Foreign Policy to Focus on Threats from Daesh, Al Qaeda: Obama

WASHINGTON - U.S President Barack Obama, who delivered his final State of the Union address early Wednesday, said that their foreign policy must be focused on the threats from Daesh and Al Qaeda.

During his speech, Obama said that “our foreign policy must be focused on the threat from ISIL [Daesh] and al Qaeda, but it can’t stop there. For even without ISIL, instability will continue for decades in many parts of the world - in the Middle East, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in parts of Central America, Africa and Asia.”

“Some of these places may become safe havens for new terrorist networks; others will fall victim to ethnic conflict, or famine, leading to the next wave of refugees. The world will look to us to help solve these problems, and our answer needs to be more than tough talk or calls to carpet bomb civilizations,” he said.

This comes while the Daesh conflict threatens to re-engage the U.S. in Iraq, while the number of troops in Afghanistan since Obama’s first term both sharply increased (during a policy called “the surge”) and sharply decreased.

While the U.S finished its combat mission in Afghanistan at the end of 2014 and Obama backed off on his original plan to have only 1,000 troops - mainly to ensure security and training - as of 2015. But now about 5,500 troops will still be in the country when he leaves office in 2017.

“We also can’t try to take over and rebuild every country that falls into crisis. That’s not leadership; that’s a recipe for quagmire, spilling American blood and treasure that ultimately weakens us. If it’s the lesson of Vietnam, it’s clear. And so we need to learn from it,” he said.

Fortunately, there’s a smarter approach, he said during his speech.

“Fortunately, there’s a smarter approach. It’s not about pumping more money into our foreign policy. It’s about using the best instruments to achieve our foreign policy objectives. We have a range of tools at our disposal - diplomacy, development, aid, counterterrorism, and above all, our alliances. We need to make sure we’re using all of them.”...

HRW Calls on Govt. to Include Women in Peace Talks Process

KABUL - Human Rights Watch on Wednesday called on the Afghan government to stick to its promise to include women in the peace process.

In a statement issued by the organization, HRW said: “The Afghan government should quickly rectify its missed deadline to produce a plan to include women in the peace process.”

They went on to say: “In September 2015, the Afghan government of President Ashraf Ghani promised to include women in international discussions on a political settlement for peace, but after three meetings in 2015, no such talks have taken place.”

Ghani Assures Stronger Security Measures for Pakistani Diplomats

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani called Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday, and expressed concern and grief over the attack on Pakistani consulate in Jalalabad.

Ghani assured the prime minister of more security measures for Pakistani diplomats in Afghanistan, and appealed him regarding the attack, a statement released by the Pakistani Prime Minister house said.

PM Nawaz said terrorism was a common enemy for the two countries, which will be fought against together to eliminate it once and for all.

The prime minister also thanked the Afghan president for his concerns and pledged cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the death of the diplomats.

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Quote of the Day

Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.

Martin Luther

WSJ Approves New Draft Law in 3 Chapters and 2 Articles

KABUL - The Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) approved the draft law on communication services in three chapters and two articles.

According to the law, 10 percent tax will be given from the telecommunication mobile services.

The Parliament has also passed the amendments to the Income Tax Law and travel tax and approved three legislative decrees:

- We have approved three decrees: Nuclear energy, agricultural pastilles and property of Parliament.

"The delivery will be in February and for now it’s just for our domestic consumption," said Muhammed Nader Ahmad Zai, second deputy speaker of Parliament.

"Several companies that have been involved with the communications sector have the ability to provide all the services in Afghanistan," he said...

Ex-Jihadi Leaders Welcome Four-Nation Peace Talks Meeting

KABUL - A number of former jihadi leaders and MPs on Wednesday welcomed the four-nation meeting on peace talks - which took place in Islamabad on Monday.

The jihadi leaders said they were hopeful about results-oriented peace talks with the Taliban, but added that they have doubts over Pakistan’s sincerity towards Afghanistan.

"Peace will be ensured in Afghanistan when all the warring sides in the country join the peace talks, but it will not happen if some factions join peace talks," (More on P4)...(3)

Russia to Supply Small Arms to Afghanistan

MOSCOW - Amid increasing concerns about instability in and around Afghanistan, the Russian foreign ministry said Wednesday that it plans to supply small arms to Kabul though it will refrain from sending other weapons.

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