

(1) Poor Political...

“Political consequences are also drawn and I believe what we saw there was not just a strong enemy opposing or surprising weak government forces, it was also a political system which did not act in time to shrink this base for the insurgents.” In addition, French Ambassador to Kabul Jean-Michel Marlaud has called for clarification of the fall of Kunduz but believes the Taliban will not succeed in winning the war. “We regret that (fall of Kunduz) and I think that it is necessary to re-think reasons why such an episode was possible and we know that the NUG is reflecting and will draw a lesson from this. But I do not think it changes things fundamentally. I am convinced that the Taliban has no possibility to take power in Afghanistan. They have no possibility because they do not have the support of the majority of the population and they will never succeed because the international community will never accept it,” Marlaud told TOLonews. Meanwhile, a member of the German Parliament, Omid Nouripour, said that the collapse of Kunduz shows that Afghanistan needs the international community’s long-term assistance.

“Leaders of both teams must show that they are acting as a unit and are one government. This is very important for Germany. The collapse of Kunduz showed that we should assist not only in the security sector but as well as in other sectors,” Nouripour said. (Tolonews)

(2) Tajik President ...

country. It puts us on our guard. So I would like to discuss today at our meeting the issues of security arrangements in the region,” Rakhmon said.

The situation in Afghanistan has worsened since the government and the Taliban confirmed in July that Taliban leader Mullah Omar had died two years ago, dashing hopes that the insurgents would quickly return to the negotiating table.

Fighting in Afghanistan killed 5,000 civilians in the first half of this year, more than at any point since the war started in 2001.

Training the 350,000 strong Afghan National Security Forces has been at the heart of the U.S. plan to end involvement in its longest war. American and allied forces officially ended their combat role at the end of last year, leaving behind a training and advisory force of several thousand. (Tolonews)

(3) Afghanistan...

the president options that would diverge from the current plan to withdraw all U.S. troops beyond an embassy presence in Kabul after 2016. “Based on conditions on the ground,” Campbell said, “I do believe that we have to provide our senior leadership options different than the current plan we’re on, absolutely.”

Analyses keep changing, of course, but Campbell’s comments may be evidence that the White House is reconsidering the complete withdrawal promised by the end of President Obama’s tenure. During his remarks, Campbell acknowledged that ISIS is more established in Afghanistan than he said they were when he appeared before Congress in February. ISIS militants are locked in a struggle with the Taliban, and the Afghan government has promised to go after both groups simultaneously.

Obama’s rationale for doubling down on Afghanistan in the first place was that it was where the terrorists were. Given that the terrorists are still there, it may be difficult for him to justify a withdrawal. But our presence has lately caused a controversy, too. At the hearing, the general was also under fire for last week-end’s attack on a Doctors Without Borders hospital, which Campbell called a “mistake” but declined to discuss further. However you slice it, the whole situation doesn’t look good for the United States. As WRM wrote yesterday, the Pentagon is, at this point, “running a vast, multi-country war effort that has become unhinged from any serious strategic vision.” The uncertainty about our policy in Afghanistan is part and parcel of that failure. (Agencies)

(4) Top UN...

the country, and praised Iran and Pakistan for hosting so many Afghan refugees.

“We are here because we want the international community to refocus on a situation that is no longer getting the attention it deserves, and because we believe that to ignore Afghanistan would be a dangerous mistake, regardless of the urgency and scale of other, newer crises,” the

UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, told members of the UN refugee agency’s Executive Committee during a meeting on the Afghan refugee situation. “UNHCR (the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) has a special relationship with Afghanistan, and with the two countries that have taken in 95 per cent of Afghan refugees – the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan,” he noted.

The gathering focused on how to create the conditions necessary for Afghan refugees to go home and re-integrate to regions where security allows.

“Reaching over six million people at its peak, this is the biggest refugee situation UNHCR has ever dealt with, as well as the biggest voluntary repatriation operation in our history, with over 5.8 million returnees since 2002,” he said, adding that after more than 35 years and with 2.6 million registered refugees remaining in 70 countries, “Afghans are also the world’s largest protracted refugee population.”

