

(1) Insecurity...

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan," he said.

This comes as conflicts have increased in the northern provinces of Kunduz, Takhar and Baghlan, the western provinces of Badghis and Farah as well as some other provinces.

The conflicts closed Kabul-Baghlan and Baghlan-Balkh highways for almost two weeks. The highways were reopened to traffic on Thursday. (Tolo news)

(2) Rand Paul ...

with CNN's Brianna Keilar on "CNN Right Now." Paul said the two "hate President Trump's foreign policy (and) they want to stay in Afghanistan forever," and cited the former vice president's tense conversation about Trump's foreign policy with Vice President Mike Pence earlier this year.

The spat between the two prominent Republican lawmakers comes as Washington continues to reel over the sudden ousting of John Bolton, Trump's third national security adviser who often clashed with the President over foreign policy matters. Bolton, who also served under former President George W. Bush, was widely viewed as a hawkish member of Trump's Cabinet, and the feud between the two members of Congress is reflective of the contrasting opinions on foreign policy within the GOP.

The two continued to feud on Twitter Thursday in a series of ad-hominem attacks after the senator suggested that Cheney "might just be mad still about when Candidate Trump shredded your Dad's failed foreign policy and endless wars" during a 2016 Republican primary debate.

"Weird. I don't see you on stage here, @RandPaul. Oh, right. My bad - you had already lost," Cheney replied, referring to Paul's unsuccessful presidential bid three years ago.

Bolton's departure comes as Trump is discussing a drawdown of forces in Afghanistan, and he recently scrapped plans to host the Taliban at Camp David for peace talks, which Bolton opposed. A senior administration official told CNN that Trump had been getting irritated with Bolton for his statements on Afghanistan, as well as other foreign policy areas. (CNN)

(3) US House Panel ...

Democrat-led committees in the House. "We are not going to just sit back and be quiet. We will make a lot of noise about it," Engel had told reporters earlier in the week.

The subpoena demands Khalilzad appear before the committee on the morning of September 19.

The State Department did not immediately comment on the House panel's move. Talks are 'dead'

The subpoena follows Trump's abrupt move on Sunday to cancel secret meetings with the Taliban and Afghan president at Camp David outside Washington, DC. Trump cited a Taliban attack in Kabul that killed at least 12, including a US soldier. He later declared the US-Taliban talks "dead".

A Taliban spokesman recently told Al Jazeera in Doha, Qatar, that Trump's cancellation of the negotiations had surprised Taliban leaders.

"It was astonishing for us because we had already concluded the peace agreement with the American negotiating team," Suhail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman, said.

Khalilzad was appointed by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as special representative for Afghanistan in September 2018. He has held nine rounds of talks - which are aimed at ending the 18 years of war in Afghanistan - with Taliban leaders before reaching a framework agreement in principle earlier this month.

Following Trump's announcement last weekend, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's office said peace would only be possible if the Taliban stopped launching attacks and held direct talks with the government.

"Real peace will come when the Taliban agree to a ceasefire," it said.

Meanwhile, in contrast with the Democrat-led House panel, James Risch, chairman of the Republican-led Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Khalilzad and other State Department officials have kept his panel well informed on the talks. "Most people on the committee have good access to Khalilzad and the other people that are involved in that," Risch told Al Jazeera. "They've done well both at the State Department and through the White House in keeping us up to date as to where they were." (Aljazeera)

(4) Mobib Pledges ...

Health Minister Ferozuddin Feroz, Agriculture Minister Naseer Ahmand Durrani and State Minister for Natural Disaster Najib Agha Fahim accompanied Mobih on the trip and informed the residents about health and uplift projects. (Pajh-

wok)

(5) US Hitting ...

few days after Mr. Trump called off the talks with the militant group.

The envoys who addressed the United Nations Security Council reiterated that the only solution to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan is a political settlement. (Tolo news)

(6) Ready to ...

friends to come and hear my plan and implement it. Neither there is a need for your ground forces nor other resources. Come and test us for six months. I don't make this claim without any calculation," Mr. Dostum said as the embattled Afghan security forces are tackling a rising Taliban insurgency in multiple fronts in the north.

Mr. Dostum who believes that the US is facing a deadlock in the war with the Taliban suggested that any troop withdrawal from the country should be carried out in a 'dignified' way.

