

(1) UN Supports...

adequate security arrangements to safeguard the electoral process and appealed to the Afghan people to exercise their right to vote. (Xinhua)

(2) Trump Fires ...

Bolton responded in a tweet of his own that he offered to resign Monday "and President Trump said, 'Let's talk about it tomorrow.'"

Trump explained he had "disagreed strongly" with many of Bolton's suggestions as national security adviser, "as did others in his administration."

According to reports, Bolton had been at odds with Trump on some foreign policy issues, especially on the Afghanistan peace process and Iran. (Pajhwok)

(3) India Calls ...

Al Qaeda and its proscribed affiliates, including the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, must be addressed.

"Having been victims of terrorism, we understand and empathise with our Afghan friends the suffering and pain they are undergoing" he said.

"Amidst the clouds of uncertainty of the present, we should not forget the precious gains that the Afghan people have made in the last 18 years," the envoy said.

The Afghan people have strengthened and embraced democracy; established a constitutional order; promoted the welfare and rights of minorities and youth; built a strong and increasingly capable security force; and forged deeper regional links.

All of this, they have done so, while confronting the most brutal threats posed by terrorism.

Even in the most difficult times, the famed Afghan resilience and strength of character shines through in their homes, schools, colleges, theatres, markets, factories, and indeed on their sports grounds.

Lest anyone doubt this, Afghan cricketers recorded, just less than 48 hours ago, their second victory in their cricket test match that they have played thus far. Such a feat was last accomplished by any other country way back in the 19th century.

This is only one instance, symbolic of the many gains that the Afghan people has made in recent times. Other areas include the remarkable reclamation by Afghanistan's women of their rightful place in all areas of their society. These hard-won achievements need to be nurtured, not nullified, the envoy said. Akbaruddin said that India has worked with commitment to support the Afghan people through human resource development, including a recent capacity building program for officials from Afghan electoral bodies. This is in addition to support for infrastructure development, trade and investment, as well as enhancing connectivity.

"We believe that there is hope on the horizon. We remain willing to work with all countries in the region and beyond, keeping Afghanistan's sovereignty and its ownership of the peace process at the forefront," he said.

"We hope that the international community, through this Council and its various instruments, can finally do right by the people of Afghanistan and support an inclusive peace which will ensure that the destiny of the country will be steered by the Afghan people," he said. (Pajhwok)

(4) India's Work ...

Iran, India and Afghanistan had signed a trilateral agreement, to develop Chabahar, in May 2016 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's visits to Tehran. (Tolo news)

(5) China Calls for ...

all in Kabul, are of serious concern," he said, urging parties to the conflict to reduce violence and civilian casualties. He said the rising number of civilian killings during search operations and airstrikes is also of concern, calling for the parties to review the way they conducted their operations to protect civilians and minimise harm. (Pajhwok)

(6) Sensitive...

Jawzjan, Sar-i-Pul, Samangan, Takhar, Badakhshan, Paktika, Bamyan, Ghor, Daikundi, Maidan Wardak and Ghazni provinces.

He added similar items were being packed and dispatched to Paktia and Khost provinces and the materials would be reached there today (Wednesday).

He assured the materials would be transferred to the rest of provinces within the next two days.

He called the electoral materials delivery successful and said the process was underway normally and there were no major problems in this regard so far.

Referring to insecurity, Sadat said insecurity was a major threat to the Sept. 28 presidential poll.

"Unfortunately, security forces are fighting with Taliban militants in some provinces currently and we are worried about this situation as sensitive and non-sensitive materials should reach provinces in time," he said. (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghanistan Beat...

night. Oman is second in the group with one win and will play its second match.

India with one loss and a draw is in 4th position while Bangladesh played two matches and lost both of them.

Afghanistan will play its next match against Oman on October 10. (Tolo news)

(8) Govt Asked ...

Today, acting Interior Minister Massoud Andarabi, Kabul police chief Brig. Gen. Syed Mohammad Roshandil and the Kabul intelligence chief visited the family of the slain army officer and met with local tribal elders.

The elders of Maidan Wardak province urged the security officials to arrest the killers of the army officer and punish them according to the law.

Tribal elder Syed Rahim Sattar told the acting interior minister: "We have decided not to bury the deceased until the president meets them and the killers are punished."

