

(1) No Preconditions...

about international politics. Pakistan now says it wants to turn a new page and help the US with this objective..." In terms of security, the situation in Afghanistan was more difficult and Taliban were stronger, he admitted. His mission, therefore, was to facilitate a reconciliation agreement between the government and the Taliban.

The Taliban and other Afghans should work to bring about conditions that did not necessitate the US military presence in that country, Khalilzad said, calling for the elimination of terrorism and extremism. (Pajhwok)

(2) Deadly Infighting...

volatile provinces in northeastern parts of the country where the Taliban militants and other groups, including terrorists are actively operating in some of its districts and often carry out terrorist related activities. (KP)

(3) Kapisa Residents...

is not good. People are killed near their homes. So how they can think they are safe?" asked Nazir, a Kapisa resident.

"The situation is not good. We hear many firings during nights, even in areas close to the main road," said Abdul Wahid a Kapisa resident.

The Kapisa Provincial Council said the problem needs a firm attention by security forces.

"Targeted killings rate has been high this year. We hope that such incidents are prevented in Kapisa," said Mohammad Hussain Sanjani, head of Kapisa Provincial Council. Statistics by Kapisa police show that almost 200 crime and terrorist incidents have occurred in the province so far this year and dozens of suspects have been arrested in connection to the incidents.

"Perpetrators of all incidents have been arrested and have been sent to judicial organizations," said Abdul Basir Khpulwak, Kapisa Police Chief. According to Kapisa Provincial Council, more than 40 people have been killed in the province in the past five months. (Pajhwok)

(4) Statement of...

religious, social and business interactions among China, India, Far East, Central Asia and Middle East during the course of history.

Honorable Guests!

Let me talk a little bit more about the magic of the Ancient Silk Road. The ancient and historical Silk Road has been one of the oldest and longest commercial routes for exchanging commercial goods, knowledge, and culture of humankind that linked some of the biggest civilizations of the world, namely, China, India, Greece, Buddhism and Islamic Cultures to each other.

History shows that this route has been used before 2000 years ago and acted as a bridge between China and Europe, Asia and African people for exchanging their material and cultural goods and played a vital role between material and cultural exchanges of the East and West. The Silk Road was more than 8,000 kilometers and more than 4,000 kilometers of the Silk route was in China. As China produced a lot of silk and exported them to other parts of the world, they called his route as the Silk Road.

Silk Road started from China and passing through the Gansu province entered Turkistan and passed through Samarqand and Bukhara and some significant parts of it passed through Khorasan. At that time, the Silk Road Passed through Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Alexandria city of Egypt in the West. The other part of Silk Road passed through Pakistan and Kabul in Afghanistan towards south to the city of Karachi in Pakistan. If it changed to sea route it could pass through the territories of the emperors of Persia and Rome.

Western and Eastern Countries' trade through the Silk Road included many goods and products. Rare birds and animals, perfumes, glassware, pearls, gold and silver coins from Western countries, and music, dance, food, and clothes from Western and Central

Asia were imported to China. Goods and products of China that were exported to other countries through the Silk Road included silk, paper products, printing, Chinese dishes (plates, bowls, cups, cases), gunpowder and compass that played a pivotal role in developing the world civilization. Cultural exchange through the Silk Road was as diverse as the trade of the goods and products. Buddhism as one of the three religions of the world entered China at the end of Western Han Dynasty of China (BC 206 BC-220 AD). In the Grottoes of 1000 Buddha of Turfan in the Sinkiang province built in the third Century, there is about 10,000 square meters of wall paintings that show the spread of Buddhism in China. Buddhism spread through the silk Road to Sinkiang and then to Dunhuang in Gansu province. There the remaining of many Buddhism caves along the Silk Road such as Mogao Caves that are of the biggest most complete ancient works of Buddhism in the world. Maiji Shan Caves located in Tianshui, Gansu province, has 194 sculptures and more than 7000 sculptures and wall paintings. Also, Lung Man grottes located in 13 km south of Liang city having more than 2300 caves, more than 1000 sculptures, 3600 scripts and 40 Buddhism towers.

All these historical relics having a combination of Eastern and Western art, show the commercial trade between the East and West through the Silk Route. Now these grottoes are parts of the world heritage.

The Cultural and Historical Heritage of Bamiyan and other provinces of Afghanistan are of the same kind of these relics. Gansu province of China and Bamiyan province of Afghanistan are now two sister cities, two cultural and historical sisters and are the symbol of shared culture and history between Afghanistan and China. I practically would like to invite from here all Chinese and especially Gansu's historians, Artists, and tourists to come to Afghanistan and visit Gansu's cultural sister, Bamiyan city and see its historical and natural spectacular sites and watch the vast landscape of the Silk Route from Gansu to Bamiyan.

