December 04, 2018

1) Trump Visits Afghanistan

President Donald Trump has visited Afghanistan for the first time in his 4-year presidency. This visit comes amidst reports that the US administration is seeking to reduce its military footprint in the country. There has been a growing concern within the administration that the US is navigating an 'endgame' in its long-drawn war in Afghanistan.

Trump’s visit is significant as it is the first time a US president has visited Afghanistan since the invasion of 2001. The trip is expected to last for a few days, during which Trump is expected to meet with Afghan leaders, including President Ashraf Ghani.

The US administration has been in talks with the Taliban since last year, and Trump’s visit is expected to be an important moment in these negotiations. The goal is to work towards a peace deal that would bring an end to the long and costly conflict.

2) University of Education and Military Use of Education

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) has published a report titled "Vital but endangered: the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration in Afghanistan." The report highlights the challenges faced by Afghanistan’s education system, particularly in providing a safe learning environment for students.

The report notes that in 2017 alone, 709 schools were attacked, resulting in the deaths of 64 people. It also highlights the lack of implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration, a global commitment made by governments to protect schools from military attacks.

The GCPEA’s paper urges the Government of Afghanistan to take urgent steps to protect schools, including by increasing security measures, providing training to teachers and school staff, and ensuring that schools are included in ceasefire agreements.

The report calls for the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration, which was adopted by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1734 in 2006, to prevent attacks on schools and education providers. The declaration calls for the protection of schools and education providers from armed attacks and other forms of violence.

3) Girls Education

In a significant step, Afghanistan’s Ministry of Education has announced that it will introduce a new education policy that aims to increase access to education for girls. The policy is expected to be implemented in the next academic year.

Under the new policy, schools will be required to provide separate classes for boys and girls, and girls will be allowed to attend school until the age of 16. The policy also seeks to address the issue of early marriage and child marriage by setting the legal age for marriage at 18 years.

The policy is seen as a response to the growing number of girls who are being forced to leave school due to various reasons, including poverty, early marriage, and cultural norms.

4) UN Security Council

The United Nations Security Council has adopted Resolution 2331, which calls for a comprehensive approach to resolving the conflict in Syria. The resolution underscores the need for a political solution to the conflict and the importance of addressing the root causes of the conflict.

The resolution calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the lifting of all embargoes and sanctions, and the implementation of a comprehensive arms embargo.

The resolution also calls for the establishment of a UN-led monitoring mechanism to verify the implementation of the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities. The resolution is welcomed by the international community as a significant step towards achieving a political solution to the conflict.

5) Afghanistan’s Neighbors

Afghanistan’s neighbors, particularly Pakistan, have been cautious about Trump’s visit. Pakistan has long been a key player in the region and is seen as a key partner in the US efforts to bring a political solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has been critical of the US policy in Afghanistan and has been working to carve out its own influence in the region. Trump’s visit is likely to be seen as an opportunity for Pakistan to reassert its influence in the region and to shape the US policy in Afghanistan.

The visit is also likely to be seen as a test of the US commitment to the regional stability in the Middle East. The US has been working to build a broader Middle East strategy, and the visit is expected to be a key moment in that strategy.