State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Farooq Wardak, Wolesi Jirga member from Kabul Haji Khan Mohammad Wardak asked the interior minister to ensure no such incident happen next time.

Andarabi said they visited the martyr's family on the directives of the president and the killers would be arrested and punished. (Pajhwok)

(9) US Reaffirm Support...

Research and Trends Analysis Branch, in continuing to draw the attention of Member States to this issue. We hope that the international community can expand efforts to address the drug problem."

The US envoy reiterated deepest sympathies and condolences to the loved ones of those killed in the terrorist attack on a wedding hall in Kabul committed by ISIS-Khorasan on August 17.

"We also convey our sympathies to the victims of recent Taliban attacks in Kabul, Kunduz, and across Afghanistan, including attacks that claimed the lives of two US service members, a Romanian service member, and a Romanian diplomat."

Their sacrifices remind us of the importance of achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan. Far too many Afghans, members of international security forces, foreign diplomats and others have lost their lives to indiscriminate violence.

On the peace process, the remarks by President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo over the weekend and yesterday speak for themselves. I have nothing to add to them at this time.

The United States commended the continued hard work of UNAMA and its staff in supporting the people of Afghanistan.

Referring to negotiation on a new UNAMA mandate, the US envoy said: "We must ensure the resolution provides UNAMA clear, specific guidance to do its critical work, particularly during this pivotal period in Afghanistan's history."

"We strongly believe this mandate is too important at this moment to have one Security Council member deny consensus for reasons having nothing to do with UNAMA. All of us must display discipline and the political will to focus the mandate on the core issues that will empower UNAMA to support the government and people of Afghanistan," he said.

The US envoy expressed his appreciation to the UN and other international partners for their support in strengthening the legitimacy of Afghanistan's electoral process, and for supporting Afghanistan's peace process. (Pajhwok)

(10) US Won't...

also champions greater sovereignty for the EU.

Key members of the bloc are increasingly unhappy about the way the Trump administration handles a variety of issues, from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to dealing with China. Merkel, on her part, doesn't seem to have established a strong personal bond with the US president. (RT)

(11) Hong Kong...

two systems" formula that guarantees freedoms not enjoyed on the mainland, including an independent legal system, triggering the anger over the extradition bill.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam has said she will withdraw the bill but many Hong Kong residents fear Beijing is steadily eroding the autonomy of the Asian financial hub.

China denies meddling and has accused the United States, Britain and others of fomenting the unrest.

"We don't even need to do a fact check to know that this is fake news," said one protester, Michael, 24, referring to the China Daily post. "The state media doesn't care about its credibility. Whenever something they claimed to have heard on WhatsApp or friends' friends, they will spread it right away." The protesters called off action on Wednesday.

"In solidarity against terrorism, all forms of protest in Hong Kong will be suspended on Sept. 11, apart from potential singing and chanting," they said in a statement.

The China Daily report was worrying, said another protester, Karen, 23. "When they try to frame the whole protest with those words, it alarms me," she said. "They are predicting rather than reporting. I think people calling it off today is a nice move." (Reuters)

(12) Russia Vows...

same, Ryabkov added.

Turning to the resignation of the U.S. Security Advisor John Bolton, Ryabkov said Russia "has no illusions regarding possible positive changes in the bilateral relations". (Anadolu Agency)

(13) U.N. Investigators...

coalition's Al-Jazeera Storm operation resulted in a high number of civilian casualties, including in a series of strikes on Jan 3 in Sha'fah, south of Hajin, that killed 16 civilians including 12 children, the U.N. report said. (Reuters)

(14) Iran Says U.S...

pact that curbed Iran's atomic energy activities in exchange for major sanctions relief. Trump reimposed a near-total embargo on the Iranian economy last year and endorsed a "maximum pressure" campaign to isolate Iran's leadership and force it to negotiate a stricter bargain.

The administration wants Iran to give up its ballistic missile program and agree to more stringent restrictions on its nuclear program. Iran has responded by restarting some nuclear activities prohibited under the agreement, a strategy some analysts say is aimed at building leverage ahead of any potential talks.

Tehran's envoy to the United Nations, however, said Bolton's removal would not change Iran's opposition to negotiations with the United States as long as economic sanctions are in place. His comments were carried by official media Wednesday.