In a pre-recorded video message to the meeting, Afghanistan’s President Ashraf Ghani thanked UNHCR for the decades of engagement with Afghan refugees. He also thanked Pakistan and Iran for opening their borders and still hosting millions of Afghans.

“My duty calls to prevent the production of more displaced people and refugees. I hope our efforts here will contribute significantly [to that end],” he said.

President Ghani also echoed the High Commissioner’s own concern over possible international neglect. “The problem of refugees is a global one. They cannot be placed on an island and forgotten,” he warned.

Mr. Guterres said that – although the situation in Afghanistan “remains very challenging, as recent events in Kunduz have shown” – the new Afghan National Unity Government of President Ghani had committed to making durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons a top national priority.

According to UNHCR, the meeting in Geneva was attended by some 800 participants, representing 131 Member States, several UN and international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

A number of guests from key donor states, UN and NGO partners, as well as Afghan civil society reportedly voiced support for efforts to find durable solutions for the many Afghans still in exile.

Meanwhile, Mr. Guterres stressed that advances in finding durable solutions would only be possible if the international community provided “significantly more support” to these efforts than has so far been the case.

“Most notably, the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, developed by the governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan with UNHCR, is the main vehicle for furthering these efforts and needs to be supported more decisively, in particular by development actors,” he stated.

The UN official pointed out that the number of internally displaced persons now stood at nearly one million and that Afghans continued to leave the country to file new asylum applications elsewhere.

Nevertheless, he emphasized that nearly 54,000 refugees had returned to Afghanistan in 2015, almost as many as the combined total for the previous two years. “It is precisely because times are difficult that it is so important to support Afghanistan now,” the High Commissioner said.

“The Afghan Government’s initiative for an Enhanced Voluntary Return and Reintegration Package for each returnee family merits particular attention, as it will provide increased support to refugee reintegration in the initial phase following their return home.”

Speaking about the situation in Europe this year, where he said half a million boat arrivals had overwhelmed capacities in many of the affected countries, he noted: “One cannot even begin to imagine the kind of pressure the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan were facing with over six million Afghan refugees at the time.”

In conclusion, Mr. Guterres said the current meeting was born from the “recognition that effective and sustainable return to Afghanistan is fundamentally important in the effort to stabilize the entire region” and urged international solidarity to make this happen. (Monitoring Desk)

(5) Supporting ...

particular, is indispensable. Referring to direct link between insecurity and migration, the minister called for continuous, integrated and long-term measures to help establish peace and security.

Rahman-Fazli also pointed to Mina catastrophe which left several thousand Muslims performing Hajj pilgrimage killed, saying that the tragic event has been associated with imprudence and mismanagement.

He further noted that Islamic World and international community should show necessary sensitivity towards the Mina incident near the Saudi city of Mecca.

The Iranian minister said that patrons of the extremist and terrorist groups should stop backing the groups, adding that while few countries such as Iran are paying large sums in aid for refugees, certain countries across the world are supporting the terrorists.

Guterres, for his part, condoled death of Iranian Hajj pilgrims in Mina incident, appreciating the refugee country for its generous moves regarding refugees, despite meager aid by the UNHCR.

He also voiced the UN agency’s readiness to cooperate with Iran for implementing joint programs and offer services to the refugees.

The final solution for repatriation of the Afghans is to provide housing for them, he said, noting that the issue tops the UNHCR’s priorities.

ExCom meeting opened in Geneva on October 5 and will continue until October 9. (IRNA)

(6) Terrorists...

his policy towards Pakistan after a wave of terrorist attacks in Kabul over the past few months.

According to Ghani, militants that launched attacks in Faryab, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Uruzgan and Helmand provinces aimed to accomplish the goals of outsiders.

