

(1) Afghan Air...

bombs, dropped the GBU-58 on March 22. Radmanish said: "This is new and modern technology (for Afghanistan) in which a bomb is dropped by a pilot from inside the aircraft's cabin and is guided by the pilot towards its target."

Some MPs meanwhile said it was a big step in fighting terrorists in the country.

"Our demand is to use all facilities on the ground to eliminate the enemy. This technology was not provided to our forces previously. Now the Afghan forces should use the opportunity," said Mohayuddin Monsef, a member of Meshrano Jirga, the Upper House of Parliament.

"You must win when a war starts. I hope that this technology will help our forces move towards victory," said Khalil Ahmad Shaheedzada, an MP.

This comes amid an ever-strengthening air force. On Wednesday, the Ministry of Defense also confirmed that India will supply Afghanistan with four Mi-24 helicopters ahead of the upcoming fighting season. Afghanistan reached out to India for assistance in acquiring some helicopters urgently needed to help in counter-terrorism operations. (Tolo news)

(2) Taliban Welcome...

Taliban welcomed Helmandis' peace efforts.

He said: "Those seeking peace should first go to Kandahar Airport and Shorab base and convince the Americans for peace because the keys of Afghan war are with the US."

The US and the Afghan government continued to use fighter jets for bombardments on people, he said. He said people's neutral efforts for peace should be appreciated.

Also in a statement, the Taliban said "peace is the huge dream and a long-standing demand of every Afghan."

The statement said the Taliban had been "forced" to fight and the US could put an end to the ongoing firefight.

The Taliban also warned the peace activists against being used by intelligence networks, saying such a case "if any unfortunate incident takes place, the responsibility would be on the organizers of the tents."

"It is not a fight for material interest, but the fight between Islam and Kufar and taking this fight to the conclusion is the duty of every Muslim." (Pajhwok)

(3) Human Right...

armed conflict; protection of children in armed conflict; elimination of violence against women, and increasing women's participation in peace-building and security, and gender equality; prevention of torture and arbitrary detention; and the integration of human rights into peace and reconciliation processes.

Presenting the report in Geneva, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kate Gilmore said that despite positive developments and constructive initiatives led by the government, the enjoyment of human rights remains elusive for the people of Afghanistan.

"With Afghanistan serving on the Human Rights Council, OHCHR looks forward to further engaging with the government for the implementation of its voluntary commitments and pledges and of the recommendations presented in the report," said Gilmore.

The UNHCR stated that in 2017, the overall deterioration in security and the lack of resources for public policies had an adverse impact on the situation of human rights.

"Civilian casualties remained high, and continued conflict and insecurity gave rise to further political and economic uncertainty. The prospects for the achievement of a sustainable peace therefore remained limited," read the report.

The issue of women's rights was also reason for concern. The report noted that although government took steps to increase respect for women's rights, the actual participation of women in all spheres of life, including peace processes, remained low. Women also continued to suffer from various forms of violence and harassment.

(4) UNHCR, PPAE...

"The poverty graduation project focuses on vocational training skills development, enterprise development and agriculture initiatives. The trainees will be given toolkits to start an economic activity and will be assisted to create their own business plans." Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela said: "Poverty graduation is a practical approach, with the potential to contribute towards the creation of durable and sustainable livelihood solutions for refugees who live in Pakistan."

Ms. Menikdiwela said such projects would focus on skills and enterprise development and assist refugees in seeking employment both in Pakistan and help provide sustainable reintegration if they decide to return to Afghanistan. UNHCR aims to expand and replicate the project in other priority districts where Afghan refugees are living after an evaluation has been carried out.

Pakistan continues to host 1.4 million Afghan refugees. In recognition of the support provided by the government and people of Pakistan for nearly four decades, UNHCR's budget to support refugees in the country

has increased in each of the past four years. The budget approved by UNHCR's Executive Committee for Pakistan to support Afghan refugees in 2018 is USD 57,725,000. In 2015, this budget stood at USD 44,568,000. UNHCR also implements the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) Program to support Afghan refugees and their host communities. Since its launch in 2009, the RAHA program has provided assistance to over 10.6 million people through 4,100 projects worth USD200 million in Pakistan in the sectors of education, health, livelihood, water, sanitation, infrastructure and social protection. (Pajhwok)

(5) Afghanistan Beats...

Beating Cambodia was Afghanistan's only win in the qualifying tournament after having drawn three matches and losing two.

Twenty four teams have already qualified for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup which will run from January 5 to February 1 next year.

