

(1) Taliban Leadership...

Mansour's message for the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha discussed resurrecting peace talks with Kabul.

Campbell said he thought 60 percent to 70 percent of the Taliban's members would ultimately be open to reconciliation.

The general told lawmakers earlier this week that he favored retaining a larger U.S. military presence in Afghanistan next year than envisioned in current plans, which calls for an embassy-based force by the end of 2016.

Campbell also said the United States has about 9,800 troops in Afghanistan. Of that number, 1,300 were tied to day-to-day training and advising missions with only 500 of those were outside the capital Kabul, he said. While declining to elaborate on his recommendations to President Barack Obama for next year, he told lawmakers a reduction in troop numbers to an embassy force would limit the ability to conduct train, advise and assist missions and eliminate counter-terror operations. Campbell said Afghan security forces had a number of shortcomings, including its limited air support capability. "Sir, if they (would have) had the A29- this summer, it would have been a game changer in some locations," Campbell said in response to a question from the committee. He added that the first five or six A29- planes would not be received until the end of the year. (Reuters)

(2) Russia Estimates...

[Islamic State, previously ISIS/ISIL, in Afghanistan] that train people from Central Asia and some regions of Russia. They speak Russian there."

He said instructors including Arabs, Pakistanis and even people with US and British citizenship are busy training militants in those camps.

"The rise of [Islamic State] in Afghanistan is a high-priority threat. Just think about it: [ISIS] showed up in Afghanistan for real just a year ago, and now it has 3,500 fighters plus supporters who may be recruited into the ranks of the militants," Kabulov added.

A Russian General Valery Gerasimov, who heads the Russian General Staff, said overall there are some 50,000 fighters belonging to more than 4,000 militant groups in Afghanistan. According to Gerasimov, Afghan Taliban is by far the strongest militant movement in the country, with some 40,000 fighters in their ranks.

However, Colonel General Igor Sergun, the head of the Main Intelligence Directorate, Russia's military intelligence agency, said Taliban's dominant position is being challenged by Islamic State, which sees Afghanistan as a recruiting ground, a source of income and a foothold for further expansion over Central Asia.

"ISIL [a former name for Islamic State, along with ISIS] uses the worsening of the situation in Afghanistan to strengthen its position," he said, adding that such development poses a real threat to Russia's security.

"We estimate that ISIL gets new troops by bribing field commanders of Taliban, the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan and other radical religious organizations operating on Afghan territory," Sergun said. This comes as the United Nations released a report late last month warning that the terror group is making inroads in Afghanistan with the number of sympathizers and followers growing across the country.

According to the report around 70 militants of the terror group are busy in forming the core of the group's branch in Afghanistan. The report further added that the group is recruiting followers in at least 25 provinces of Afghanistan with 10 percent of the sympathizers belonging to the Taliban group. (KP)

(3) Ghani, Obama ...

In addition, Obama said his country will take decisions regarding defense, support and more assistance to the Afghan people in the coming weeks.

Obama also called the head of the MSF on Wednesday and expressed his condolences. He apologized for the attack. (Tolonews)

(4) Int'l Community ...

has displaced some 120,000 people, as well as the increasing number of Afghans making their way to Europe.

UNHCR estimates that Afghans account for up to 14 percent of those who arrived by boat in Europe this year.

The main framework for solutions for the Afghan refugee problem is a strategy that would support voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration and provide assistance to host countries.

According to UNHCR, almost 54,000 refugees have returned to Afghanistan so far this year, joining millions of others who have returned home since 2002. In Afghanistan, one in every five inhabitants is a former Afghan refugee. UNHCR estimates that between 100,000 and 150,000 registered Afghans could voluntarily return from Pakistan and Iran during the course of 2016. (Xinhua)

(5) Uzbek, Turkmen ...

the construction of large hydropower plants on transboundary rivers, it is necessary to fully comply with the relevant UN conventions.

During the talks, the sides also discussed the issues related to raising the volume of trade turnover, increasing the number of joint enterprises and developing the cooperation between the businessmen.

Following the negotiations, Islam Karimov and Gurbanguly Berdimuhhammadov signed a joint declaration. Moreover, the governments, ministries and other structures of the two countries signed documents on further developing the relations in the spheres of economy, transport, customs, tourism, science and technologies, health CARE and sports.

