

### (1) Carter Offers...

enough stability to remain a long-term security partner for the U.S. and the West. The war began as a response to the 9/11 attacks.

"To have a stable security partner that is eager and willing to work with the United States is an asset for the future for us," Carter said.

Carter was making his last planned trip to Afghanistan before handing off his Defense Department responsibilities to his successor. President-elect Donald Trump has nominated retired Marine Gen. James Mattis for the post.

Trump has not said if or how he will alter the U.S. course in Afghanistan, but has denounced what he calls U.S. nation-building projects.

The U.S. has about 10,000 troops in Afghanistan to train and advise Afghan security forces combatting a resilient Taliban insurgency. U.S. special operations forces are hunting down al-Qaida and Islamic State militants.

Carter's visit comes amid concerns that despite improvements in Afghan government defenses, Taliban forces are gaining leverage and are continuing to use neighboring Pakistan as a sanctuary. By U.S. estimates, the Afghan government controls slightly less than two-thirds of the country's population.

The Taliban holds sway over about 10 percent, and the remainder of the population is "contested."

The top US commander in Afghanistan said Friday "the fundamental logic" of the U.S. counterterrorism mission is solid, suggesting it should continue after the change of administrations.

"Our policy of having an enduring counterterrorism effort alongside Afghan partners is, in my view, very sound - something that we need to continue," Army Gen. John Nicholson told a news conference in Bagram. Appearing alongside Nicholson, Carter said that having "a stable security partner that is eager and willing to work with the United States is an asset for the future for us."

U.S. commanders have praised Afghan soldiers for taking the lead in battles against the less-well equipped Taliban, but they have been suffering heavy casualties.

Before Carter's arrival, his press secretary, Peter Cook, said Carter wanted to get a full rundown on operations. He said Carter would discuss "the growing capabilities and resilience demonstrated by Afghan security forces in recent months," as well as efforts to build "Afghan combat capacity including aviation." President Barack Obama had planned to reduce U.S. troop numbers to about 1,000 by the time he left office in January, but he scrapped that approach in the face of Taliban gains. (AP)

### (2) Afghans Pay...

rust, said Sayed Ikram Afzali, the group's executive director, while introducing the survey results in Kabul. "Institutional capture coupled with petty bribes paid by citizens on a daily basis due to systemic corruption has become so serious that it threatens national security," he warned.

"The early euphoria that accompanied the inauguration of the National Unity Government in October 2014 has largely dissipated, leaving a populace that is disappointed, angry, and fearful about the future," the survey noted.

The government had no immediate reaction to the report's findings.

Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani briefed NATO foreign ministers meeting Wednesday in Brussels on his country's anticorruption measures.

"Our central message remains clear: Afghanistan will spare no efforts to eliminate corruption and ensure accountable and transparent governance across Afghanistan," the minister vowed. (VoA)

### (3) Taliban Should...

centers and public facilities, and meanwhile some neighbor countries are trying to justify the war in Afghanistan and the massacre of Afghans. The Taliban in such a situation should choose peace," the Ulema Council said in the statement. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Advisors Defend ...

confusion in people's minds. They claimed the president had made unprecedented achievements over the past two years.

Despite a whole host of challenges facing the country, the aides said Ghani's performance had been unparalleled. No previous government had been able to achieve such gains, they reiterated.

They said they were in contact with the president through an effective mechanism, whereby they could deliver any advice to him anytime.

The statement said, the number of

Ghani's advisors was less than the previous government; but a number of media outlets were out to mislead the people. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Taliban Offer ...

talks in winter and the war in summer, they never endorsed sincere talks, because of this, they table such preconditions which are not practical," said political analyst Saleh Mohammad Registani.

"Until the time the government of Afghanistan is not directly involved in the peace process and it had not provided the central role, the people of Afghanistan will not accept it," said political analyst Moeen Marastyal.

"There is a need for practical steps and they (the Taliban) must engage in direct contacts with the national unity government which reflects the will of the people of Afghanistan, I think such sort of propaganda in media has no credible basis," said senator Sayed Saifullah Hashemi.