"Our position has nothing to do with changes in the U.S. administration" despite Bolton's reputation as a "hard-liner," Majid Takht Ravanchi said, adding that it was "too early to tell" what the impact of his removal would be.

Another senior official and secretary of Iran's Expediency Council, Mohsen Rezaei, accused Trump of "sacrificing Bolton" for talks with Iran but said Tehran would not be "deceived" by the move, the Mehr News Agency reported. (Washington Post)

(15) Democratic Debate...

candidates, the California senator Kamala Harris and South Bend mayor Pete Buttigieg are looking to recreate the momentum that propelled their candidacies earlier in the race. Further down the run, candidates such as the Minnesota senator Amy Klobuchar, the New Jersey senator Cory Booker, former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke, former housing secretary Julián Castro and the only non-politician, tech entrepreneur Andrew Yang, need a breakout moment that will jumpstart their lagging campaigns. But a strong debate performance must have a second act, said Mo Elleithe, a former spokesman of the Democratic National Committee who is now the executive director of Georgetown University's Institute of Politics and Public Service.

"What do you do the next day or the next week after the debate?" Elleithe said. "These debates don't tend to have winners. They have moments that a candidate can use as a springboard."

Judy Downs, the executive director of the Polk County Democrats in Iowa, said voters are still undecided between

the many Democrats running for the White House and the debate could help narrow their choice.

"Voters are looking for authenticity," she said. "A candidate who can shake off their pre-written notes, talking points and stump speech - a candidate who seems like they're going off script to address issues with the same sense of urgency and energy that we feel here on the ground in Iowa as Democrats - I think that would really resonate."

Electability - a fraught and elusive measure of the candidate most likely to be successful in a general election - is front of mind for many voters.

Biden has portrayed himself as the strongest choice against Donald Trump, pointing to polling that shows him ahead of the president in head-to-head match-ups. Polling suggests Democrats agree. (The Guardian)

(16) Former Indonesian...

President Joko Widodo expressed deep condolences, and the government called for a period of national mourning until Saturday.

Habibie was tapped to lead Indonesia by Suharto as the military dictator's -32 year hold on power crumbled in May 1998 during a student uprising and a devastating economic crash. It ended after only 16 months in October 1999 when he withdrew from contention in presidential elections.

An engineer educated in Indonesia, the Netherlands and Germany, Habibie spent nearly two decades working for German aircraft maker Messerschmitt-Boelkow-Blohm, before returning to Indonesia in 1974 to help lead Suharto's campaign to industrialize the economy. As president, Habibie apologized for past human rights abuses and outlined an eight-point reform program "to build a just, open and democratic society."

He ordered the release of political prisoners, dismantled restrictions on the press and reformed politics to allow for free elections.

He lifted a three-decade-old ban on the speaking and teaching of Mandarin as part of an easing of discriminatory policies against ethnic Chinese that was instituted by Suharto after his anti-communist pogroms of 66-1965.

Responding to international criticism of Indonesia's occupation of Portugal's former colony of East Timor, Habibie surprised Indonesians by announcing in January 1999 a plan to hold a referendum under U.N. supervision on self-determination, offering a choice between special autonomy and independence.

Indonesian militias deployed terror tactics to intimidate people into voting for continued union, but East Timorese voted overwhelmingly to split from Indonesia.

In 2017, the young democracy held presidential and parliamentary elections that were the first without U.N. supervision since peacekeepers left in 2012.

Despite his reforms, Habibie was unable to master the political tumult unleashed by the student uprising.

He described the bloody riots that ended Suharto's dictatorship as "barbaric," further alienating students who feared he was betraying their democratic revolution and staged violent protests against his presidency. A failure to prosecute a longtime friend over allegations of massive corruption undermined his campaign to stay in power. On Oct. 1999 '20, Habibie withdrew from upcoming presidential elections. (The Modesto Bee)

(17) Turkish Drones...

Bayraktar, who is married to the younger of the president's two daughters. Hifter's forces have already shot down several Turkish-supplied drones, and the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord is said to have ordered more drones from Baykar. Unmanned aerial vehicles are increasingly gaining prominence in the Libyan conflict as the air forces of the warring sides are limited to several dozen warplanes, which are old and lack adequate flight crews. The growing role of drones has led to a marked increase in mutual attacks on airports.