Anyway, the Silk Road as a traditional land road lost its historical importance and gradually diminished. However, the Silk Road in the UNESCO Plan has been termed as the Road of Dialogue in order to facilitate the dialogue between the Western and Eastern countries and currently China has decided to revive it. This time people will not travel by horses, camels or on foot, but by automobiles, rails and ships.

Honorable guests, The new official relations between China and Afghanistan started in the second half of the twentieth century in 1949 and following it, Zhou Enlai the Prime Minister of China accompanied with a High ranking delegation travelled to Kabul, Afghanistan in 1957. The King of Afghanistan received warmly the Chinese delegation. The Chinese delegation discussed the mutual issues with King Zahir Shah and the Prime Minister Dawood Khan and elaborated to improve their bilateral relations especially the economic cooperation between Afghanistan and China.

At the end of 1957, Afghanistan's Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud Khan was invited to China to meet with Chinese leader Mao Zedong. In November 1963, Afghanistan and China signed an agreement on Wakhan Corridor, about 100 kilometers long borderline, and both governments recognized the high and impassable Wakhan Corridor as their borders.

Since those days both countries have extended their relations in various areas, and today both governments are determined to promote their mutual relations more than ever which is based on trust and respect. The power and solid presence of China in areas of politics, economy, science and technology has formed a distinct neighbor and a notable and honest partner for us. High-ranking officials visits, friendly talks and signing strategic cooperation declarations

and agreements indicates the expansion of friendly relations. We express our gratitude and appreciation to the government of China for their contribution and cooperation with Afghanistan in diverse political, security, cultural, educational, economical and development issues.

The new Silk Road, namely, the Belt and Road Initiative, that is designed by the Chinese government and involves construction of land, air, marine, and railways infrastructures, energy transfer, and a resourceful universal plan is fully supported and confirmed by Afghanistan government. Based on an official agreements signed between the two governments in May 16, 2016, we voice our full support for any kind of cooperation in its implementation and execution. The pivotal impact of Silk Road for the development and progress of countries along the Belt and Road is self-evident. Afghanistan is capable to export through Silk Road to European and Far-East countries. Afghan and Chinese investors are able to invest in both countries with the use of projects related to Silk Road. Also, the reconstruction of Wakhan Corridor in Badakhshan Province, Afghanistan, an important gateway in Silk Road, is crucial for the economic and commercial growth of Afghanistan and the region.

Based on the territory, Afghanistan is the forty-first largest country in the world and is the forty-second most populated country in the world. Afghanistan is located in the intersection of four most populated and richest regions of the world in South Asia, Central and North Asia, Middle East and Far-East. Afghanistan is the intersection spot in these four regions.

Located in the major East-West commercial paths and vast region of Europe-Asia, Afghanistan is the paramount center and the axis that benefits from all routes from India, South-East Asia, Europe, Russia, Middle East and China. Afghanistan is an intersection spot for commercial routes to China, India, Middle East and Europe for more than two thousand years.

Furthermore, Afghanistan holds rich gas, iron, copper, decorative and gem stones resources. Also, based on the scientific assessments, Afghanistan's saffron is of highest quality among three hundred samples from various countries in the world. Afghanistan's agricultural products and dried and fresh fruits are of unique quality, and Chinese investment in Afghanistan, Afghanistan's exports to china and Afghanistan's imports from China are of significant importance for both countries.

Dear participants, For all of us to have fruitful regional cooperation and convergence, a stable region is needed. Afghanistan's external politics in the region is based on "a safe community that is economy-based". Afghanistan is an active member in regional organizations such as "SAARC", "ECO" and an observer member in "Shanghai Cooperation Organization". We believe that "Heart of Asia" and "Istanbul Process" processes and Regional Economic Cooperation Conference for Afghanistan or "RECCA" are appropriate frameworks for development, prosperity and cooperation in the region.

We and all the countries in the region have common threats and interests. We need to cooperate to confront our common threats such as terrorism, extremism, narcotics, organized crimes, and smuggling in a coherent and continuous joint battle. Also, the establishment of regional railways, energy transfer, mine extraction, transit and commerce could involve our most important shared economic activities. In our region, we respect the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, exchange of information, knowledge and technology, can pave the way for provision of peace and stable security for political sustainability that can facilitate for the economic growth and development of the regional countries.

The government of China is a great and ancient friend for us and plays a

crucial role in all the region, international and regional matters. Whilst, we voice our support for the policy of China in fighting terrorism in the region, and appreciate the role of China in creating the coordination in the region, call for Chinese government to help us and use its authority and position in the region towards providing stability and lasting peace in the region and Afghanistan. I hope that our joint endeavors will lead to success and through establishment of stability and security, Afghanistan can play its role for economic growth and prosperity of all countries in the region.

Thank you for your attention!

(5) Taliban Denies...

with us on the release of prisoners," he said, adding that some prisoners facing minor charges had already been released and officials had divided up others into three categories, depending on their importance, for future release.