Taliban's Qatar office was inaugurated in 2013 with an aim to conduct peace negotiation talks with the government. But the Afghan government refused to officially recognize the office, a move that ended in deadlock.

The National Unity Government (NUG) under president Ashraf Ghani and his Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah made new attempts to persuade the group to return to the peace table. But the Taliban, as in the past, responded to government's peace offer with suicide attacks and explosions in major Afghan towns and the talks never proved successful. Recently Ghani asked the UN to include the name of the group's leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada.

The government in Kabul so far has not made a comment on the offer, but Afghan envoy to Islamabad Omar Zakhwal has said that fresh opportunities have emerged for peace talks between the two sides. (Tolnews)

### (6) 1st Phase...

on Darul Aman Palace and start of the second phase.

The president said based on the study the reconstruction work, including cleaning and technical works in the palace, needed more than one million dollars.

However, due to efforts by officials of the Ministry of Urban Development, the work was completed at a total cost of \$30,000 from the government budget, he said.

Ghani said the work by the ministry was commendable and asked the minister to confer appreciation letters on individuals who played an important role in the reconstruction work of the palace.

Urban Development Minister Sayed Sadaat Mansoor told the meeting that all technical works of the project including cleaning and the scaffold had been completed.

From inside the palace nearly 650,000 tonnes of iron and destroyed materials were collected and removed.

The president said in the first phase an office for a group 100 engineers had been established and ground paved for practical training for about 200 engineering faculty students of the Kabul Polytechnic. (Pajhwok)

### (7) NATO Support...

benefit of shared security and stability, he said.

"Afghanistan is keen on establishing an official Mission at NATO headquarters to enhance our cooperation. We have already submitted our official request, and I hope it will receive a favorable consideration from NATO member states.

Addressing a media briefing after the meeting Rabbani said the Warsaw Summit in July marked a milestone in the start of a new phase of strategic partnership with our NATO partners. He hailed the ministerial meeting as success from Afghanistan's perspective.

The participants reaffirmed commitments towards Afghanistan undertaken by NATO allies and partners in Warsaw this past July. "I am grateful for their active participation and insightful deliberations, which demonstrate their firm commitment towards Afghanistan."

At the meeting, the first on Afghanistan at the foreign ministers' level after the NATO Summit in Warsaw, Rabbani spoke in the security situation, governance, reconciliation, electoral reforms, regional cooperation, human rights and women's empowerment. He commended as valuable the work being done by the Resolute Support Mission in training, advising and assisting Afghan security institutions. In response to a query from Pajhwok Afghan News, Rabbani said: "My message to Afghanistan's neighbours, including Russia is that they should contact the Afghan government, not its armed opponents, on all issues. I hope for cooperation from neighbours."

Violence in Afghanistan is not a home-

grown phenomenon, according to the minister, who alleged extremist groups were aided from abroad with sanctuary, freedom of movement, recruitment and material support.

This year's General Assembly resolution on the Situation in Afghanistan again calls on neighboring States in particular, to deny extremists with various forms of support, as it endangers regional peace and security.

"We hope relevant actors in our region will heed to that call in adherence to the UN Charter, and to avoid further isolation at the international level," he said, without naming any country. He was apparently referring to Pakistan.

He also rejected recent claims by the Taliban that the group's leadership Council had relocated to southern Helmand province from Pakistan. "Such claims have no merit and are aimed at diverting attention from a lack of sincere effort by some to combat terrorism."

Afghanistan would spare no efforts to eliminate corruption, and ensure accountable and transparent governance across, he promised, renewing the government's commitment to the rule of law.

"Progress in the area of electoral reform is another important development since the NATO Warsaw Summit and Brussels Conference. Just a few weeks ago, new commissioners of the Independent Electoral and Complaints Commission were appointed..." (Pajhwok)

### (8) Germany Pledges ...

and mutual understanding and trust between both countries, according to MoU.

It also added that India will be provided foothold in Afghanistan's strategic space and communication sector and to boost high-tech jobs in both countries in both core Science & Technology and R&D fields, and also the field of implementation.