"We will tackle the Taliban. We have the ability to defeat the Taliban on condition that the NATO, US, and president of Afghanistan trust us. We are not going to disintegrate the north," Mr. Dostum said. "We will not create militias. We will help the US as we did in 2001 to get out of this deadlock so that it can leave Afghanistan in a dignified way and victorious."

Mr. Dostum has persistently criticized President Ashraf Ghani for not hearing his military plan to defeat the Taliban. (Tolo news)

(7) Afghan Forces...

statement added.

The house, which was rented by the two Daesh members, was rented where the suspects were planning terrorist attacks in Kabul and were making suicide vests, according to the statement.

Local residents said the house was rented by the two suspects two months ago.

The statement said that a large number of weapons was seized during the operation.

Sources said that at least five members of the Afghan forces were killed and wounded in the operation.

The NDS in the statement calls on the people to cooperate with the security forces in recognition of suspects when they see that they are residing to their areas. (Tolo news)

(8) NATO Committed ...

and it has to be a credible deal, meaning that we have to believe that the deal actually delivers peace, stability and that we can preserve the main achievements we have made in Afghanistan, making sure that Afghanistan doesn't once again become a safe haven for international terrorists," Stoltenberg added.

"We also do whatever we can to preserve the rights of women, human rights in Afghanistan, where we've seen a lot of progress over the last years, not least supported by the presence of NATO troops," he believed.

Referring to the resumption of talks with Taliban, he says it is too early to say when talks can again start, but, again, the aim is to have a peaceful solution. So, at the end of the day, there has to be talks again to find a negotiated solution. "But we stay committed to our military presence in Afghanistan, to make that possible, to create the conditions for peace," he pledged. (Pajhwok)

(9) Silence on...

the IECC show Ghani used government resources such as buildings, equipment and vehicles during his electioneering. Additionally, government servants also attended the gatherings he addressed.

Abdullah's promise to create the posts of prime minister and third vice-president was also dubbed as an offence by IECC.

None of the candidates has so far declared their assets. Election oversight institutes, during a conference on July 4, accused the runners of launching campaigns before schedule.

In one of his speeches, Abdullah pointed to Ghani's mistake in reading a poem of Maulana Jalaluddin Mohammad Rumi and said: "Now we add poets (to our discussions); they now introduce themselves as heirs of Maulana and Bedil. It is plain disrespect to the towering literary personalities when their poems are recited in such a way."

Pointing to the previous presidential election results, which the CEO did not accept and were protested by his supporters, Ghani asked his competitors not to stir the streets or reject the results if his team won again.

Portraits of some candidates have been torn in some parts of the country.

Interference by candidates and their supporters in electioneering of rivals, damaging posters, early or late (beyond deadline) electioneering and participation of government workers in such gatherings are against the law.

Under the regulations, candidates, po-

litical parties and coalitions cannot use public assets and properties during their campaigns unless they are provided to all runners by the institutions concerned. Consequences:

Experts and election oversight institutes say that ignoring the violations would harm the legitimacy of the vote and the results might be unacceptable to some.

Mohammad Yousuf Rashid, head of the Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FFEFA), said the legitimacy of the ballot would be questioned if violations are ignored and the relevant law not applied to all candidates. The IEC should also exercise its authority to check violations.

Gul Rahman Qazi, a legal expert, also stressed a strong response to such violations and said: "The continuation of this situation will lead to a crisis over election results."

He said Afghanistan had a long history of electoral offences. The violations committed would question the legitimacy of the polls, he feared.

Qazi believed the ground had not been paved for free, fair and credible election. He accused the electoral commissions of incompetency in implementing the law.

Abdul Subhan Misbah, deputy head of the Afghanistan Lawyers Association, warned: "If regulations and laws are not observed, the election will have no credibility and the result would be unacceptable to the Afghans and the international community."

He said ignoring election law violations would lead to serious consequences and the IEC should see to it all runners respected the law.

Mohammad Farooq Baraki, a political analyst, said violations of the law by candidates would negatively impact the public mind and people would not trust them even if they won the vote.

He asked the people not to expect a transparent election, considering the performance of the election commissions and brazen violations of the relevant law.

Registration of complaints:

Mohammad Qasim Elyasi, spokesman and member for the Independent Electoral Complaint Commission (IECC), said 53 complaints had been registered so far.

He added 70 percent of the complaints had been addressed, but there was need for coordination among the election bodies, watchdogs, political parties, media and candidates to monitor the process.

Without going into details, he said most of the complaints had been filed against the State Maker Team led by President Ashraf Ghani and Stability and Partnership team headed by Dr. Abdullah.