The volume of trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is growing consistently - it has tripled over the last six years. The volume of trade turnover between the two countries stood at 413\$ million as of 2014 and 245\$ million in Jan.-Aug. 2015.

Uzbekistan exports vehicles, fertilizers, agricultural products, construction materials, electrical and mechanical equipment, metal products and services in various fields to Turkmenistan.

This is while Turkmenistan exports petroleum products, polymers of propylene and other chemical products to Uzbekistan. The economic potential of the two countries creates opportunities for further expanding the cooperation.

According to the intergovernmental agreement on mutual deliveries and the treaty on economic cooperation for -2013 2017 signed in 2012, consistent work to further diversify and increase trade volumes is carried out.

Transport communications are another priority area of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Roads and railways of the two countries are a well-integrated system and profitable transit complex for other countries as well. In this sense, an agreement to build a new Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman international transport corridor signed in 2011 has geostategic importance.

Both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are rich in hydrocarbon resources. Their export requires coordinated action. Close cooperation creates opportunities for diversification of energy industries and access to world markets for the two countries. Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline, which was commissioned in 2009 and increases its capacity, is a vivid example of this fact. (TNA)

(6) Afghanistan...

government forces," Kabulov quoted by local media said. Kabul further added that Russia delivers weaponry to Afghanistan and provides military training for Afghan officers.

This comes as Shakir Kargar, special envoy to President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, said earlier in April this year that negotiations regarding the purchase of Mi35-helicopters will begin in the near future.

In the meantime, the First Vice

President, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum has requested Moscow to provide military assistance to the Afghan security forces during his visit to Russia.

The Afghan national security forces are in critical need of air support amid deteriorating security situation across the country with the rampant insurgency activities by the Taliban militants.

The Afghan Air Force received the first six Armed MD530-s earlier this year with the NATO Train, Assist, Advise Command-Air and 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, saying that the armed MD-530s will increase the Afghan Air Force aerial fires capability.

However, the Afghan Air Force officials are saying that the helicopters have proved to be insufficient to meet their demands considering the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan and the effective range of the helicopters. Col. Qalandar Shah Qalandari of the Afghan Air Force said the helicopters cannot even reach areas where the Taliban normally operate and in summertime, the maximum altitude of the helicopters with a full load of fuel and ammunition is only 7,000 to 8,000 feet - meaning it cannot cross most of the mountain ranges that encircle Kabul, which is itself at an elevation of about 6,000 feet.

"It's unsafe to fly, the engine is too weak, the tail rotor is defective and it's not armored. If we go down after the enemy we're going to have enemy return fire, which we can't survive. If we go up higher, we can't visually target the enemy," Colonel Qalandari quoted by New York Times said. "Even the guns are no good." (KP)

(7) MSF Officials ...

include former chief of National Directorate of Security (NDS) Amrullah Saleh, former minister of education Ghulam Feroq Wardak, Fazel Karim Emaq, Ayoub Rafiqi and Abdullullah Mohammadi, the press release read. (Tolonews)

(8) Military Begin...

cleared. So far 13 armed Taliban insurgents have been arrested during the search operation, he continued. Meanwhile, residents voiced their concerns about the ongoing battle in their city.

They called on the government to accelerate their operations and clear the area of insurgents as soon as possible.

"See our house is totally destroyed. We have no food and no water. Everywhere you look are bullets," a resident of Kunduz said. He also said he has lost one of his family members in the ongoing battle.

The city has however not been completely cleared of insurgents, reports Amiry. The battle is still ongoing in some areas.

Insurgents have been reportedly pushed back to the outskirts of the city and Chawk-e-Kunduz, the main traffic circle, is under control of government forces.

The center of the city's is back to normal, with many shops open. (Tolonews)

(9) Withdrawal ...

for everyone, NATO headquarters makes no secret of this. "It did not take a very large force to capture the city, and the national security forces found themselves in a difficult situation. It's clear that they are unable to cope with challenges without external assistance." (TASS)

(10) MSF Rejects ...

in our facilities is absolutely forbidden and not tolerated," said Stokes adding that all patients and visitors are required to hand their weapons in before entering their facilities. They both called Saturday's attack a grave violation of international law and said no medical institution should be targeted and that those responsible should be held accountable.

Stokes said MSF is still however providing medical care in Kunduz city despite their hospital having been destroyed. He said however, that necessary work was being done to rebuild the facility.

