AAF to Receive 58 Armed Black Hawk Helicopters

KABUL - According to Mr. Shires, senior editor of the Daily Outlook newspaper, as part of the Black Hawk deal, UH-60 models have been upgraded to a UH-60A+ variant with more powerful engines. Fifty-eight of the aircraft will be fitted with additional night pods and machine guns to provide close air support like the KA-50s. Army Maj. Azizullah Lipo, a program manager at the NATO's Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air, has told the paper that the training of the Afghan pilots for the helicopters is underway. This comes as the Afghan government continues to build up its forces with the support of its international allies and NATO has stepped up efforts to boost the capabilities of Afghan national defense and security forces, particularly the Afghan Air Force. The NATO defense minister also concluded in Brussels last week with the Resolute Support mission, to continue training, advising, and assist mission to the Afghan forces being a part of the meeting. According... (More on P4, D)

US Troops will Join Afghan Forces in Joint Operations

WASHINGTON - A top American diplomat has told lawmakers that the Taliban are a key impediment to a negotiated political settlement in Afghanistan and even the US wants the Taliban to engage directly with the Afghan government. Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Alice Wells told lawmakers during a Congressional hearing this week. “We have to change that calculus of the Taliban using both military and political means.”

We want to start with—from India to Afghanistan, and to call in air strikes when needed, US officials said. Foreign Policy reported that several current and former Pentagon officials said the Trump administration is also sending thousands of additional troops to Afghanistan to participate in these missions. The magazine reported that hundreds of American troops will accompany Afghan forces on combat missions, when they will be able to directly request bombing raids and artillery fire for their Afghan partners.

Last month, the US Air Forces Central Command reported that the number of US air strikes in Afghanistan hit a seven-year high in September as the military action on President Donald Trump’s new strategy for the country. US forces dropped 741 bombs against the Taliban and the militant Islamic State (IS) group targets in Afghanistan in September, an increase of 50 percent from the 585 dropped in August and the most since the Battle of Badakhshan in late 2010, when more than 100 US and British troops were killed while fighting the Taliban. Senior US officials...

Karzai Holds Talks on Loya Jirga and Elections with Russian Ambassador

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday said government will not allow for interference in the nation’s legal and judicial system, and that more comprehensive programs will be introduced to make sure that justice is provided to the people at grass roots level.

He said that the legal and judicial institutions in Afghanistan are free and independent and that no one, including the president, should try to intervene in the justice sector. Ghani made the remarks during the closing ceremony of the Fifth Afghanistan Attorneys. “... (More on P4, D)

Taliban Key Impediment to Afghan Settlement: US

WASHINGTON - A top American diplomat has told lawmakers that the Taliban are a key impediment to a negotiated political settlement in Afghanistan, and even the US wants the Taliban to engage directly with the Afghan government. “The key impediment to achieving a peaceful negotiated settlement in Afghanistan, adding the US wants the Taliban on the table as early as possible.”

“We have to change that calculus of the Taliban using both military and political means.”

Wells said the Trump administration has always set no preconditions to negotiations but “in conditions”. The in conditions have been a cessation of violence, cessation of ties to terrorists that the Taliban are key impediment to a negotiated political settlement in Afghanistan, adding the US wants the Taliban to engage directly with the Afghan government.

He reiterated NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg’s announcement that the organization would also be sending in more troops, in addition to the United States’ troop surge of about 4,000. Belarus announced that NATO approved the Afghan government’s four-year strategy and pledged to continue supporting the country’s military endeavors financially. He also said a clear message emerged during the NATO meeting, and that was aimed at Pakistan to stop supporting insurgents.

Brahmani Reports on NATO Meeting, Says Insurgent Attacks up by 13%

WASHINGTON - The US wants to make sure that talks between the US and Pakistan are a success and is working with all NATO members and India to bring about a resolution to the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has said. He said that President Donald Trump’s new South Asia strategy comprised regionalisation, realigning of forces and reinforcing them.

What we want to do is work with India to across the region—to is make certain that every- thing we work on works. And on the same sheet of music. We want to make certain that no terrorist organi- zation can find a haven anywhere and, with a border adjoining Afghanistan that makes Paki- stan a priority,” Mattis said. “... (More on P4, A)

State of Prisons in Afghanistan Remains Inhuman: IWA

KABUL - The Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) on Sunday launched a report that said despite spending millions of dollars, the state of prisons in Afghanistan remained inhumane. In its report, the watchdog analyzed three ma- jor prisons in Afghanistan, Pul-i-Charkhi on the eastern outskirts of Kabul, the central prison in northern Baghlan and central Maidan Wardak provinces, where basic provisions for women and minorities, and those that continues to be the case”, she added. “... (More on P4, A)

US Working with Pakistan to Cut Insurgents off: Mattis

WASHINGTON - The US wants to make sure that talks between the US and Pakistan are a success and is working with all NATO members and India to bring about a resolution to the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has said. He said that President Donald Trump’s new South Asia strategy comprised regionalisation, realigning of forces and reinforcing them.

What we want to do is work with India to across the region—to is make certain that every- thing we work on works. And on the same sheet of music. We want to make certain that no terrorist organi- zation can find a haven anywhere and, with a border adjoining Afghanistan that makes Paki- stan a priority,” Mattis said. “... (More on P4, A)

No Preparations for Upcoming Polls

Irks TEFA

TEFA head Mohammad Naim Ayubzada, pre- senting his organization’s proposed draft plan for.WebElement(1,1),(995,995)