US Pullout: Rumours to Afftect Talks with Taliban

**KABUL** - US President Donald Trump’s reported order to the Pentagon to withdraw half of America’s troops from Afghanistan, which the US-based weekly magazine The Economist wrote the reports appeared plausible, in so far as Trump had just announced a withdrawal from Syria and had publicly wrestled about keeping any troops in Afghanistan in all 2017, before deciding to increase their number from 8,400 to 14,000.

Yet the sudden reversal had come out of the blue. The Afghan government and startled allies with troops in Afghanistan, such as Britain, said they had not been consulted and were awaiting confirmation, it added. According to the widely-circulated report, the biggest immediate impact of the rumors of a withdrawal could be on nascent peace negotiations with the Taliban. It was last year that the Trump administration enticed efforts to find a political settlement. In December, US envoy spoke with Taliban representatives in the hope of launching formal negotiations... (More on P4)...

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In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said Mohib briefed the Indian side on the situation, holding of parliamentary elections, the presidential vote and Kabul’s efforts for peace and reconciliation. Doval reiterated that India would continue to support all efforts for peace and reconciliation that are Afghan-owned, Afghan-led and Afghan-controlled. The meeting between Afghan National Security Advisor (NSA) Hamidul Mohib and his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval was held in New Delhi on Friday. The Afghan side briefed Doval on the ongoing efforts for peace and reconciliation. In return, Doval highlighted India’s continued support for all efforts for peace and reconciliation that are Afghan-owned, Afghan-led and Afghan-controlled.

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Second Candidate Registers for 2019 Presidential Elections

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