India has remained one of the key donors for the reconstruction of Afghanistan following the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

Since 2002, the Government of India has committed USD 2 billion dollars to the socio-economic rebuilding of the Afghan state and society in accordance with the development priorities of the Government and the people of Afghanistan. (KP)

### (9) Congress Extends...

Department policy bill extends the program through 2017. While supporting the measure, Doris Matsuisaid it did not go far enough. She stressed need for more visas and resettlement help for the Afghans.

"I'm pleased that we have taken a step forward by extending the program. But our work is not yet done. I'll continue to advocate for the improvement of the resettlement process for these families in Sacramento and across the United States," Matsui said. President-elect Donald Trump's pick for attorney general, Sen. Jeff Sessions, has already objected to raising the number of visas and said "just because you've got applicants doesn't mean every one of them is deserving of acceptance."

Shaheen voiced disappointment with the Senate's failure to pass an amendment for 2,500 new visas that she co-sponsored with Senator John McCain. However, she hoped Congress would extend the programme before it ran out of visas. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Taliban would ...

message to the enemies of Afghanistan that they would never succeed," Nicholson said, adding the Afghan forces were working day and night and giving sacrifices for a bright future of their country and people.

The aim of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan was to prevent the country from again becoming a safe haven of terrorists, he added.

NATO's training and advising mission would still continue after 2016 in Afghanistan and would deploy 12,700 soldiers from 30 countries there, he said. "Afghan forces this year were put to the test and they showed great performance and confidence," Nicholson said. He also praised Afghan special forces' performance and said they carried out 70 percent of operations independently. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Afghanistan's ...

awaken to the untapped potential of Afghanistan's national treasures," said US Ambassador P. Michael McKinley. He said Afghan exporters harbored entrepreneurial spirit that turned Afghanistan into one of the major trade hubs on the ancient Silk Route, their passion for good business remained strong, despite challenges over recent years. Exhibition Afghanistan raised awareness of Afghanistan's biggest exports, including fresh and dried fruit, nuts, saffron and spices, carpets, silk, cashmere, apparel, handicrafts, marble, gems, and precious and semi-precious stones.

Afghanistan has shown its commitment to secure investor and buyer interest in these lucrative areas with extensive trade reforms that culminated in the country's accession to the World Trade Organization in July 2016.

"Afghanistan is home to some of the best products on earth. The quality of many of its exports - such as fruits, nuts, saffron, lapis lazuli, marble, and carpets - is unrivaled," said Minister of Commerce and Industries Humayoon Rasaw.

"Afghanistan's products and the country's commitment to trade lay the foundation for very lucrative business opportunities." (Pajhwok)

### (12) Security Incidents ...

arrival of winter in November, activities of the armed opponents saw unprecedented decrease. But the security forces couldn't manage to retake areas under control of the insurgents," said TOLNews researcher Abbas Hussaini.

The eastern province of Nangarhar with 117 security incidents remains top while provinces like Uruzgan, Faryab, Kunduz, Helmand, Zabul, Farah and Sar-e-Pul are respectively among the provinces which have suffered major security incidents in November.

"The Taliban had planned to make their way to success via Sar-e-Pul and still they continue their efforts," said Mohammad Zahri Wahdat, the governor of Sar-e-Pul province.

2151 armed opponent fighters, 77 security personal, 164 civilians and 6 US soldiers were killed in November. However this figure shows that fatalities among insurgents dropped by 93 percent while fatalities among civilians dropped by 15 percent.

But, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) did not provide details of casualties among army soldiers to media.

"In this period of time, both the government and the Taliban would make preparations for the war, but it is a good opportunity for the government," said Sayed Abdul Muqaddam Amin, political analyst.

"All bases where the terrorists and the opponents exist must be targeted during winter," said Dawlat Waziri, spokesman to MoD.

The attack on civilians during an air raid in Kunduz, suicide attack inside a mosque in Kabul and a chopper crash which left the commander of 207 Zafar Army Corp commander general Muhayuddin Ghorri were the major casualties in November. (Tolnews)

### (13) Kabul, Islamabad ...

in Kandahar, he said, calling the southern city an ancient commercial hub. The park will be set up close to the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline.

