

(1) Pakistan is the

"Today the line of right and wrong would be made clear. The line of the Afghan government and the Afghan people is the right line. Those who do not accept this and do not accept Almighty God's order, are the wrong line and the wrong line will be defeated," Ghani said. "Those Taliban who do not believe in this must separate themselves."

He pointed out to Afghan forces' operations against insurgents across the country and said the military operation in Band-e-Temor area, in Kandahar, was "very successful".

According to National Directorate of Security, at least 50 Taliban militants were killed in the military operation in Band-e-Temor area on Thursday evening.

President Ghani said the security agencies will submit him the Kabul security plan next week on Sunday.

"The security of Kabul and the security of Afghans will not be affected by any political deal or political act," he said. "There is only one politics right now, and that is the politics of being an Afghan. Other small politics have no place in this juncture."

The president stated that security and defense officials will be appointed based on "commitment and talent" afterwards.

President Ghani's remarks come after a series of deadly attacks in Kabul and other parts of the country, claimed by Taliban and Daesh militants in the past two weeks. The attacks claimed dozens of lives.

The president addressed the nation after performing the Friday prayers in the Presidential Palace's mosque. (Tolonews)

(2) Takhar Woman

Takhar officials confirmed the incident, but said it took place at least 45 days ago.

"We will act according to the law and arrest the people involved in the incident and will hand them to judicial institutions," Sunnatullah Timor, Takhar governor spokesman, told TOLONews.

The silence of government on the matter during this time is questioned by women's rights groups.

Beating of a woman in an area under government's control is worrying, said Bilal Sediqi, spokesman for Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC).

"This happened under government-controlled area. We ask government to arrest the perpetrators of this incident and bring them to justice," said Sidiqi.

Women's rights activists and religious scholars said such violent incident "is a shame for government".

"Lashing and holding a kangaroo court for a woman in the area where government has control is concerning," women's rights activist Laila Ali said.

"Islam has allowed no one to do such an act," religious scholar Baz Mohammad Rahmani said.

The AIHRC statistics show that in the last 10 months, six kangaroo court incidents against women and girls have been registered in the commission which have taken place in different parts of the country. (Tolonews)

(3) Parliamentary

"Nothing will happen if the IEC commissioners are divided and have internal problems and continue to criticize each other and spend most of their time focusing on their disagreements," said Yusuf Rasheed, CEO of Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan.

"The Election Commission has lost a lot of time. The (election) commissioners are expected to work together to hold a transparent election," said Janan Abdulrahimzai, a member of Afghanistan Civil Society Elections Network (ACSEN).

Meanwhile, the Chief Executive office said there is no disagreement between the CEO's office and the Presidential Palace on holding the upcoming parliamentary elections.

"There is no rift between the National Unity Government leaders regarding parliamentary and district council elections," the CEO's deputy spokesman Jawed Faisal said. "It is better that the elections should be held on its scheduled date so that people can trust in the process, and by this, provide legitimacy to the system." According to the IEC, international donors have provided \$30 million USD for the voter registration process and that the process will start in the near future. (Tolonews)

(4) Poverty-Stricken

He was injured and was left disabled. He said he married his wife Basmina 22 years ago and together they have 13 children. Their youngest is five months old. The family said they have not eaten food for three days.

"I had a rickshaw and I worked with it but my situation worsened when the rickshaw was damaged," Khan said.

"It is better to die than live this life," said Basmina, who has given birth to nine girls and four

Mohammad Khan's family is an example of thousands of families in the capital city who are bearing the brunt of severe poverty. President Ashraf Ghani at a ceremony this

month said at least 40 percent of Afghans are living under the poverty line. (Tolonews)

(5) Not the Right Time

United States will continue to support our Afghan partners to defeat ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan, and deny them and their affiliates safe haven and material support", he said.

"Afghan leaders and I also discussed security cooperation, and the importance of holding timely, credible and inclusive parliamentary and presidential elections," he said.

"We reviewed Afghanistan's progress in the areas of security, governance, rule of law, economic development and peace and reconciliation," Sullivan said.

Responding to a question, he said during talks with the Afghan government, they focused on the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the need for continued bilateral discussions between the two neighbors.

"But I also emphasized that the United States must continue to have its bilateral relationship with Pakistan, both on its own terms, and with respect to the region, including Afghanistan," he said.

The United States, he said, has made clear to the Pakistani government its expectations for them to take action against terrorists that are in sanctuaries in Pakistan, to reduce the pressure and the threat of violence in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(6) 2017 Budget

makes the procurement process fully transparent, and all contracts are published online for the public to see.