The Taliban, who regard the internationally recognised Afghan government as an illegitimate regime imposed by foreign powers, have generally insisted on negotiating only with the United States but there have been regular unofficial contacts.

Earlier this year, Washington dropped its refusal to talk with the Taliban, saying the United States would be willing to participate in Afghan-led peace talks and U.S. and Taliban delegations met for talks in Doha, Qatar, in July.

The Taliban officials said the meeting in Saudi Arabia came after plans for another meeting with American officials broke down over U.S. demands for a three-month ceasefire.

"Some of our senior people were not in the favour of holding talks with the Afghan government as until now we were calling them puppets and refused to meet them," said one senior Taliban leader in Qatar.

"But our proposed meeting with the Americans failed to take place due to certain reasons," he said.

The U.S. State Department declined to comment.

The officials said U.S. demands for a ceasefire was something the leadership could not agree to. As a result, no formal meeting was held although there were informal contacts.

"Our agreement for holding the meeting was only to discuss prisoner exchange and the removal of our people from the U.N. black list so they can travel," said one senior Taliban leader from the movement's political office in Qatar. (Reuters)

(6) Not a Single...

in election, social and cultural activities had been smaller in Kandahar than other provinces.

Insecurity and a negative public mindset were the most worrying challenges in Kandahar for women election runners, she said.

To begin with, said Aziza, the level of literacy is low in Kandahar and fewer educated women could not take part in social activities because of insecurity and old traditions.

She added keeping in mind these challenges she had taken the brave step of nominating herself for the long-delayed parliamentary election.

How she can venture out to meet women and ask them to vote for her in the existing security environment, the poll contestant asked.

Aziz also referred to another big problem -- male superiority in Afghanistan's conservative society. Most of the time, she alleged, male candidates forced women to vote for individuals of their choice.

Provincial Council member and women rights activist Serina Faizi also cited women's weak position. Most people did not allow their daughters to go to school, she complained, seeing no chance for them to participate in the electoral process.

She said insecurity, a prejudiced public mindset, wrong traditions and cultural restrictions had spawned the current situation. Faizi is particularly bothered by the unjust attitude of society toward women. "Being an incumbent member of the

provincial council, I have been faced with immense challenges and problems. How would a newcomer deal with these challenges?" she questioned.

As a result of support from her family, she was able to continue her work. "Let me acknowledge that in absence of family support, I may not work for a moment.

"There is an acute need for similar support to other women from their families and society at large," she continued, calling for girls to go to school and work in offices.

Farida, another nominee for Wolesi Jirga polls, agreed women still lived under the control of men and only a small number of them were independent.

Women could not get their tazkiras without permission from their family members, she maintained. She said exercising the right to vote was a highly sensitive issue, she maintained.

According to Farida, many families withdrew their daughters from school after promotion to 9th or 10th grade. Such families will not let women work.

Haji Sharif, a resident of the Kabul Shah area of Kandahar City, said: "It's enough to educate my daughters. The situation is not suitable for them to take part in electioneering or run for elections, though they have the ability to do so."

He listed insecurity the biggest problem. Another issue for educated women was society's misbehavior, the elder said, lamenting conflict, illiteracy and other problems had damaged the social fabric.

Women faced a variety of problems when they went outside of their homes to study or work, he noted.

IEC's deputy head Haroon Kaliwal says 112 candidates, including 12 women, are in the run for the Wolesi Jirga polls. Under gender rules, their number should be equal to men's.

The province has 11 seats, including three for women, in the lower house of parliament. He confirmed many educated women were not interested in politics.

The educated women, he said, preferred working in fields like education and health in accordance with the wishes of their relatives.

Changing such a mindset needed a long time but improvement had still compared about, the official elaborated. He called the participation of women in the national process very low.

In some areas of the province, women have not registered as voters. Kaliwal shared with Pajhwok a list, which indicated women did not register as voters in Shah Wali Kot, Mianshin, Shorabak, Gork and Registan districts.

Voter registration did not take place in Nesh and Maroof districts. He promised considering the gender issue in recruitment for election duty. There should be polling centres for men and women in each area.

Male workers had to be hired in some insecure districts where travel through land routes is not possible, the official concluded. (Pajhwok)

(7) 33 Afghan...

Coast guard patrols have prevented many possible disasters.

Europe countries, a major destination for many Afghans, have failed to reach consensus for a humanitarian response to the migrant influx. (Pajhwok)

(8) 3,000 Samangan...

Sher Mohammad, a farmer in Larchan village of Aibak said: "I cultivated wheat on 10 acres of land, but they did not grow due to drought and lack of rainfall.

He said the wheat he obtained today could be enough for his family for two months. (Pajhwok)

(9) Kandahar...

attacked his fellow officers has fled the area. He said the attacker joined the police force members almost a year ago.

According to him, police have started investigation into the incident.

So far, no group including the Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack. (Tolo news)