In the past several years, Hifter's forces were already known to have used Chinese-made Wing Loong drones, supplied by the UAE. The drones, stationed at the al-Khadim base in eastern Libya, were employed in the Libyan National Army's onslaught on Tripoli, which began in early April, but this time they have been confronted by the Bayraktars.

The first Turkish-made drones are believed to have reached Tripoli on May 18. Along with four drones, the deployment reportedly included two control stations and a number of

operators. At the time, the buzz around the shipment was more about the 40 armored vehicles it included. The vehicles - the Kirpi and Vural models manufactured by the Turkish company BMC - were part of a cargo that a Moldova-registered ship brought to Tripoli from Turkey's Black Sea port of Samsun.

Turkish drone involvement in the fighting in Libya first came under the spotlight June 1 as the Libyan National Army announced the downing of a Turkish drone that was bombing targets in Gharyan, a town south of Tripoli. On June 6, Hifter's forces claimed to have destroyed two Bayraktar TB2s and wounded two Turkish operators in a strike on the Mitiga airport outside Tripoli. Another Turkish drone was destroyed at the same airport June 30.

Fayez al-Sarraj, the prime minister of the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord, received assurances of continued Turkish support as he met with Erdogan in Istanbul on July 5. Soon reports emerged that on the same day an Ilyushin I176- aircraft, operated by the Ukrainian company SkyAviaTrans, had begun shuttling between Ankara and Tripoli for four days in a row. The plane allegedly transported eight TB2s, some of which were deployed in Tripoli and some in Misrata. A spike in airfield attacks followed the reported shipment.

On July 25, two Ilyushin I176-TD transport planes belonging to the Ukrainian company Europe Air were destroyed at the Libyan National Army-controlled al-Jufra airbase in bombing raids involving Turkish drones. On Aug. 6, Hifter's forces, using a UAE-supplied drone, hit an Ilyushin I176TD belonging to SkyAviaTrans at the Misrata airport. The plane, which had just arrived from Ankara, was said to be laden with ammunition.

Then Hifter's forces lost a Wing Loong, which was downed by the Bayraktars' signal jamming systems while targeting the Misrata Air College. Late on Aug. 18, the Libyan National Army announced it had conducted 11 air raids on a military facility at the Misrata Air College housing the Bayraktars. (Al-Monitor)

(18) Erdogan Plays...

particularly from Istanbul. Unregistered Syrians were given until Aug. 20 to leave the city. The Interior Ministry quietly announced that the deadline was extended until Oct. 30 and that Turkey had recalibrated its refugee policies. Almost all restrictions were relaxed. The harsh deportation policy is gone and the new guidelines are much more flexible.

The Turkish public is now largely adamantly anti-Syrian, and one of the main reasons it supports the "safe zone" is the oft-repeated goal of Syrian refugees leaving Turkey for the area. So why did the government abruptly soften its refugee policy? What happened in a month?

Al-Monitor spoke with senior AKP officials who are close to the palace about the change. They referred to a "fine tuning" rather than a change in policy and named three key factors in the decision.

First, there was a strong Islamist reaction to the public roundup and deportation of Syrian refugees. As Erdogan's former allies become his potential challengers, Erdogan is feeling pressure from the shrinking number of Islamists still loyal to him. In the last election, although the AKP won the cities with high numbers of religiously motivated voters, it lost a significant number of votes in each of them. And in the June 23 Istanbul re-election, the AKP's most devout districts voted for the opposition.

The Metropoll polling agency's August 2019 report put Erdogan's approval rating at %44, a %10 decrease in one year.

Several Islamist nongovernmental organizations, including Humanitarian Relief Foundation, the Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyane) and religious orders such as the Menzil group have been heavily involved in Syria. Prominent Islamists have called Syrian refugees "God's blessings." Chasing, handcuffing and deporting Muslim refugees is seen as un-Islamic. Indeed, Erdogan started his "we will be forced to open the gates" speech on by saying, "We have been blessed to be ansar but we could have been muhajir as well," a reference to the local inhabitants of Medina who took the Prophet Muhammed and his followers into their homes and protected them. Welcoming Muslim immigrants (muhajir) in distress is seen as a duty in Islam. Deportation of Syrians to war zones is seen as a potential threat that could end the AKP's raison d'etre. (Al-Monitor)