

(1) Afghanistan...

peace requires "precision, courage and sincerity."

"There is no doubt a real peace will be made, and will persist, when the people of Afghanistan achieve their rights without any discrimination," Ghani said, reiterating that engagement in politics is essential: "The only way to solve decades of war is along a political path, and this requires investment in the political process, and support for the election and the government."

He also stated that there is a need for a ceasefire first in order to achieve a "real peace."

"We do not want to continue the war even for a minute if the Taliban wants peace," Ghani said, because "war is not the solution." (Tolo news)

(2) Donors Call...

The group also discussed the importance of reducing poverty, anti-corruption, long term infrastructure development, improving access to basic services and promoting economic growth.

It called for continued reform, transparency and the protection of the rights of all Afghan women, men and children, including minorities.

It stressed the need to ensure future assistance from the international community should support human rights, in particular women's rights and participation. (Pajhwok)

(3) MPs Call on ...

said Ali Akbar Qasemi, an MP from Ghazni province, "People's votes must be counted not sheep's."

Meanwhile, Amir Khan Yar the first Deputy Speaker of the House called on the electoral bodies to prevent any interference and hold a transparent elections.

The Afghan presidential election is set to be held on September 28. (ATN)

(4) Trump Repeats His ...

quickly, but many, many, really, tens of millions of people would be killed, and we think it's unnecessary," Trump said.

Similar comments were made by Trump in July during an Oval Office meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. There, Trump claimed he could win the war "in a week" but said he did not want to go that route, because "I just don't want to kill 10 million people."

Trump earlier this month called off negotiations with the Taliban, and subsequently said the talks with the group are "dead." (Pajhwok)

(5) National Procurement ...

"Afghan government institutions and leaders must be transparent and accountable to the Afghan people. We stand against those who exploit their positions of power and influence to deprive the Afghan people of the benefits of foreign assistance," Pompeo said in the statement.

The National Procurement Authority is led by President Ashraf Ghani, and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. Others with authority include Elham Hotak, head of the National Procurement Commission, and also Mohammad Humayun Qayumi, the Acting Finance Minister.

"We consider ourselves responsible to respond to all these concerns," the NPA spokesman Ahmad Ramin Ayaz said.

The statement on corruption within the Afghan government comes as the government leaders - President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah - are both running for president in an election to be held at the end of this month.

Critics remain skeptical about the government's will to fight corruption.

"I wish the US would have started this earlier--between 2001 to 2014. During that time billions of dollars were poured into Afghanistan from the international community, especially the United States, and they went into the pockets of Afghanistan's political elites," political affairs analyst Daud Nadi said.

The US decision on withholding the funds was supported by presidential candidate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who addressed a campaign rally in Paktia province on Friday.

Hekmatyar said the international community's aid has gone into the pocket of "thieves," referring to some government officials.

"They might have cut off the aid to

put pressure on the government to abandon its political disputes [with the US]," Hekmatyar said. (Tolo news)

(6) UK Hosts International...

The group emphasised the importance of continued reform, transparency and the protection of the rights of all Afghan women, men and children, including minorities, and the need to ensure that future assistance from the international community should support human rights, in particular women's rights and participation. (Monitoring Desk)

(7) Security Bosses ...

Gen. Scott Miller talked about security measures being taken for the 28 September presidential election.

The security bosses stressed joint cooperation for maintaining security on the Election Day.

Meanwhile, Deputy Interior Minister Brig. Gen. Khoshal Sadat shared information about the overall security situation and assured security across the country on the polling day. (Pajhwok)

(8) 3 Taliban Commanders ...

Badghis is among the insecure provinces in northwest of Afghanistan where the Taliban insurgents are operating in a number of its districts. (ATN)

(9) ANP Chief Wants ...

the two countries to travel freely across the border for the sake of friendly relations between the neighbours.

President Ghani concurred that Pakhtuns on both sides of the border had paid a heavy price for the ongoing civil war in the region.

Ghani added he had made it clear to the Pakistan government that it should sincerely extend a hand of friendship to Afghanistan if it wanted to eliminate poverty, energy crisis and other issues. (Pajhwok)

(10) Nangarhar sweet ...

imported sweets but also provided jobs to hundreds of people.

He said raw material was brought from Pakistan if not available locally. He said if raw material producing factories were rehabilitated in Afghanistan, their business would strengthen and the entire country would benefit.

He said due to lack of electricity in rural areas, most of sweet factories are established in Jalalabad, the provincial capital. He said if electricity was provided to such factories in rural areas, the move would help overcome unemployment.

Qari Farhad, who previously ran a handcart now works at a sweet factory in Jalalabad. He said his new job was good because he was daily paid his wage.

Another worker, Nabiullah, urged investors to establish such factories in order to rescue the youth from joblessness and asked the government to facilitate investors in this regard.

Ajmal, who sells sweets on the side of a road in Woch Dand Ghara area of Jalalabad, said nowadays only locally produced sweets were sold and bought in Nangarhar. He said every buyer only asked for local sweets.