The winner of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup will earn the right to participate in the 2021 FIFA Confederations Cup. (Tolo news)

(6) India to Provide...

India," he said.

Afghanistan has a four-year military transition plan backed by the US to modernise its air force, but the country reached out to India for assistance in acquiring some helicopters needed immediately for counter-terrorism operations. "India has been kind enough to agree to that request... Afghanistan will have ready helicopters that will be used in the coming season," Abdali said.

Two years ago, India supplied four Mi-24s to the Afghan Air Force, marking a significant shift from its earlier reluctance to provide lethal military equipment, the Hindustan Times reported.

However, reports indicate that some of these helicopters have been grounded because due to the lack of spares. The Hindustan Times reported that Abdali said India is working on plans to help repair and refurbish these Mi-24s and other Russian-origin helicopters and transport aircraft of the Afghan Air Force.

In his interview, Abdali was quoted as saying: "No one can shy away from the fact that terrorism continues to spread from within Pakistan."

"The fact of the matter is terrorist groups still have found the place to live freely, and to cross and to then hurt others."

He said terror attacks in Afghanistan had increased after the US announced its South Asia policy.

"More terrorist activity has just one message for me personally - to look at this as if (it's a) no to a call that don't use terrorism. The ball is in the world community's court and we have to respond," he said.

Asked about the Pakistan Army's demand that Afghanistan "end" India's influence in the country in return for help in controlling the Taliban, as detailed in Steve Coll's book Directorate S, the Hindustan Times quoted Abdali as saying: "It's quite distressing to see expectations of this nature from one neighbour to another neighbour...Can Pakistan accept, for example, Afghanistan's demand to cut its ties with China? No way, and we will never ask."

He added, "We have heard for years a desire that we should have no ties with India. The Afghanistan that I know and belong to will never ever surrender to anyone's demand of this nature, whether this is vis a vis India or any other nation." (Tolonews)

(7) India Reiterates...

returning Afghan refugees," he said. Akbar said that India's other key priority is helping Afghanistan in building "robust, reliable and year-round connectivity, improving trade and investment relations of Afghanistan with prominent markets in the region and beyond".

"We strongly believe that lack of connectivity directly impacts the economic, security and political situation in Afghanistan.

"A well-connected Afghanistan can hope to become economically vibrant, prosperous and politically stable. It will be able to engage the energies of its youth, and attract back lost talent from an Afghan diaspora." He also said: "The Indian grant aid of 170,000 tons of wheat supplies to Afghanistan is currently transitioning through Chabahar (Port in Iran)," Akbar said.

"The India-Afghanistan air freight corridor, established in June 2017, is another important achievement," he said, adding that there are now cargo flights between Kabul, Kandahar, New Delhi and Mumbai.

"Thus far, over 110 flights have carried over 2,000 tons of exports from Afghanistan to India worth over tens of millions of dollars." (Tolo news)

(8) DoD Finds Major...

consistently followed property accountability procedures.

"For example, an ANDSF vehicle that was reported as destroyed in battle and removed from the property books was later brought in for maintenance," the report stated.

The report states that the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, or CSTC-A, cannot definitively account for \$3.1 billion USD of US taxpayer's money that went to the Afghan government from

2014 to 2017 to aid the Afghan army and national police, the Defense Department's Inspector General found, according a report released last week.

The lack of accountability leaves the funds vulnerable to "fraud, waste and abuse", the report stated.

"CSTC-A officials did not effectively manage and oversee the US direct funding provided to the Ministries of Defense and Interior, which oversees Afghanistan's Army and National Police, respectively," the report stated.

"CSTC-A management and oversight of the direct funding is intended to increase [Afghan security forces] effectiveness and capabilities so the [forces] can become more professional and increasingly self-sustaining," read the report.

Officials from the command, which is charged with funding and training Afghan forces, largely blamed "inadequate staffing and security concerns" for any shortcomings. However, the IG found systemic issues were also to blame.

CSTC-A officials established unrealistic and unattainable goals for the Afghans to improve their own capabilities toward achieving independence in supplying their own troops, the report says.

The report was the eighth and final report in a series of oversight investigations into CSTC-A functions since 2015. The reports have uncovered widespread issues within the command, including the commands' inability to account for more than \$700 million USD worth of ammunition provided to the Afghan security forces between 2015 and 2017.

The Afghan Ministry of Defense has however rejected the report.

"I am sure that the number of vehicles which needed repairing is less than what has been shown in the report," Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammad Radmanish told TOLONews.