The Minister also mentioned the launch of Afghanistan National Strategy for Anti-Corruption as being critical in guiding the reforms across government, as well as important measures to engage citizens, such as the establishment of a citizens complaints line.

"We aren't 100% there yet but the initiative has been taken," he said. He concluded by crediting the government's strategy for self-reliance for ensuring that the reforms will be institutionalized and sustained: "The more you rely on your own resources, the more you are committed to building your institutions."

The Minister also spoke about the 2018 national budget, which was recently approved by the Afghan parliament, stating, "I proudly say that in 2018 for the first time ever we have a budget based on the best international practice." It is the country's first-ever fully transparent national budget that follows international standards, cuts corruption and ensures efficient and effective development. "For the first time, the budget is fully transparent", writes the Afghan Analysts Network (AAN) about the new Afghan national budget.

Deputy Minister of Finance Khalid Payenda said the new budget was restructured to provide full disclosure of government-planned expenditure, which reassured the government's commitment towards transparency and accountability. He also elaborated on the government's efforts to engage civil society and the public in the budget formulation and implementation process.

"We were actively engaged with civil society organizations and the public this year to formulate the national budget. The draft subnational governance policy provides a mechanism to have the government, civil society, elected representatives and citizens consult with each other on addressing challenges through the national budget," said Deputy Minister Payenda.

The panel in Washington was co-hosted by Oxfam, and included panelists from Oxfam, the International Monetary Fund, and the finance ministers of Mexico and Georgia. (Pajhwok)

(7) 50 Taliban

and ground where 50 Taliban including some of their key commanders were killed and 32 suspects were arrested, the statement added.

According to the NDS statement, a bomb-making center with 30 bombs, 20 kilograms each, and 10 houses were destroyed in the operation.

The NDS statement said that at least 50 motorbikes, 10 vehicles and different weapons were either destroyed or seized during the operation.

Taliban has not commented on the military operation so far. (Tolonews)

(8) Ongoing Arg-

standoff. We should work with no concern," said Matin.

The tension between the two sides increased when President Ashraf Ghani removed Atta Mohammad Noor from his position as governor of Balkh last year in December.

Government and Jamiat delegations held seven rounds of discussions to break the stalemate but the result is not clear so far. "Political talks are ongoing and when the discussions are final, the new Balkh governor will be introduced," said Munira Yusufzada, spokesperson of Independent Directorate of Local Governance.

(Tolonews)

(9) All Groups

achieve peace, security and prosperity for their country," he said. "While in Kabul, I had the opportunity to meet with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani and other government leaders. During each of these meetings, Afghanistan's leadership made it clear to me that despite the recent tragic events, the Afghan government will continue to work to create the necessary conditions to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and establish an environment for a sustained peace.... Unfortunately, at this stage everyone but the Taliban appears ready for peace. The Taliban's reprehensible attacks targeting innocent civilians demonstrate that they are not ready to enter into good faith peace negotiations," said Sullivan.

He said US wants Pakistan to eliminate terrorists' safe havens on its soil to overcome the conflict in Afghanistan. "We have made clear to the Pakistani government our expectations for them to take action against terrorists that are in sanctuaries in Pakistan to reduce the pressure and the threat of violence in Afghanistan and to contribute to a lasting and enduring peace in Afghanistan and in the region," said Sullivan.

Meanwhile, Pentagon Chief spokesperson Dana White said they call on Islamabad to join the US in counter-terrorism efforts, despite it has supported terrorist groups.

"We have said many times that Pakistan has an opportunity. It has been a victim of terrorism and has supported terrorism. And we are looking for Pakistan to actively join. It can do the things we need them to do to confront terrorism," said White.

The White House this week said US President Donald Trump has provided the US commanders with more resources and authority to target terrorists' sanctuaries in Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Tolonews)

(10) Pakistan Extends

Pakistan -- most of them for decades. This population is in addition to a million undocumented refugees.

The cabinet decision comes at a time when relations between the uneasy neighbours have hit a new low in the wake of the latest wave of attacks in Kabul. The Afghan government blames Pakistan-based militants for the assaults. (Pajhwok)

(11) Eight Political

consulted and discussed the mater for two weeks and have concluded that there should be an amendment brought to the election law.

Major points according to the parties are improving political parties' role in parliamentary elections and keeping the 34 provinces as 34 constituencies.