Nangarhar governor's spokesman Attaullah Khogyani said work on a major solar power plant was underway in Nangarhar to resolve electricity shortage being faced by factories. He said the plant would specially supply power to industrial parks in Sheikh Mesri and Hesar Shahi areas where everyone could open a factory. (Pajhwok)

(11) Trump to Meet...

following leaders. Prime Minister Khan of Pakistan, President (Andrzej Sebastian) Duda of Poland, Prime Minister (Jacinda) Arden of New Zealand, Prime Minister Lee (Hsien Loong) from Singapore, President al Sisi of Egypt and President Moon of S Korea," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

On Tuesday (September 24), Donald Trump will deliver his address to the UN General Assembly. After that, he will hold a number of bilateral meetings.

"Prime Minister (Boris) Johnson of United Kingdom, Prime Minister Modi of India, the UN Secretary-General," the official said, adding that the president will also meet his Iraqi counterpart and end the day with a diplomatic reception. With Modi-Trump meeting on Tues-

day, the two leaders would be meeting for the fourth time in as many months. The meeting in New York is expected to set the tone of the bilateral relationship between the two countries over the next few years.

The two leaders are likely to discuss a range of bilateral, regional and global issues, including efforts to address the growing bilateral trade disputes, potential defence and energy deals and peace process in Afghanistan. (Oneindia)

(12) China, Russia...

Tehran of masterminding the attacks, allegations that Iran denied. Tehran warned that any military action by the United States or Saudi Arabia would result in "all-out war". US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo initially condemned the attacks on the oil facilities as an "act of war" but later said the US was seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis.

On Friday, Chinese President Xi Jinping condemned the attacks during a phone conversation with Saudi Arabia's King Salman, adding that he hoped the incident would receive a full and fair investigation.

There was no report of the joint drill plan in Chinese media.

Analysts said the exercise was possible as China might want to show support for Iran.

"The timing of the joint exercise might be a bit sensitive and some might take it as a show of China's support for Iran should there be any military conflicts between countries," Beijing-based naval expert Li Jie said.

"But it might well be a regular military exchange between the countries if it is held in international waters and without targeting another country." (SCMP)

(13) Turkey Is...

saying Washington was providing them with arms.

"We have no wish to come face to face with the U.S." he said. "However, we cannot afford to overlook the support that the U.S. is giving to a terrorist organization."

His comments about border preparations came a day after two security sources said doctors have been stationed in southern Turkish provinces to prepare for a possible incursion into Syria.

One source said doctors' leave had been suspended. "We have been preparing for a long time," the source said. "The operation can be conducted whenever deemed necessary."

Turkey has already launched two military incursions into northern Syria since 2016, targeting Islamic State and YPG forces west of the Euphrates. (Reuters)

(14) Merkel's Climate...

becoming a key issue for voters. Among them were kids, inspired by Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who within a year has become the face of the climate movement.

Merkel's fiercest political enemies were quick to seize the moment. "Merkel is bowing down to Greta's movement of school truants," Alternative for Germany leader Joerg Meuthen quipped on Twitter. "Permanent climate hysteria reigns."

The far-right party, a persistent thorn in Merkel's side, doubts the scientific evidence behind climate change and says Merkel's plan is "really expensive."

Polls, however, show an increasing share of Germans place greater weight on the environment than they do on jobs. Record-breaking heat waves, dwindling of the Rhine river and a series of powerful storms have turbocharged the climate debate and lifted the Green party to second place in election polls.

But environmentalists think Merkel's plan is nothing but "hot air and empty promises." Germany will miss its 2020 climate goals due to rising emissions from transport and heating, and the new plan intended to at least chart a path to a 55% cut in emissions by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

"I am bitterly disappointed," Annalena Baerbock, co-leader of the Green party, said of the measures. "The government has failed in the humanitarian task of climate protection."

Germany is not alone in struggling to reconcile climate needs with messy politics at a time when recession clouds gather. The task of trying to appease industrial interests, while grappling with a worsening

economic situation and restive environmentalists is near impossible.

In Canada, October's election could be decided on Justin Trudeau's introduction of a carbon tax. In France, Yellow Vest activists have taken to the streets to protest Emmanuel Macron's environmental levies on gasoline. In the U.S., Donald Trump is taking the climate fight to California with a plan to revoke its right to regulate vehicle emissions.

There are a lot of stakeholders in the game and the lesson Merkel is learning is that in trying to please everyone, you please no one.

While upsetting environmentalists, Merkel still didn't soothe the concerns of fossil-fuel industry leaders. For example, would an increase in taxes on flights put German airlines at a disadvantage against international competitors who don't face the same charges?

"This intensification of a unilateral approach in the highly competitive aviation market will not reduce CO2 emissions, but merely shift them, which is ecologically useless and economically harmful to airlines in Germany," said BDL chief executive Matthias von Randow, who runs the powerful airline lobby.

The union representing energy and chemical industry workers said the government avoided tackling the slow expansion of Germany's power grid with new cables needed to get renewable energy from north sea wind parks to the country's manufacturing heartlands further south. Attempts to build power lines have so far gotten snagged by "not in my backyard" protests from locals.