Momand claimed Pakistani entrepreneurs did not face any problem in Afghanistan. By the same token, he said, Afghan traders should also be granted all required facilities by Pakistan.

The ACCI deputy head claimed bilateral trade had been harmed by Pakistan's wrong policies. Current tensions were detrimental to the economies of the neighbours, he belied.

In the not-so-distant past, Alokzay recalled, about 2,000 Afghans would travel daily to Pakistan for medical treatment. But now they preferred visiting India because of Pakistan's undue restrictions.

He hit out at the Afghan government for its failure over the past 16 years to resolve the issue of constant power supply to Kandahar - a vital facility needed to strengthen industrialisation of Kandahar.

While welcoming SAARC's decision on building an industrial park in the city, he sought concrete cooperation from Pakistan in this regard. The site is close to Chaman, Quetta and Central Asian republics.

A trader from the Chaman town of Balochistan, Haji Daroo Khan, blamed both governments for creating problems for entrepreneurs - though traders and people on both sides of Durand Line did not have any issue.

Gen. Raziq accused Pakistan of always shutting transit routes around the fruit harvest time in Afghanistan, a move that inflicted heavy losses on orchard owners and merchants.

He said Afghanistan could take similar steps to harm the Pakistani businesspeople transporting goods to or from Central Asia. However, the police chief explained, they avoided teasing the Pakistanis.

The Pakistan consul-general in Kandahar acknowledged better Afghan-Pakistan relations were central to boosting bilateral trade and commerce.

Bitani promised conveying relevant Pakistani authorities the problems identified by Afghan traders. Efforts would be made to resolve the issues. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Young, ...

school and finally I want to become a doctor to further serve our peo-

ple," Nuria, a 16-year-old student of Laeqa's, told Xinhua, while also explaining that she was sad that her father had been reluctant to send her to school in her childhood.

Another student in Laeqa's class was a 35-year-old house wife, Fatima, the mother of four children, two of whom attend the class with her.

"In the beginning I was completely illiterate and utterly ignorant but now I can write and read," Fatima said happily.

Director of Literacy Courses in Bamyan, Mohammad Sadeq Farhang told Xinhua that Literacy Courses aimed at fighting a low literacy rate and promoting education in society were launched in 2005 and so far thousands of illiterate men, women and teenagers have learnt how to read and write.

"At present we have seven literacy courses, each split into two shifts everyday throughout the province and people from all walks of life including police officers are benefiting from becoming literate," Farhang said.

He also maintained that the way to "achieve prosperity in society is to make education available to all the people, not just males, the privileged, or certain sectors of society." (Xinhua)

### (15) Sindh CM ...

to step up the repatriation of unregistered Afghan citizens. But the central government, responding to a UNHCR request, delayed the repatriation for six months.

About 600,000 Afghan refugees were living in Pakistan, including 1.3 million in Sindh, Indrika Ratwatee said, but the chief minister contested the figures. The UNHCR chief said they usually remained in touch with their people back in Afghanistan.

Shah said many unregistered Afghan nationals living in Sindh were registered to know who was who and where they lived. "We spend on their food subsidy, they are using our utilities and even their children are going to government schools."

The UN had allocated \$175 million for the education and health of refugees, Ratwateesaid, adding Sindh would receive \$30 million of the sanctioned amount. "You can spend this on the education, health and other social services for Afghan refugees." (Pajhwok)

### (16) 100 Greenhouses ...

want greenhouses' construction to become common in Khost and other provinces."

CARD-F jointly works with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and a number of other ministries to develop and expand agriculture and livestock. (Pajhwok)

### (17) Disabled Soldiers ...

requested the ministry of finance give us money and they have accepted," said Abdul Fatah Ahmadzai, spokesman of the ministry.

This is not the first time that disabled soldiers complained about the issue. (Tolnews)

### (18) 26 Rebels ...

a vehicle, but the drug traffickers managed to escape."

Over the past two months, periodic clashes have been underway around 2nd, 3rd and 4th police districts of Lashkargah, the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

### (19) Communist Regime...

tried so that they are remembered as bad in the history," said Habib Rahyab, chairman Afghanistan Victims Families Association.