"Political parties and movements must be given a role," Noor Rahman Akhlaqi, member of Jamiat-e-Islami Party said.

The parties have also asked that the details of the presence of parties and international electoral observers in the electoral process should be mentioned in the law.

"Amendment to every law will make it better and it is good for every law," said Aimal Ebad, political affairs analyst.

Amid the suggestions, the head of the Independent Election Commission Gulajan Abdulbadi Sayyad said people will vote by using paper identity cards in the next elections.

"A number of Afghans, especially those living in villages and women in particular who have not received identity cards should get the (paper) identity cards. We have been told at least 10 million (paper) identity cards will be distributed," he said. This comes after Hizb-e-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar this week called for highlighting the role of political parties in parliamentary elections. (Tolonews)

(12) Enemy inside

their government to share the evidence of Pakistan's ISI involvement in recent attacks with the United Nations and the European Union.

"We and the nation together support the government because we are going towards self-sufficiency and our biased neighbors cannot tolerate our development so they commit barbaric acts," he said.

Jannat Khan Samkani, secretary of Paktia provincial council, urged politicians to realize the country's sensitive situation and stand beside people and the government.

He said some figures by giving misleading statements wanted to provoke the public and help the enemy to secure their own interests.

"It is a joint sorrow for all of us, but some politicians turn everything towards their own interests and do not care about the country situation. A common man cannot transfer bombs to cities or place them in ambulances, our detective organs should be strong," he said. The provincial council members also voiced on militants not to hear to outsiders and avoid killing their own brethren or destroy public facilities.

During the last one month, at least 592 civilians have suffered casualties in security incidents across the country. (Pajhwok)

(13) 4 of a Family

had been delivered two injured children and one injured woman from the scene.

A security operation has been ongoing against militants in the area over the past one week. So far nine posts have been established and a 10 kilometer area cleared of Taliban. (Pajhwok)

(14) Nearly 40

Taliban commanders were among 30 insurgents killed in the operation in Khwaja Sabz Posh district of Faryab province, the release said, adding the four Quetta Council members were killed in the Maiwand district of southern Kandahar province.

It identified the slain Quetta Shura members as Mualvi Bacha, Mualvi Baqi, Haji Adam Khan and Haji Nasro.

Five Taliban were killed in Waza Khwa district of southeastern Paktika province and their two motorcycles and some weapons were confiscated. Four militants were killed in Helmand's Nad Ali district and three in Farah's Bala Buluk district and seven others wounded.

Two militants were killed in Syedabad district of Maidan Wardak and one Daesh gunman was killed in Kunar's Watapur district and a second wounded.

A dozen suspected militants were arrested during an operation in the Dilaram district of Nimroz province. The security forces also seized one bike and some explosives and weapons from the detainees. (Pajhwok)

(15) New Appointments

of the preaching and recruitment commission.

Mullah Daud Muzzamil and Haji Farooq have been appointed as the first and second deputies to the Taliban military chief Sadar Ibrahim.

The new Taliban spymaster, Hamidullah Akhunzada, is believed to be close to Haibatullah. He was able to change the command of the prisons and ransom commission.

"The ransom and prisoner swap committee is one of the money-milking commissions for Taliban. Haibatullah has to make and distribute money if he desires to compete with the well-off Helmand Shura," remarked the former Taliban governor.

Meanwhile, other senior Taliban leaders called the new list of appointments a bit shocking and reflective of the powers between the Helmand Shura under Sadar Ibrahim and Pakistan-based militant leaders including Haibatullah.

"Mullah Sherin's appointment as governor for Kandahar and the same assignment for Haji Lala in Daikundi -- where Taliban have a negligible presence -- show a clear power struggle between the Helmand Taliban and those based in Pakistan under Mullah Haibatullah," said Mullah Niazi.

Sherin and Lala Agha Nusrat were close to Sadar Ibrahim, head of the Taliban military council based in Helmand. Ninety percent of the province, a failed legacy of British forces in Afghanistan, is controlled by the militants, who earn huge revenue from drugs and smuggling. Enjoying life in Pakistan, Haibatullah has appointed his tribesmen to the Taliban's new structure. He wants to grab control of the movement. (Pajhwok)

(16) Insecurity

and they could not be retaken due to a shortage of police forces," he said.

"We have several times requested for increase of our personnel, but the problem still persists," he said.

He said the strength of ALP personnel for his district was 200 but 180 of them had been sent for duty elsewhere.

