

Quote of the Day

Genius begins great works; labor alone finishes them.

Joseph Joubert

Obama is Reconsidering Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan

WASHINGTON - President Obama is reportedly rethinking the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan because of the recent gains made by the Taliban in that country.

The New York Times, quoting senior officials, reports Obama appears to be willing to retain a military force strong enough to tackle Taliban and al-Qaeda. The president had wanted to withdraw the remaining 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the time he leaves office next year, and, in fact, most combat troops left the country last year.

The apparent White House rethink has been prompted by a confluence of factors: The Taliban's capture of Kunduz late last month, the group's biggest prize since it was removed from power by the U.S.-led invasion in 2001;



the fact the militants are more spread out across Afghanistan than at any point since 2001; the continued presence of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan's mountains; and inroads being made by the Islamic State, a group whose tactics and brutality the

world is becoming increasingly familiar with in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere.

[A]t the very least, those pushing for an expanded mission after 2017 would like to see the United States and its NATO allies maintain at least two or three bases from

which drones could be flown and Special Operations Forces could readily strike at militants. The Central Intelligence Agency also wants a larger presence to help protect its assets in Afghanistan. For now, the ...*(More on P4)...*(1)

Ghani Vows to Boost Agricultural Sector



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday opened the 15th exhibition of agricultural products in Badam Bagh area in Kabul, where he said despite being an agricultural country, Afghanistan imports over \$3 billion USD in fresh produce and dairy products every year. He said the ministries of Finance and Agriculture must in their next 100-day plan work at removing marketing obstacles to boost the sale of local

products. Ghani said no attention has been paid to improve the agriculture sector in the past few years. He said the reasons for the huge import demand was because of land grabbing, lack of support to farmers, lack of farming facilities and the lack of fertilized seeds. "Currently, we import agricultural and dairy products worth \$3 billion annually. We will work at improving the quality of ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

Taliban Threaten Media to Hide Their Crimes: MPs



KABUL - MPs in the Wolesi Jirga, (Lower House of Parliament) on Wednesday criticized the Taliban's threat against TOLO TV and 1TV and said the insurgent group's move is an attempt to stop the two channels from reporting on the group's crimes committed around the country.

Following mounting criticism by the Afghan gov-

ernment and the international community over the Taliban's anti-media move, lawmakers on Wednesday said any attack on the media would constitute a war crime.

The Taliban on Monday issued strong threats against TOLO TV and 1TV and put these two most-watched channels on their hit list. In ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

EU Lashes Nations for Falling Short on Refugee Pledges

BRUSSELS - The European Union lashed out at member countries for failing to come up with funds and experts they promised to help cope with the refugee emergency, with the crisis set to take center stage at Thursday's summit of EU leaders.

The European Commission complained Wednesday that only three of 28 nations have pledged a total of just 12 million euros (\$13.7 million) to a fund to help African nations better manage their borders. The pot is meant to total 1.8 billion euros (about \$2 billion) over two years.

The EU's border agency and asylum office have appealed for a total of around 1,000 officers to help fingerprint people and decide whether they are eligible for asylum. So far, about a dozen of the 28 EU nations have offered around 130 personnel. "Words need to be matched with action," ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

UN Official Warns of Alarming Humanitarian Situation

KABUL - The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned Tuesday of a deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and appealed to the international community for more help. The UN's humanitarian affairs operational director, John Ging, expressed these statements after his visit to



Afghanistan in the wake of an attack on the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) hospital in Kunduz earlier this month which left 22 people dead, including 12 MSF staff members.

He called for more humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan to address the urgent problem. His call came after thousands ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

Parliament Rejects Decree to Impose 10% Tax on Mobile Phone Users

KABUL - The lawmakers in the Lower House of the Parliament - Wolesi Jirga rejected a legislative decree by the Presidential Palace to charge 10 per cent tax on mobile users. The decree was unani-

mously rejected by the lawmakers during their session this morning. The subscribers of the telecom companies started paying 10 per cent tax on every top-up with effect from last month.

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) officials said the telecommunication tax was imposed in a bid to increase the government revenue. According to officials the government ...*(More on P4)...*(6)

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