Abdullah Calls for a Regional Counter-Terrorism Plan

WASHINGTON - The top American commander in Afghanistan faces sceptical US lawmakers amid concerns about security, as conditions demand a greater number of US forces to ensure the gains made in the war-torn country since 2001 aren't lost.

Army Gen. John F. Campbell is slated to testify on Tuesday before the House Armed Services Committee, where members are expected to press him on President Barack Obama's plan to cut American troop levels from 9,800 to 3,400 before he leaves office next January. Obama has backed down from his initial plan to reduce the US force to 1,000 by the end of the year.

Republican lawmakers have long assailed Obama's exit strategy, saying it will endanger the country. With the Taliban staging new offensives and the Islamic State extremist group making gains in Afghanistan, US lawmakers are raising the prospect of an extended US military presence.

"I've always believed that putting a time limit on it is a mistake," Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, the committee chairman, said Monday. "If we say this is going to take five years, 10 years or 20 years, nobody can say that's true.

Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., warned against a rush to leave, saying the US military is still needed in Afghanistan, noting that it too faces challenges and its utilization as an instrument of regional security is worsening with the number of troops we have there now, then we shouldn't cut them below the current level.

Campbell is expected to retire soon and Obama has nominated Army Lt. Gen. Joseph Votel as his replacement.

No Deal on Forced Deportation of Afghans: Ministry

KABUL - The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation on Tuesday said 250,000 Afghans applied for asylum in 44 countries in 2015 and the Afghan government was willing to sign any memorandum of understanding (MoU) with any country on forcibly deporting Afghans.

Kerry said the US wanted the Afghan government to continue " partnership with the US.

The government of Afghanistan has decided to sign such memos with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and other countries.

Afghan refugees do not want to be extradited to these countries.

" Argentina also launched by the coalition forces in Nangarhar province, 29 Islamic State (IS) militants were killed and a radio station belonging to the militant group was destroyed.

The foreign forces conducted four air raids against IS positions in Nomand Days of Achar Mountain district Monday night, he said.

Ghani Accepts Diplomatic Credentials of Seven New Ambassadors

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani accepted the diplomatic credentials of seven new non-resident ambassadors in 2015.

Ghani invited three ambassadors for the Philippine, Mauritius and Mozambique, and two former ambassadors from Uzbekistan and the Philippines before he signed the agreements.

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