Governor's spokesman, Arif Noori, confirmed to Pajhwok police shortage in Gilan and Maqur districts and said decisions about police strength were taken by the central government. Noori said the problem had been shared with relevant organs for solution. (Pajhwok)

(17) MoI, NDS

officials visited Pakistan on Wednesday and met with high-ranking intelligence and military leaders to discuss the recent attacks on Afghanistan.

Barmak said they met with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief and other high-ranking military officials to discuss the issue of insurgency and recent attacks and emphasized that the Taliban claimed responsibility for a number of attacks and said their orders were coming from Pakistan.

Barmak meanwhile implied Pakistan is cooperating with Afghanistan in the investigation and said Islamabad has promised Afghanistan it will take action against insurgents.

Stanekzai said as a follow up, Pakistan will send a delegation to Kabul on Saturday to give feedback on questions Afghanistan put to them. He said their trip to Islamabad had been the first step in their investigation.

Barmak meanwhile said they will inform the public about any progress after Satur-

day's visit by the Pakistanis.

Stanekzai however stated it was "clear that attacks (on Afghanistan) are originating from across the border and that the international community knows where insurgents have safe havens."

He would not however reveal the names of suspects on the list handed to the Pakistani's -- stating that it could jeopardize their enquiry.

Stanekzai also made it clear that recent attacks had been different and had targeted civilians, while the use of an ambulance in a bombing was also in contravention of international laws.

He said these "attacks clearly show crimes against humanity."

This comes after a spate of attacks in Kabul and around the country in the past 12 days claimed close to 150 lives and wounded hundreds more.

In response to the remarks, Pakistani embassy in Kabul issued a press release on Thursday saying that the Pakistan delegation's visit is not a follow up of the Afghan delegations's trip to Pakistan.

"Pakistan has not given any commitment to give reply to the information received from the NDS Chief Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, during his trip to Islamabad, yesterday. The Pakistan delegation visiting Kabul on Saturday 3rd February 2018 is a consequence of the ongoing negotiations on the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Solidarity (APAPS) since November last year. A press release to this effect was issued by the Embassy on 31st January 2018," the press release said.

The statement noted that the information provided by the NDS chief is being examined for its authenticity. (Tolonews)

(18) Balkh Issue

a combination of political, social, materialistic and non-materialistic asset. Balkh is a symbol of national unity of the people of Afghanistan and I am the servant of every individual of this country," Ghani told the visiting delegation.

He assured the people and different stakeholders of Balkh province that all steps regarding the issue of Balkh would be taken in line with the constitution.

The president added: "The system will be strengthened through legal steps, justice and a proper strategy. No one, including me, have the right to endanger the supreme interest of the country. Those who claim to be politician should adopt democratic process."

Referring to the recent terrorist attacks, the president said: "We all are mourning but at the same time we are determined to build the future of the country." (Pajhwok)

(19) Trump: Safe

in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

The document also stated that "Trump will relentlessly pursue threats to America's security, prioritizing efforts to confront and defeat radical Islamic terror and the ideology that sustains it."

According to the statement Daesh has lost almost 100 percent of territory it once controlled in Iraq and Syria and that "along with our partners, we will continue to pursue the thousands of ISIS (Daesh) fighters who remain at large.

"... we will not rest until we have achieved the enduring defeat of ISIS and decimated global

The statement noted that Trump's foreign policy is putting the interests and security of the American people first adding that Trump is restoring American leadership in the Middle East, rebuilding relations with Israel and taking strong action to confront aggressors in the region.

It also stated that the Trump administration is confronting Iran's destabilizing behavior and the threat of its nuclear program, working to fix the serious flaws in the Iran nuclear deal, and sanctioning dozens of Iranian officials and entities.

"The President is revitalizing the NATO alliance by successfully encouraging our partners to meet their defense spending commitments and share the burden of collective defense.

President Trump is pressing for reform at the United Nations, and will consider withholding funds to United Nations entities that perpetuate the dependency of millions."

This statement came just hours after Trump delivered his State of the Union address in Washington DC on Tuesday and said US forces and their Afghan counterparts will engage in the war in the country with new rules and regulations.

He also announced that he had signed an executive order to keep Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba open.

This decision is a reversal of his predecessor president Barack Obama's policy. "Today I'm keeping another promise. I just signed an order directing Secretary (James) Mattis... to reexamine our military detention policy and to keep open the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay," Trump said in his speech.

"I am also asking the Congress to ensure that, in the fight against ISIS (Daesh) and al-Qaeda, we continue to have all necessary power to detain terrorists - wherever we chase them down." (Tolonews)