"Our cooperation with the Afghan government will continue and we will continue to treat patients but we want assurances that hospitals will be protected," he said.

He went on to say that all parties involved in the war need to respect the sanctity of medical facilities.

MSF however called on organizations to help with humanitarian aid to Kunduz and said that they are trying to provide facilities for expectant mothers in the city.

In addition, they called on the Afghan government to also identify those responsible for the attack.

Stokes said: "The Afghan government has given the assurance that such incidents will not be repeated."

But "coalition forces need to provide answers and ensure such mistakes are never repeated," he added.

He said: "A hospital is a place of safety, not carnage."

They did however admit that there were patients in the hospital that were from both sides of the war but made it clear that MSF does not discriminate against anyone and that all patients are treated equally.

The airstrike in the early hours of the morning Saturday killed 22 people, including 12 MSF staff members. MSF officials have blamed the United States, demanding an independent investigation into the incident.

United States President Barack Obama in a phone call on Wednesday apologized to MSF chief Joanne Liu for the incident. But Liu, who condemned the airstrike as a war crime, made it clear the organization wants an independent investigation and also said the strike was in violation of international laws.

In addition, U.S defense secretary Ashton Carter expressed his deep condolences and sympathy to the Afghan families who lost their loved ones and said those responsible will be accountable. (Tolonews)

(11) Afghanistan ...

cooperation in economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization currently has six full members -- China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan are six observer states, and SCO's dialogue partners include Sri Lanka and Turkey.

The Organization's six full members account for %60 of the land mass of Eurasia and its population is a quarter of the world's population. With observer states included, its affiliates account for about half of the world's population. (Asia-Plus)

(12) Outsiders Plus...

to retake the city although clashes are ongoing. The siege of Kunduz was a major victory for the Taliban - albeit a short-lived one - after being overthrown by the US-led coalition in 2001. (Tolonews)

(13) Sharif to Brief ...

implications on Pakistan. "Internal security situation was reviewed during the meeting," a PM House statement said.

The source said the army chief briefed the premier regarding a Corps Commanders meeting held at the military's General Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Thursday.

Read: Shutting the door: Army wants better managed Afghan border

Days after the top US military commander in Afghanistan said that the military operation by the Pakistan Army in the tribal border areas had forced militants across the Durand Line, military commanders discussed ways to plug the porous border.

"External security situation was comprehensively discussed with particular emphasis on the situation in Afghanistan and border management issues on Pak-Afghan border," an ISPR statement said. (Agencies)

(14) Afghan Sikhs,...

fled the country during the series of conflicts that have persisted over the past 40 years. Many of them fled to India or Europe but still cling to a hope of returning. The population of the Hindu and Sikh minorities has dwindled in Afghanistan since the invasion of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, which spilled over into a series of civil wars that often took on sectarian dimensions.

There were once 50,000 Hindus

and Sikhs families living in Afghanistan; the number has now dwindled to a few thousand.

At a Hindu temple in eastern Nangarhar province, a man ushered Anadolu Agency's reporter into a corner to whisper: "please interview me, then I can seek asylum in the U.K. or any other European country." (Agencies)

(15) Spanish, German ...

in political and economic terms and analyzed the main topics of the international agenda.

Apart from the Syrian war they also talked about the migration crisis occurring in Europe, the Ukrainian war and the situation in Libya. (Xinhua)

(16) Fifth FMIC...

of Afghanistan's Call to Action and vital to improving maternal and child health care services," said Mr Jean-Michel Marlaud, Ambassador of France to Afghanistan and he described Agence Française de Développement support to the RMNCH agenda.

Mrs Nurjehan Mawani, Diplomatic Representative, Aga Khan Development Network explained how FMIC's initiatives to improve healthcare in Afghanistan have ranged from "clinical services to medical education, from improving access to quality health services to technical support to upgrading nursing education." In addition, FMIC will be expanding its services to cover maternal health once the new Women's Wing opens next year.

The first day also heard discussions on public health and how to continue to promote public-private partnerships as a strategy in bringing quality health services to Afghanistan. In some provinces, such partnerships have already been successful: the Afghanistan Health and Nutrition survey, conducted in select districts and provinces, shows a steady decline in fertility with promising child mortality indicators in Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan and Bamyan provinces.

The participants also discussed the importance of improving maternal health literacy among mothers through antenatal education and the need for increased investment in health system to facilitate implementation of cost effective solution for mother and child healthcare.