"Right now, a large number of our vehicles are being repaired and will be available for use very soon."

One member of the Meshrano Jirga, the Upper House of Parliament, Nader Baloch, criticized government for its lack of attention to maintain military vehicles.

"The vehicles are used for personal purposes and besides that little attention is paid to them when they are used, while these vehicles should be used in a better way in order to ensure the safety of people in Afghanistan," Baloch told TOLONews.

Officials at CSTC-A also faced scrutiny last year when John Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, uncovered \$28 million USD of wasteful spending on Afghan National Army uniforms in a decade. (Tolo news)

(9) 26 Insurgents...

17 suspects were detained by the security forces.

Radmanish did not provide more information about the operation.

Taliban did not confirm the claims. (Tolo news)

(10) Uruzgan districts...

officials themselves threatened him and he had to shift to Tirinkot.

A source in the appellate prosecutor's office told Pajhwok Afghan News no prosecutor had ever traveled to any district of Uruzgan in the past 16 years. He said people in districts brought their cases to the provincial capital.

Head of the provincial courts said security of judicial organs had not been assured and claimed security officials did not cooperate with them.

Governor Asadullah Saeed acknowledged no judge or prosecutor was available in districts and pledged to dispatch judges and provide security to them.

He said he had heard people in far-flung areas referred their cases to Taliban because they provided speed and quick justice. (Pajhwok)

(11) Regional Efforts...

shun violence and join the peace process. He expressed concern over the proliferation of Daesh and increase in drug production in Afghanistan.

He also stressed the need for cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours on preventing the cross-border movement of terrorists and criminal networks.

Pakistan's proposal "Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity" was aimed at developing mechanisms for bilateral cooperation in security, counter-terrorism, border controls and smooth return of Afghan refugees to their homeland, he added., (Pajhwok)

(12) Tashkent Meeting...

for bringing peace, stability and development to their country.

It recognised the importance of international and regional initiatives to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan, in particular the Kabul Process, as a main forum under the leadership of the Afghan government. In the declaration, the participants said they:

Support Central Asian states' efforts toward advancing the peace process and socio-economic development of Afghanistan, and their involvement in regional political

and economic processes; Emphasize the importance of the Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan: Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Connectivity as a continuation of the international community's efforts in support of Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process;

Voice our strong backing for the National Unity Government's offer to launch direct talks with the Taliban, without any preconditions, with the ultimate goal of reaching the comprehensive peace agreement with the Taliban that is backed by the international community; and call upon the Taliban to accept this offer for a peace process that is Afghan-led and Afghan-owned and in accordance with the relevant Resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations;

Emphasize that a political settlement with the Taliban is the best way to end violence in Afghanistan, and there is need for direct peace talks between the Government of Afghanistan and reconcilable elements of the Taliban without any preconditions; Reiterate our support to the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to begin direct talks with the Taliban and acknowledge the Kabul Process as a main forum and vehicle along with other regional and international peace initiatives on Afghanistan;

Call on the Taliban to recognize their share of responsibility for bringing peace and security to Afghanistan in order to end the suffering of the Afghan people and officially declare their willingness for entering into direct peace talks with the Government of Afghanistan with full support from the international community through a mutually agreed format;

Urge the Afghan Government and the Taliban to move towards a political settlement. An inclusive peace agreement will be a victory for all its parties and a defeat for none. It should guarantee the inclusion of the Taliban in the political process as a legitimate political actor, the renunciation by the Taliban of violence and breaking of all ties to international terrorism, including Al-Qaeda, Daesh and other Transnational Terrorist Networks (TINs), as well as the respect of the Afghan Constitution including the equal rights of all Afghans;

Stress the importance of women's full and meaningful participation in Afghan reconciliation, security and economy, pledge continued support for international efforts aimed at Afghan women's empowerment, and remain fully committed to support the implementation of the Afghanistan's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security;

Support the government of Afghanistan in creating favourable conditions for the start and progress of the peace talks through provision of effective incentives and oppose with necessary measures those who prove themselves irreconcilable to peace, continue to commit violence, bloodshed and atrocities and provide assistance to TINs;

Call on all countries to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and non-interference in its internal affairs in order to achieve its security, stability and prosperity;

Pledge our support for a peaceful Afghanistan from where terrorism will not be able to threaten other countries and which can fully rely on its own forces in creating security on its territory;