In addition, the Army’s Deputy Chief of Army Gen. Murad Ali Murad and the acting governor of Kunduz Hamdullah Danishi briefed the meeting via video teleconference about the recent security developments in Kunduz city – which recently fell to the Taliban following a massive and well-planned attack.

Murad assured the meeting, chaired by Ghani, that security forces had not violated human rights laws.

According to Murad, security forces were putting all their efforts into protecting the lives and properties of civilians in the embattled city.

Referring to reports of crimes by the Taliban that include mass murder and looting in Kunduz, Ghani noted that the traitors were being financed by external elements behind the killings of Afghans and the looting of their properties.

Touching on the advances being made by the forces in Kunduz, Ghani praised the troops and said: “Our courageous and brave forces are moving forward towards protecting the lives of Afghans to ensure their freedom, independence and prosperity.” (Tolonews)

(7) Obama’s Afghanistan..

lawmakers cited the rise of the Islamic State (IS, also known as ISIS or ISIL) and other threatening groups in the region as reasons for Obama to rethink his plan to reduce U.S. troops to a small force based at the American embassy in Kabul by the time he leaves office.

“Our current force strength is the minimum capable of adequately staffing our bases,” the congressman wrote. “Any further reduction would result in base closures, minimizing our footprint, and hindering our intelligence capabilities going forward. This would severely limit our ability to conduct counterterrorism operations.”

They said the United States’ hasty withdrawal from Iraq allowed for the rise of IS terrorists in the Middle East.

“We must recognize that the fight against violent extremism cannot be won overnight. We must learn from our experience in Iraq and be careful to not put the progress we have made in jeopardy,” the Republican lawmakers advised. “Withdrawing from a country does not mean the problem goes away.”

The letter was sent to the president one day before Gen. John Campbell, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Obama’s plan to significantly scale back U.S. troops in the war-torn country should be scrapped in favor of one that maintains a larger force.

“Based on conditions on the ground, I do believe we have to provide our senior leadership options different than the current plan we are going with,” Campbell said, pointing to the rise of the Islamic State and in-

urgent violence in the region.

“We cannot now withdraw from our footprint in the country, at places like Bagram’s Air Force Base, and leave a vacuum for the reemerging Taliban to fill,” Wenstrup stated Wednesday, citing Campbell’s testimony. “It would be a mistake to end our counterterrorism operations based on political timelines.”

Obama is reportedly reconsidering the Afghanistan pullback and is looking at a plan introduced by former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey that would leave as many as 5,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan beyond 2016. Campbell has also developed multiple options for a larger force in the country, including one that would maintain the current level of U.S. force of about 10,000.

Campbell will testify before the House Armed Services Committee Thursday. Thornberry told journalists late last month that scaling back U.S. troops to a small force by the end of 2016 would do “significant damage” to national security and the strength of Afghan forces.

“Let’s [not] have a repeat of Iraq where we have a new additional – and some people think even more serious – threat facing us, in part because we left too early and too fast,” he said. (Agencies)

(8) Study Finds...

is to infiltrate all tribes in Afghanistan,” Ali added.

The study reiterates that the lack of employment, a sluggish economy and dissatisfaction about the functioning of the Afghan educational system are major factors in the politicization of high school students in Afghanistan, which also includes an attraction towards extremist groups. Researcher and university lecturer Dr. Antonio Giustozzi said: “If nothing is done I think there is going to be a problem of serious political mobilization among the students. Then of course the students are the generation of the future,” he said adding that often people kept these political ideals they absorb in high school for the rest of their lives.

In addition, the study found: “One key assumption of donors in Afghanistan is that the quantitative growth in the offer of state education is always a positive indicator and that the number of students enrolling in high schools is an unmistakably positive sign.”

“The numerical rise of youth in education, not matched by an improvement in the quality of education and/or growth in educational opportunities, leads to youth radicalization and political instability,” read the statement.

The study notes that if the ban were to be revoked, at least there would be a more level playing field in high schools, allowing a greater variety of parties and organizations to compete for the loyalty of the younger generation. To date, the ban has primarily only been successful in keeping out moderate and progressive groups. (Tolonews)

(9) President Ghani...