The measures "are exactly the flip-flopping that the chancellor said she wanted to avoid," IGBCE leader Michael Vassiliadis said in a statement. Merkel may have also misjudged the public mood, with a mid-week ARD poll suggesting voters now place a higher priority on the environment than on economic wellbeing. As she heads to the United Nations climate conference next week, one has to wonder whether she could have done more. (Bloomberg)

(15) Syrian Army...

the drone incident on Thursday.

Syrian forces find Israeli-made weapons in ex-militant redoubt Separately, Syrian government forces have carried out a string of clean-up operations in Quneitra province, discovering a substantial amount of Israeli-made munitions and medical supplies from a former stronghold of foreign-backed Takfiri terrorists.

An unnamed military source told SANA that Syrian soldiers launched operations in the outskirts of Quneitra on Saturday to clear the area of hidden explosive devices and ordnance left behind by the militants.

The source added that the weapons included machine guns, anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launchers and assault rifles besides telecommunication devices, food supplies and medicine.

Back in June, Syrian army soldiers discovered a substantial amount of munitions, some of them US-built, from a former militant position when they mounted operations on the outskirts of the town of Jubata al-Khashab in Quneitra province.

An unnamed military source said the weapons were hidden inside two underground tunnels dug by terrorists, which included artillery rounds, rockets, night-vision devices, American BGM-71 TOW anti-tank missiles as well as various types of machine guns.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country. (Press TV)

(16) Human Rights...

authorities should recognize that the world is watching and take all necessary steps to avoid a repetition of past atrocities," he added.

Protests have become very rare in Egypt following a widespread crackdown on dissent under Sisi, who took power after ousting Egypt's first democratically-elected president, Mohamed Morsi, in 2013 through a military coup.

The US-based rights group also strongly called on Cairo to protect the right to peaceful protest in upholding Egypt's obligations under international human rights law, urg-

ing the authorities to "immediately release all those arrested for solely exercising their rights."

Friday's protest rallies were held in response to an online call for Sisi's resignation by Mohamed Ali, a former army contractor, who accused the president and the military of corruption.

The HRW further called on Sisi to "direct the state security forces to abide by international standards for law enforcement during demonstrations."

There was heavy security presence in downtown Cairo and on Tahrir Square, where mass protests started in 2011, ending up in the downfall of veteran ruler Hosni Mubarak.

Since Morsi's overthrow, Egyptian authorities have been engaged in a persistent crackdown on dissent, killing hundreds and arresting thousands. (Press TV)

(17) US Sending ...

international rules-based order" that Iran is supposedly defying.

Exact details of the deployment are still being worked out, said General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, adding that he could only describe it as "not thousands."

The newest batch of troops and missiles joins a steady stream of military assets the Pentagon has been sending to the region for months, parallel to the "maximum pressure" campaign of sanctions against Iran. Tehran has repeatedly said that any attack on Iran would be met with a disproportionate and devastating response against both US assets and allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Tehran has rejected the accusations of involvement in the September 14 attack, the responsibility for which was claimed by the Houthi rebels in Yemen. Anonymous US officials have accused Iran of launching the attack from its territory, but neither Esper nor Dunford wanted to comment on that claim.

Esper maintained that the weapons used in the attack were "Iran-produced and not launched from Yemen," but would not say more, except to note that Saudi Arabia was "still vulnerable to attack."

The strike on Aramco's Abqaiq petroleum facilities and Khurais oil field temporarily crippled Saudi oil production, but resulted in no human casualties, and Saudi officials insisted that things would get back to normal by the end of September.

Wherever the drones and missiles came from, the attack was a major embarrassment to the Saudis - as well as the US, which has supplied the Kingdom with most of its air defense hardware. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who has just returned from Saudi Arabia, tried to dismiss the issue by saying that "some of the finest [weapons] in the world don't always pick things up."

The Russian military has taken note of the lack of performance by the US-supplied Patriot and other air defense systems, and President Vladimir Putin even joked that the Saudis ought to consider buying the Russian missiles instead, following the lead of Iran and Turkey.

On Friday, the Houthis announced they would stop their attacks on Saudi Arabia if the Saudi-led coalition would halt its operations in Yemen. Riyadh has not officially responded to the offer. (RT)

(18) Dozens Detained...

and then the people will be released." Reuters reporters witnessed several arrests in Nur-Sultan and Almaty. In Kazakhstan's capital Nur-Sultan, police detained a man with a banner reading: "Let's not give way to Chinese expansion" and "The old man is the enemy", an anti-Nazarbayev slogan. Several people chanted: "Freedom to political prisoners".

Some protesters tried to escape as police moved in and smashed the windows of a police bus.

In Almaty, protesters were quickly taken away to police buses as they began chanting slogans against Chinese expansion and "Old man, go away!"

China is a major investor in Kazakhstan's energy sector and buys oil and gas from the mostly Muslim nation of 18 million, but critics accuse some Chinese companies - as well as Western ones - of hiring too few local staff and paying them less than foreign workers. (Reuters)