In 2013, Holland disclosed the identities of 5,000 people buried in mass graves on the basis of the information provided by a man know as Amanullah.

Zahra is an Afghan mother who has been crying for her two sons Abdul Rahim and Abdul Rauf for years.

She says that Haifzullah regime killed her sons without having done anything wrong.

"One of my sons was a government employee and the other one was studying at class 8. One day they left the home and then I never saw them again, whatever I did, no one heard me, but three years ago, it was disclosed that my sons are in Pul-e-Charkhi," said Zahra referring to the mass grave.

Family members of the victims also raised deep concerns about the culture of impunity in the country. They said that any peace negotiation talks with the armed opponents without serving justice on the war criminals is meaningless.

"During that era, even the children were being tortured, I saw the old men were brought there in charge of plots and overthrowing the government while they even were not able to read and write," said Abdul Khaliq Azad, a prisoner of Hafizullah era. "We and all those who survived the

torture and oppression and came out of the prison alive need to work for the families of the victims to ensure justice and work for respect of human rights," said Toori Qul Memaangi, a prisoner of Hafizullah regime.

Families of the victims also asked the government and international institutions to review a peace deal with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar -led Hizb-e-Islami and disclose the names of those who plotted attacks on protesters in Deh Mazang, Sakhi Shrine and Baqir-Ul-Olom mosque. (Tolnews)

### (20) US Soldier ...

Maryland..."

A DoD statement said the soldier was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. (Pajhwok)

### (21) Takhar Ulema...

women themselves will stand against him.

"He repeatedly insulted women and said they are deficient. He does not pray for Afghan soldiers' funeral. He should apologize to Takhar women," said Latif Saied, a member of the provincial council.

"Religious scholars must speak out against Islam teachings and instead of insulting women, explain the rights that Islam has given to them," said Shaima Elm Soroush, a women rights activist in Takhar province.

Abdul Samad however says he is not regretful of his recent remarks on women.

"The people who do not listen to religious scholars and are busy with their personal works deserve to hear such speech and I will tell them even more bitter words," he said. (Tolnews)

### (22) US Senate...

raise. It also calls for 3.2 billion dollars more in base defense funding than Obama has requested, plus an additional 5.8 billion dollars in White House-requested war dollars. (Xinhua)

### (23) UN Rights...

owners' consent, this legislation would violate international law according to which Israel, as the occupying power, must respect the private property of Palestinians, regardless of whether or not compensation is provided," the high commissioner said.

"I strongly urge lawmakers to reconsider their support for this bill, which if enacted, would have far-reaching consequences and would seriously damage the reputation of Israel around the world," he added. (Xinhua)

### (24) Around 150 ...

Spanish Interior Minister Juan Ignacio Zoido, commented to Spanish media in Brussels, where he is attending an EU meeting, that the "majority" of those who had taken part in the assault had been detained by the Spanish police and searches were being carried out for the remainder.

Ceuta and the other Spanish enclave of Melilla are favored destinations for many migrants as they are officially European Union (EU) soil and their being on the African continent means avoiding the perilous sea crossing to southern Europe. (Xinhua)

### (25) Turkey Issues ...

Fetullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric now living in the United States but being sought by Ankara for his role in the coup attempt, the daily said.

Press reports said over 36,000 people have been arrested while some 100,000 state employees dismissed in the ongoing crackdown launched soon after the coup bid, in which 246 people were killed. (Xinhua)

### (26) S. Korea's ...

bureaucratic machinery that suspended Park and transferred her powers to Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn began churning as soon as the impeachment motion passed Friday. (AP)

### (27) Chinese Official...

cooperation in cyber security. For her part, Rice said U.S.-China relations are the most important relationship in the world. She expressed the hope that the two sides could work together to deepen pragmatic cooperation and carry forward bilateral ties. (Xinhua)

### (29) Turkmenistan ...

supplied 229,140 tons of gas to China. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) buys natural fuel from Central Asia since 2009, after the pipeline from Turkmenistan through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan was launched. Beijing plans to increase the volume of annual gas purchase up to 65 billion cubic meters. (Trend)