Kunduz acting-governor. The appointment comes in the wake of the fall of Kunduz to the Taliban.

Kunduz Governor Omar Safai was out of the country at the TIME OF the attack. Danishi previously worked as the Kunduz deputy governor. (Tolonews)

(10) Russia Backs...

real aim is to help the government. Moscow says it shares the West’s aim of preventing the spread of Islamic State, and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu told President Vladimir Putin during a televised meeting that four Russian warships in the Caspian Sea had launched 26 rockets at Islamic State in Syria earlier in the day.

The rockets would have passed over Iran and Iraq to reach their targets, covering what Shoigu described as a distance of almost 1,500 km (900 miles), the latest display of Russian military power at a time when relations with the West are at a post-Cold War low over Ukraine.

The air campaign in Syria has caught Washington and its allies on the back foot and alarmed Syria’s northern neighbor Turkey, which says its airspace has been repeatedly violated by Russian jets.

Ankara summoned Russia’s ambassador for the third time in four days over the reported violations, which NATO has said appeared to be deliberate and were “extremely dangerous”.

Turkey said Syria-based missile systems harassed its warplanes on Tuesday while eight F-16 jets were on a patrol flight along the Syria border. (Reuters)

(11) Perversion...

a lot of this extremism. If you take, for example, some of the organizations in the Middle East, some of those clerics that are putting out the most extreme stuff – they’ll have Twitter followings that go into millions of people.

“These people are saying things about Jewish people – about even those in their own religion who are different that we would regard as completely unacceptable – and it’s those waters of extremism in which the violent extremists can swim,” he said.

“The majority of people within Islam do not support either the violence or the ideology. What we are talking about, however, is a radical Islamist way of thinking that results in extremism by small numbers of people, but that thinking is shared by larger numbers of people, and you’ve got to attack both – the violence and the extremism, the thinking behind it,” Blair said. He said countries where extremism had taken hold needed to overhaul their education systems. (CNN)

(12) No Sleep for ...

of the area from the Taliban four days earlier but insurgents continue an offensive to recapture the area. Hamid reports that during the drive through the area, insurgents fired a mortar in their direction. After taking cover, insurgents retreated and commandos found an area where they could settle down to eat their dinner.

“We are always ready to sacrifice our life for this homeland. We do not care whether we get food or not. We are always ready to serve our country,” a commando, Rahmaullah said.

Bala Hisar is a key area of Kunduz and commandos believe that their successful operation to retake it was an achievement.

“Enemies were here before we reached the area but we caused a major blow to the Taliban and they escaped,” a commando, Sayed Maqsood said. (Tolonews)

(13) Security Forces ...

the presence of civilians. Residents are however still paying the price for the ongoing battle. They face severe food and water shortages.

The Kunduz battle has now entered its second week but despite the deployment of reinforcement troops the city has still not been cleared of insurgents. In addition, officials have said that over 6,000 people have been left homeless since the Taliban launched their attack in the early hours of last Monday. (Tolonews)

(14) Omer Daudzai...

on the emergence of the new extremist group in the country, Daudzai declared Daesh a serious threat to the security of Afghanistan.

“Taliban are comparatively a bigger threat than Daesh,” Daudzai said. “Both of them are worse than each other. [Initially] Daesh was considered more dangerous than Taliban, but what they [Taliban] did in Kunduz showed that they are more dangerous than Daesh. Both are a threat to Afghanistan,” he maintained.

In addition, he said that Kunduz fell to the Taliban because of a weakness in the intelligence services. (Tolonews)

(15) Russia has ...

Mediterranean port, and reassert Moscow’s place as a big international power competing with the United States.

“The force that they have deployed down there is actually quite impressive for a rapid deployment of a week or so,” Lute said. “(It is) all arms, combined arms, attack aircraft, it is the attack helicopters and artillery, rocket artillery.”

Russia’s ground forces in Syria include some of its most advanced tanks, he added.