Condemn the recent heinous attacks against the people of Afghanistan and express our strong solidarity, denounce terrorism in all its forms and manifestations without any distinction and acknowledge the serious and common threats emanating from the nexus between trans-national terrorism, narcotics and organized crime to the security and stability of Afghanistan, the region and the international community at large; Emphasize the importance of practical regional and international cooperation for the elimination of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in accordance with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant UNSC resolutions;

Stress the importance of intensified practical efforts by the Government of Afghanistan in cooperation with regional and international partners to address drug production and trafficking, precursor and weapons smuggling as a main source of financing terrorism;

Recognize that terrorism, narcotics and organized crime are interlinked global threats and require a common strategy based on the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy;

Affirm that all security assistance to Afghanistan should be provided through the Afghan Government and strongly oppose any provision of financial support, material assistance or arms to the Taliban and ISIS/Daesh, which only serves to destabilize Afghanistan and prolong the conflict; Support the recent progress in regional economic cooperation and connectivity projects that recognize Afghanistan as a natural land-bridge connecting Central Asia with South Asia and the wider region. Economic integration of Afghanistan in the region will further contribute to lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and the wider region; Stress that the timely implementation of

regional trade-transit, transport, energy, infrastructure, communication projects connecting Afghanistan to its immediate neighbourhood and the wider region will provide tangible benefit to the people of the region, as a whole, improve livelihoods, and reinforce ongoing efforts to promote peace and combat terrorism and illicit activities;

Acknowledge that, drawing on the previous initiatives, the Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan: Peace Process, Security Cooperation & Regional Connectivity provided a unique opportunity for open and comprehensive discussions on a wide range of issues regarding the Afghan peace process, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics efforts, regional economic cooperation and stimulated the elaboration of mutually agreed solutions;

Express deep gratitude to the Government of Uzbekistan for the traditional hospitality and excellent organization of the high-level Conference in Tashkent, as well as the determined efforts to establish a broad and firm regional and international consensus on the issues of peace, security and regional connectivity.

This declaration was adopted in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, by Afghanistan, China, France, Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, the UK, the US, Uzbekistan, the EU and UN. (Pajhwok)

(13) Russian FM ...

meanwhile expressed support for the Afghan-led peace process and said Russia's goal was to help stabilize the countries of the region and expand economic cooperation between them.

Russian Foreign Minister proposed that a trilateral meeting between Afghanistan, Russia and the United States be held, the statement said.

Ghani welcomed the proposal and said the process of holding the meeting would be pursued through the relevant channels.

In addition, the Presidential Palace statement said that Ghani also met with British Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Gareth Bayley, and Thomas Shannon, the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

Shannon reassured Ghani of his country's commitment to implement the war strategy, saying that the US supports a fully-fledged Afghan-led peace process, the statement said.

Meanwhile in a separate meeting with the UK's special envoy, Ghani thanked Bayley for Britain's support and cooperation.

Bayley meanwhile, reassured Ghani of his country's commitment to supporting Afghanistan and once again expressed the UK's support for the Afghan-led peace process, the statement added.

This comes after Ghani met with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini - also on the sidelines of the Tashkent peace conference.

The president thanked the European Union for their assistance and cooperation to Afghanistan over the past few years. He also thanked Mogherini and her accompanying delegation for attending the Tashkent conference.

Mogherini meanwhile praised Afghanistan for its achievements over the past few years, especially in the areas of regional connectivity, transit and trade, the statement said.

Mogherini said the EU supports the Afghan-led peace process and added that it is ready to cooperate at any stage of the peace process. (Tolo news)

(14) 4 Afghan Commandos...

three Pakistani nationals were also killed in the clash.

However, Taliban spokesman Qari Yusuf Ahmadi said 14 Afghan commando soldiers were killed and seven others were wounded in the clash. Ahmadi confirmed the death of only two fighters in the firefight.

The Ministry of Defense on March 10 had said four commando soldiers were killed in a clash in Bala Boluk district while the Taliban had claimed killing and wounding dozens. (Pajhwok)

(15) Nearly 1400...

captured a vehicle, two Kalashnikovs, 10 magazines and 216 Kalashnikovs bullets from the detainees, he added.

According to Khogyani, police had detained another insurgent named Sahib Jan, a resident of Khogyani district, in the Surkhrod district.

Mohammad Wali, accused of threatening people on the phone and targeting people after planting landmines, was also detained. Amirullah wanted to join Daesh had also been detained, Khogyani said.

The detainees had confessed to their crimes before media and had called on their comrades to renounce violence and join the peace process, the official said.

He said the governor had tasked all detective and security organs with confiscating unauthorized ambulances and bringing their drivers and owners to justice. (Pajhwok)