The conference was also attended by Mr Mir Ahmad Joyenda, Member of Provisional Operating Committee FMIC, representatives from ministries, embassies, AKDN agencies, national and international NGOs, civil society, healthcare providers around Afghanistan and media. (PR)

(17) Wiki Leaks ...

investigation into the deadly US airstrike to determine whether the attack should be regarded as a war crime.

Such an investigation should gather evidence from the US, NATO and Afghanistan, as well as testimonies of the Kunduz hospital staff and patients, they said.

Depending on the findings, Doctors Without Borders would consider whether to file charges against Washington for loss of life and partial destruction of the hospital in Kunduz. (AFP)

(18) Pentagon ...

of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the change publicly.

Under the new approach, the U.S. would provide communications gear, for example, to enable established rebel groups to coordinate U.S. airstrikes in support of their ground operation, the officials said. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because details of the shift in approach had not yet been announced.

The original program was beset with a series of embarrassing setbacks. The first group of trainees largely disbanded soon after they were sent into combat; some were captured or killed, while others fled. A second class yielded only a small number of new fighters, drawing criticism from U.S. lawmakers who condemned the program as a joke and a failure. A Syrian rebel commander leading the trainees last week handed over a half-dozen vehicles to extremist militants. (AP)

(19) Say No to...

baker in Kabul. Another baker said: "It is better to use paper

and cotton bags or newspapers for carrying bread and other purposes but plastic bags are not good as they can lead to CANCER among people."

He called on Kabul residents to use cotton bags and make them in their houses.

Kabul residents also praised the initiative by the activists, saying that this trend should be extended all over the city.

Analysts say that plastic bags and dishes can transfer at least 118 diseases. (Tolonews)

(20) US to...

Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban and disrupt terrorist networks. Originally the US held such prisoners in sites in Afghanistan, but needed a facility to detain them where they could be interrogated. (ATN)

(21) Kunduz ...

resident named Naqibullah said. A five-year-old boy told of how scared he had been. "I remember the first day when there were bombs going off everywhere," the child named Samiullah said.

Kunduz city fell to the Taliban last Monday after scores of insurgents, equipped with light and heavy weapons, launched a well-planned attack on the city.

The security forces have eventually been able to clear parts of the city from the Taliban, pushing the insurgents to the outskirts of the city.

According to rough statistics, nearly 6,000 families had been left homeless, leaving them to find shelter in the neighboring provinces of Takhar and Baghlan. (Tolonews)

(22) Aid Workers,...

throughout northeastern Afghanistan, but the MSF hospital was the only one that could handle major war injuries. And yet at least for now it has closed down."

Kugelman said he feared that with the Taliban emboldened by its brief seizure of Kunduz, it will step up its offensives in surrounding districts and result in more civilian casualties.

Local Afghan charities will need to take on an even greater burden than they already bear, with the very real threat of diminished international humanitarian assistance, he added.

MSF, which has been in Afghanistan since 1980, pulled out for a period after five staff were killed in 2004. It has already shut down its hospital's operations in Kunduz and has given no indication of when it might reopen. (CNN)

(23) US to Send...

temporarily stage one armored brigade combat team's vehicles and associated equipment in countries in Central and Eastern Europe, with elements of this equipment be moved around the region for training and exercises. (Xinhua)

(24) Guterres to...

Organization for Migration (IOM), up to some 7,000 migrants and refugees have been arriving every day on Greek islands in the past week, almost double the number in last month.

IOM indicated that this sharp increase may be attributed to the expected deterioration of weather conditions in the Mediterranean, making boat crossings from neighboring Turkey particularly dangerous. (Xinhua)

(25) EU Launches...

EBRD Small Business Support Team, said the EBRD is currently offering unique support to SMEs by helping them access a combined range of advisory services and finance.

The program is part of an ongoing commitment from the EBRD and the EU to supporting SME development in Albania, she said.

The EBRD so far has invested almost 1 billion euros (1.1 billion dollars) in some 70 projects in various sectors of Albania's economy. (Xinhua)

(26) Resolving...

Rafiq Rajwana and Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

The power plant will be commissioned jointly by Harben Electric International of China and American General Electric at a cost of 55 billion rupees. (Agencies)

(27) State Duty...

tional certification comparable to a notarization in domestic law, and normally supplements a local notarization of the document. (Asia-Plus)