistance and care throughout the whole process." (CNN)

### (13) We will...

of Afghan security forces and all those serving as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission. He encouraged the international community to continue to support the government of Afghanistan and urged the Afghan leadership to stand strong and united, and implement necessary reforms.

Focusing on recent peace efforts, Mr. Stoltenberg said he was greatly encouraged by the agreement between the Afghan Government and Hezb-i-Islami. "This is an important step forward in the peace and reconciliation process and essential for a credible long-term peace deal," he added. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Clashes Continue...

Wednesday as sporadic gun battles were continuing and the government forces backed by helicopter gunships have been targeting Taliban positions, according to witnesses.

"The counter-offensive is continuing. The security forces cleared several locations, including Police District First and Third, Bandar-e-Kabul neighborhood and parts of Sehdera locality on Wednesday. The troops are moving carefully to avoid civilian casualties as militants are using private properties and houses as bunkers and they are using snipers to target security forces," a police spokesman at the region, Mahfuzullah Akbari, told Xinhua.

The counter-operation may need longer time as the militants are using civilians as human shields, spokesman Akbari said.

(Xinhua)

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crime; they could come to the house in daytime after investigations. All the people killed were civilians," he insisted.

He said Kama was one of the most peaceful districts of the country but the government was trying to create security problems there.

Some days ago, the Special Forces also killed a United Nations officer during an operation in Jalalabad, the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

### (16)30 Rebels ...

operations over the last 24 hours. However, the Taliban claimed inflicting casualties on security personnel in Tirinkot and Kandahar. (Pajhwok)

### (17)Top Taliban...

Remote districts. The death of commander Uzbek comes as the group has been launching major attacks on Afghan security forces during the recent months. Taliban launched a coordinated attack on the strategic Kunduz city earlier this year with an aim to recapture the control of the city but the attack was repulsed by the Afghan forces. (KP)

### (18)Iraq Summons...

Turkish troops as hostile occupying forces," said the parliament. Moreover, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry on Monday rejected in a statement the recent comments by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over Ankara's willingness to join the battle of Mosul and the post battle arrangements.

It said that such comments "represent a blatant interference in Iraqi internal affairs and a violation of principles in bilateral relations." (Xinhua)

### (19)Chinese Envoy

international community should jointly take measures to crack down on the use of Internet by terrorist organization for disseminating violent extremist ideologies as well as planning acts of terror.

He also said the international community should strengthen cooperation in regulating financial and other fields and suppress attempts by terrorist organizations to acquire financing through smuggling oil, cultural relics or drugs. (Xinhua)

### (20)Turkey Summons...

in terms of fighting Daesh." Some 150 soldiers and up to 25 tanks were stationed in the Bashiqa camp, located about 30 kilometers north-east of Mosul.

According to the report, the training mission has been in operation since March 2015 and was not assigned to combat duties.

Ankara said that Turkish soldiers were sent to Bashiqa at the request of Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi. (Xinhua)

(21)Pence Breaks using military force differ from what Trump has said about how the U.S. should approach Syria, as Yahoo News noted.

During a May interview on MSNBC's "Morning Joe," Trump suggested that it would not make sense to fight the Islamic State and Syrian President Bashar Assad at the same time, and that the fight against ISIL should be the bigger priority.

"I would have stayed out of Syria and wouldn't have fought so much for Assad, against Assad because I thought that was a whole thing," Trump said. "You have Iran, which we made into a power. Iran now is a power. (TMP)

### (22)U.S.-Led ...

Mosul, some 400 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, is the second largest city in Iraq. The city has been under IS control since June 2014, when Iraqi government forces abandoned their weapons and fled, enabling IS militants to take control of parts of Iraq's northern and western regions. (Xinhua)

### (23)Ukraine May...

controversial issue in Ukraine. Its supporters claim that the continuation of the moratorium limits the rights of about 6.9 million Ukraine's plot owners to dispose of their property.

Meanwhile, critics claim that small landowners may lose their plots once the moratorium is lifted as big agricultural firms may use shadow schemes to appropriate their farmland. (Xinhua)

### (24)Iran Denies...

airstrikes against the Houthis rebels in Yemen, with Saudi Arabia saying the move aimed at restoring the legitimacy of the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. (Xinhua)