WASHINGTON - President Obama is reportedly rethinking the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan because of the recent gains made by the Taliban in that country. The New York Times, quoting senior officials, reports Obama appears to be wrestling with whether to retain a military force strong enough to tackle Taliban and al-Qaeda. The president had wanted to withdraw the remaining 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the time he leaves office next year, and, in fact, most combat troops left the country last year. The apparent White House rethink has been prompted by a confidence of factors. The Tal- "bal"s capture of Kunduz last month, the group's biggest advance since it was removed from power by the U.S.-led invasion in 2001, the fact the militants are now operating across Afghanistan than at any point since 2011, the continued presence of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan's mountains, and intra-party being made by the Islamic State, a group which tactically and strategically the world in becoming increasingly familiar with in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere. [A] the very least, those pushing for an expanded mission after 2015 would like to see the United States and its NATO allies maintain at least two or three bases from which drones could be flown and Special Operations Forces could readily strike at militants. The Central Intelligence Agency also wants a larger presence to help protect its assets in Afghanistan. For more, see (Move on P5, 4).

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday opened the 15th exhibition of agricul- tural products in Kabul, where he said despite brac- ing an agricultural cou- try, Afghanistan imports over $3 billion USD in fresh produce and dairy products every year. He said the future of Finance and Agriculture must in their next 100-day plan work on encour- ging marketing obstacles to boost the sale of local products. Ghani said no attention has been paid to improve the agriculture sector in the past few years. He said the reason for the huge import demand was because of land grab- bing, lack of support to farmers, lack of harvesting facilities and the lack of refrigerator. Currently, the import of agricultural and dairy products worth $3 billion annually. He will work at improving the quality of (Move on P5, 4).

KABUL - MPs in the Wide- ish Jarga (Lower House of Parliament) on Wednesday condemned the Taliban’s threat against Tolo TV and ITV and said the insurgent group’s move is an at- tempt to stop the two chan- nels from reporting on the group’s crimes committed around the country. Following mounting con- cerns by the Afghan gov- ernment and the interna- tional community over the Taliban’s anti-media move, lawmakers on Wednesday said any attack on the me- dia would constitute a war crime. The Taliban in Monday in- creased threats against Tolo TV and ITV and put these two most-watched channels on their hit list. In... (Move on P5, 4).

UN Official Warns of Alarming Humanitarian Situation

KABUL - The United Na- tions Office for the Coordi- nation of Humanitarian Af- fairs warned Tuesday of a determin- ing humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and appealed to the international community for more help. The UN’s humanitarian af- fairs operational director, John Cogdill, expressed these statements after a visit to afghanistan in the wake of an attack on the Mehmans Shari Hospital (MSF) hos- pital in Kunduz earlier this month which left 22 people dead, including 12 MSF staff members. He called for more humani- tarian assistance in Afghan- hind to address the urgent problem. His call came after a month when a UN official said... (Move on P5, 4).

Parliament Rejects Demand to Impose 10% Tax on Mobile Phone Users

KABUL - The lawmakers in the Lower House of the Parliament - Wolesi Jarga rejected a legislative decree by the Presidential Palace to charge 10% per cent tax on mo- bile users. The decree was unani- mously rejected by the lawmakers during their session this morning. The subscribers of the telecom companies started paying 10 per cent tax on every top-up with ef- fect from last month. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) officials said the telecommunication tax was imposed in a bid to increase the government revenue. According to officials the govern- ment... (Move on P5, 4).

Taliban Threaten Media to Hide Their Crimes: MPs

EU Lashes Nations for Falling Short on Refugee Pledges

BRUSSELS - The European Union lashed out at member countries for fail- ing to come up with funds and efforts they promised to help cope with the refugee-emergency, with the crisis set to take center stage at Thursday’s summit of EU leaders. The European Commission, in a statement Wednesday that only three of 28 na- tions have pledged a total of just 12 million euros ($15.7 million) to a fund to help African nations better manage their borders. The sum is 0.1 billion euros (about $2 billion) over two years. The EU’s border agency and asylum off- fice have appealed for a total of around 1,000 officers to help Yemeni police and border officials are eligible for asylum. So far, about a dozen of the 28 EU nations have offered around 200. (Move on P5, 4).

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