He added the IECC did not initially receive complaints regarding the use of government assets in election campaign by the State Maker, Stability and Partnership teams but the findings of the commission show the two teams had been warned against such practices in advance and were told to fully respect the guideline of the IEC.

Referring to the campaign financial expenditure report, Elyasi said the two teams had not submitted details of their assets. Both are bound to declare their assets.

Election teams in denial: Javed Faisal, spokesman for the State Maker team, rejected the launch of campaign ahead of schedule. He said some of their events were dubbed as campaign gatherings to damage the image of the State Maker team.

Regarding the presence of government officials at their campaign events, Faisal said a strategy had been devised to keep public servants away from such meetings. A government employee participating in election events would face legal action from the IECC, he continued.

Asked why the State Maker did not submit a report about assets of its leaders to the election body, Faisal replied a report of financial expenditure had been prepared and would be handed over to the election bodies.

Earlier, acting foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani was fined 15,000 afso for participating in the election gathering of the Stability and Partnership Team.

However, Faridon Khwazoon, spokesman for Abdullah's team, said no government official had ever taken part in their election campaign gatherings.

About Rabbani's presence in the election gathering, he said the foreign minister also led a political party besides holding a government position. The law was silent on the issue, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(10) Trump's Decision ...

"About other Afghans, we are ready to talk with them if there is ceasefire with them, there will be no attack [against] them. This is another aspect of the Afghan issue," Mr. Shaheen said.

"It was astonishing for us because we had already concluded the peace agreement with the American negotiating team," he said. "One copy of the agreement was given to the Qatari side, we got one copy and one copy was with the American team.

And after that, Mullah Sahib Bradar, the chief of the political office, and deputy Amir of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan for political affairs, and his team had a meeting with Dr. [Zalmay Khalilzad] and Gen. Scott Miller. They were happy with this agreement and they talked about the ceremony of signing the peace agreement. Amidst that, the [Trump] tweet very surprising and astonishing for us."

This comes as a new survey by The Balance shows that America's war in Afghanistan has cost \$975 billion.

Their data is based on research from Brown University and it makes the war in Afghanistan second only to the inflation-adjusted \$4.1 trillion the United States spent during the Second World War in terms of the overall cost.

"The president has said since his campaign days his goal was achieving peace in Afghanistan and bringing our troops home," State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus told reporters on Thursday.

The US President Donald Trump called off negotiations with the Taliban after the group carried out an attack in downtown Kabul which killed 13 people, among them a US soldier. (Tolo news)

(11) Kazakhstan...

Kairbekova's decision to take this spat public now appears to have landed her in trouble.

Following her public statement in August, the two men that Kairbekova named - Orsariyev and deputy Education Minister Rustem Bigari - have accused her of engaging in a sustained campaign of defamation and have said they will file suit. Kairbekova last week fired back by taking to Facebook to post what she says are recordings of phone calls between herself and Orsariyev and Bigari. One taped conversation, which has not been independently verified, appears to capture the moment when Bigari urged Kairbekova to put her initials on a contract.

"The risks are too high ... the [company] has only existed for two years," Kairbekova is heard to say. "They will just take the money and run. What will we do?"

"If so, they will be caught and punished," answers Bigari. "I have reviewed the law. I am taking this risk."

On September 10, Kairbekova posted a video appeal to say that two days after she went public with her story, she was demoted by Orsariyev.

The Education and Science Ministry, to use its full title, is one of Kazakhstan's most corrupt institutions.

Earlier this year, a former deputy minister, Elmira Sukhanberdiyeva, was detained and charged with abuse of authority and engaging in illegal business practices while on the job. At her sentencing, the judge fined her 6.3 million tenge (\$16,500) and allowed her to leave court without serving time. And Sukhanberdiyeva is making hay out of the 36 days she spent in the pre-trial detention center. She announced that she plans to publish a book titled "Prison Through The Eyes Of The Vice Minister," which has only generated more public harrumphing.

In May, Ramazan Alimkulov, head of the ministry's National Testing Center, was arrested on suspicion of corruption.

One month later, the state anti-corruption agency charged Orsariyev's personal secretary with embezzling 11 million tenge. Kairbekova used this development as supporting evidence for her claims of malfeasance at the ministry.

Although Kairbekova is the one making the accusations this time, she has faced charges of questionable management techniques of her own in the past.