A U.S.-led coalition has been waging air strikes against Islamic State militants, Syria’s most powerful insurgent force, since last year but NATO is not directly involved.

However, Russian air space violations of NATO-ally Turkey near the border with Syria at the weekend have brought the crisis right up to the alliance’s borders. NATO called the incursions “unacceptable” and dismissed Russia’s explanation that they were a mistake caused by bad weather. (Reuters)

(16) Soldier ...

the hospital,” he said. The strike came in the early hours of Saturday morning killing 22 people, including 12 MSF staff members.

However MSF officials called the incident a war crime and have blamed the United States for the attack.

Also, they rejected as baseless claims

that insurgents were hiding in the facility.

“So claiming that they were targeting [Taliban] fighters is not proven by the facts so this claim is ridiculous ... only patients inside the building were – as I said – patients and staff and they are the only wounded and casualties of this attack,” said MSF President Meinie Nicolai.

This comes after the United States’ commander of international forces in Afghanistan Gen. John Campbell said on Tuesday the airstrike on the hospital had been a mistake. (Tolonews)

(17) Clashes...

this to their benefit. But our operation is underway and we will finish this fighting soon,” a Kunduz police officer said.

Residents are however still paying the price for the ongoing battle. They face severe food and water shortages. “For Allah’s sake, it has been nine days that we have had no food and water,” a resident of Kunduz said.

The Kunduz battle has now entered its second week but despite the deployment of reinforcement troops the city has still not been cleared of insurgents. (Tolonews)

(18) ICRC ...

earlier on Tuesday said that humanitarian needs in the Afghan city of Kunduz are largely unknown at the moment due to lack of access and there are presently no humanitarian agencies left inside the city. (Xinhua)

(19) Responsible ...

those who have shown negligence in their duties would be punished.

Residents of Kunduz city have been trapped in the fighting between security forces and Taliban from the past 10 days.

Although, a specific number has not been announced yet but reports suggest that at least 300 people have been killed and wounded since the beginning of the attack. (KP)

(20) Taliban...

usual, only to realize that on this morning something was different. “Intense gunfire could be heard,” Sherzai says, and soldiers and tanks were deployed in the area.

“The radio station was located next to several government buildings,” she explains, and fighting was raging at a nearby police station.

. (RFE/RL)

(21) Houthis...

conditions, and so do we,” the letter added.

Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s General People’s Congress (GPC) party also accepted the plan. “An official source at the General People’s Congress reiterated the party’s fast position on ending hostilities and raising the blockade and on a peaceful solution to Yemen’s crisis,” it said in a statement.

The Saudi-led coalition and President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi view the Houthis as proxies for non-Arab Iran and regard Saleh as a spoiler trying to undermine a political accord that allowed him to step down following months of protests in 2011. (Reuters)

(22) Furious but...

coming in highlights that Turkey’s policies in Syria are not working,” said Jonathan Friedman, Turkey analyst at Stroz Friedberg, a risk consultancy.

“You’ve seen over time Russia and the U.S. taking stronger roles in the region. That constrains regional actors’ abilities to influence developments.” Turkey shares a 900 km (560 mile) border with Syria and has shouldered much of the humanitarian fall-out from the civil war, now spilling into a fifth year. It has kept an open border policy throughout the conflict, taking in more than 2.2 million refugees at a cost of \$7.6 billion and rising. (Reuters)

(23) U.S. Welcomes ...

Nov. 1 in a move, which Kiev described was a “threat” to a peace process in the area.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko welcomed the decision on the vote postponement, saying it paved the way to hold local elections in Lugansk and Donetsk in accordance with the Ukrainian law and under international observation. (Xinhua)

(24) China,...

including international organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic bodies to participate in and contribute to the establishment of African public health system.

China pledged that it would continue to provide scholarships and training courses to African public health professionals, both in China and in African countries, while African countries will support the recruitment process and ensure that qualified candidates are identified and trained. (Xinhua)