The anti-corruption agency, which operates at the behest of the president's office, has previously found that after Kairbekova was appointed to the Education Ministry's Internal Control Department in early 2014, she contrived to drive out almost all her eight-person staff.

Kairbekova's owned troubled history suggests the possibility that this ongoing saga is just as much about the petty, clannish infighting the besets most areas of government in Kazakhstan as it is about corruption. (Eurasianet)

(12) IMF Sees...

compliance costs for businesses, reducing electricity and transportation costs by reforming the state-owned companies that operate in these sectors, and containing public-sector salary dynamics by avoiding regulations that hamper domestic competition.

The IMF's forecast for this year is more upbeat than that of the Bank of Namibia, which has said it sees a 1.7% contraction this year. (Bloomberg)

(13) AOC Condemns...

a forced marriage saved his life," Heng says. "Mine is a face of freedom. My skin is not white, I'm not outrageous, racist nor socialist. I'm a Republican."

Heng, who lost her bid in November to unseat the Democratic incumbent in California's 16th Congressional district, is the

daughter of Cambodian immigrants who escaped the communist Khmer Rouge, according to her biography on the New Faces GOP website.

The ad - which apparently refers to the genocide by the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s, with images of skulls and corpses - ran in a small number of markets including in New York City and Washington, D.C.

The graphic ad quickly drew criticism on social media Thursday night. On Friday morning, #BoycottABC was a trending topic on Twitter. ABC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Ocasio-Cortez, a first-term representative, is one of four progressive Democratic congresswomen of color, known as "the squad," who have been frequent targets of President Donald Trump and his supporters.

"Know that this wasn't an ad for young conservatives of color - that was the pretense," Ocasio-Cortez continued on Twitter on Thursday night. "What you just watched was a love letter to the GOP's white supremacist case."

Heng responded by asking in a tweet: "Are you really calling me a racist @aoc?" "I'm calling all Democrats out for supporting an evil ideology," Heng wrote in the tweet. "Or are you just in Congress to hang out with celebrities and tweet out ridiculous ideas like the green new deal?"

The New Faces PAC's website says its goal is to "Help elevate the next generation of Republicans so that we can not only survive as a party, but expand beyond the boundaries we've set for ourselves," and "Identify the new faces of the GOP who will lead us into tomorrow."

Heng says in her bio on the site, "In one generation, I saw firsthand the power of the American Dream. That's why I am going to continue to fight for freedom of speech, free-market capitalism, and the founding principles of our country that has allowed families like mine to dream bigger and achieve more than we ever imagined possible." (Euro News)

(14) B-2 Stealth...

made, the B-2 bombers are worth \$2.1 billion each.

Steve, a bank office worker, from Swindon said: "They come down pretty low and are pretty loud. I thought I would opt for a different approach by getting the other spotters in the photo."

The B-2 pilots and support staff are from the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

They are in the U.K. for a short deployment to show American strength and to support NATO and its partners in Europe, it has been reported.

RAF Fairford has long been an important strategic base for American forces.

During the last B-2 deployment the planes were involved in bombing raids in the Middle East. (Fox News)

(15) Russia Ready...

separated on either side of the line of contact, he said, wording on the special status for the Donbass region should be agreed, and there should also be a preliminary agreement on what the summit's conclusions should be.

Kiev's forces have been battling pro-Russian separatists in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine since 2014 in a conflict that has claimed more than 13,000 lives. Sporadic fighting continues despite a ceasefire agreement.

Ushakov said he did not rule out the summit taking place in October. (Reuters)

(16) UAE Says ...

it's known to be an area home to al-Qaida militants.

The UAE entered Yemen's war in March 2015 alongside Saudi Arabia to back Yemen's internationally recognized government, which the Houthis rebels had pushed out of the capital, Sanaa. The Emirates largely has handled ground operations in Yemen's south in the conflict, while the Saudis have bombed from the air and handles operations in northern Yemen.

The war has pushed Yemen to the brink of famine and killed more than 90,000 people since 2015, according to the U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, or ACLED, which tracks the conflict.

The UAE has not published overall casualty figures in the war. However, it has acknowledged individual incidents, the worst of which came in the war's opening months when 45 Emirati troops were killed by a rebel missile attack. It marked the deadliest day for its military in the 47-year history of the federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula home to Dubai.

The UAE has not publicly acknowledged how many troops it withdrew from Yemen since June. Yemeni officials have suggested Emirati troop strength has dropped by as much as 75% out of around 10,000 troops. (AP)