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Former U.S. Officials Worry What Trump Could Do In Iran and Afghanistan

After a purge at the Pentagon, former national security officials are worried about the fallout if President Trump were to launch an unprovoked military action against Iran or make big changes in Afghanistan in his waning days in office. That's in addition to the ways that President Trump's refusal to concede and to give President-elect Biden access to intelligence materials are already damaging national security. "The scenario most national security people are worried about is a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities," says Kori Schake, who served on George W. Bush's National Security Council and also in senior posts at the Pentagon and the State Department. "Because the 'maximum pressure' campaign that has been the signature of Trump administration foreign policy has very little positive result." ... **P3**



Afghanistan, Kazakhstan Health Ministries to Sign MoU on Bilateral Cooperation

Minister of Healthcare of Republic of Kazakhstan, Alexei Tsoi has held talks with his Afghan Minister of Public Health Ahmad Jawad Osmani in a virtual format here on Thursday. At the onset of the meeting, Kazakhstan's Tsoi extended his condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of the terrorist act at the Kabul University and wished speedy recovery to those injured. Alexei Tsoi went on to stress the importance of Kazakh-Afghan cooperation in the sphere of healthcare based on mutual respect and trust. It has become obvious especially amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic which can be defeated through joint and coordinated efforts, he said. «We are keen to give a huge impulse to cooperation in the sphere of healthcare between our countries and propel this cooperation to a new level," Tsoi said. He proposed to step up bilateral cooperation in healthcare in such ... **P3**

Food Crisis Deepens in Afghanistan with 42% of Population Now Facing Acute Hunger



aA new report reveals Afghanistan has been pushed deeper into an already dire food security crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather events, ongoing conflict and high food prices, with 13.15 million people, up from 11.15 million people just months ago, now facing acute hunger. Government of Afghanistan lockdown measures imposed to curb the spread of COVID-19, between mid-March and the end of May,

worsened an already desperate food security situation. Small-scale income generating activities were mostly shut down, leading to diminished savings, impacting the ability to buy food. Marianne O'Grady, CARE Afghanistan's Deputy Country Director, said, "People are back at work after the lockdown, but the fallout from not saving for months is huge. Many people also accumulated debt during lockdown that they are now struggling to pay back, so day-to-day

expenses were, and still are, affected. Putting food on the table is getting harder and harder and with winter coming, we are very worried for the people of Afghanistan. And for women, the situation is even more difficult. In Afghanistan, generally men eat first due to cultural norms, so when there's not enough food to go around, it's the women who miss out." Women often act as 'shock absorbers' in times of crisis, when they have to take on greater economic

responsibility for their households. CARE's programs, including community-based savings groups, have enabled women to better withstand the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. CARE conducted a Rapid Gender Analysis in Afghanistan in mid-2020. Sixty-two per cent of respondents said food is their highest need. A female respondent from Balkh Province said, "The community is affected by a flood, I lost my house, but most people are now jobless and need assistance due to the lockdown." There are currently over 40,000 reported COVID-19 cases in Afghanistan, but testing is extremely limited, so those numbers are feared to be much higher. The health system in Afghanistan was critically weak even before the pandemic hit, with only around 300 ventilators in the entire country. "The health implications are huge and responsibility for caring for family members falls primarily on women, even if they are sick themselves. "In rural areas, accessing health facilities can be incredibly challenging. Often clinics are far from people's homes and there are transportation costs to reach the clinics. If there are limited funds available for transportation, families must make tough decisions around who goes to the clinic, and ... **P3**

Pakistan PM due in Kabul for talks this week

aThe Pakistani prime minister is scheduled to visit Kabul this week for talks on the Afghan peace process and bilateral cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Saturday. Imran Khan would also confer with President Ashraf Ghani, Dr. Abdullah and other officials on ways of strengthening political, security, trade and economic links. MoFA spokesman Gran Hewad Khan says Khan's trip is in response to an invitation President Ghani ... **P2**



Mark Esper: 'All Wars Must End'

Former Defense Secretary Mark Esper was hesitant to withdraw additional US troops from Afghanistan, sending a classified memo about his worries to the White House earlier this month, according to a Washington Post report published Friday evening. Esper, who was fired by President Donald Trump on Monday after months of speculation, had reportedly sent the memo and argued that based on the rate of violence in the country and the possibility of escalation, the White House's plans for additional cuts were imprudent. The US's withdrawal agreement with the Afghan government and the Taliban is contingent on a number of factors, including an overall reduction of violence. But following the ceasefire in February, violence in the country has dramatically spiked, prompting US officials to deliver a



stark warning. "I return to the region disappointed that despite commitments to lower violence, it has not happened. The window to achieve a political settlement will not stay open forever," Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad tweeted on October 27. The Defense Department did not

immediately return a request for comment. Trump campaigned on withdrawing US troops from combat operations overseas, tweeting that US forces in Afghanistan would be "home by Christmas!" News of Esper's reported memo comes as his temporary successor, acting defense secretary ... **P3**

French forces...

to cut back the number of troops it has in the country, in favor of a stronger European commitment to stabilize the region.

And in October, France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and Mali's interim Prime Minister Moctar Ouane disagreed on whether there should be attempts to negotiate with armed groups. After a meeting between Ouane and Le Drian, the Mali PM told reporters: "The conclusions of the inclusive national talks ... very clearly indicated the necessity of an offer of dialogue with these armed groups."

He added: "We need to see in that an opportunity to engage in far-reaching discussions with the communities in order to redefine the contours of a new governance of the areas that are concerned." However, Le Drian disagreed. He replied: "Let's say things very clearly: There are peace accords ... and then there are terrorist groups that have not signed the peace accords. "It is simple."

Pakistan PM...

had extended him during a telephone conversation with Imran Khan last month.

This would be Khan's first visit to Kabul, coming at a time when the Afghan peace negotiations in Doha remain deadlocked.

Turkish, Russian...

"welcomes and is relieved by the agreement on a cessation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone announced in the November 9 joint statement of president of Azerbaijan, the prime minister of Armenia, and the president of the Russian Federation."

Guterres said he is grateful to the Russian Federation for its efforts to bring about this agreement.

By: Carlo J.V. Caro

The Biden Administration Needs to Junk Trump's Deal with the Taliban

The Trump administration's peace agreement with the Taliban has been flawed from the start, as it has ignored Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. Indeed, it has been a critical mistake by both the United States and Afghanistan to continue to include Islamabad in these negotiations, as Pakistan's aim has been to try to turn Afghanistan into its Islamic satellite. The Trump administration even failed to remember the lesson from 2009 when Pakistan frustrated the Obama administration's negotiations with the Taliban as Islamabad's main concern was to safeguard and advance its interests.

Pakistan's vision has always been simple: if peace negotiations fail, then Pakistan wins, as it continues to influence Afghanistan through the Taliban, and if the peace negotiations succeed, then Pakistan also wins, as its influence will extend to a power-sharing agreement between the Taliban and a very weak Afghan government. An Afghanistan dominated by Pakistan, through either reality, is a safe haven for radical Islamic movements, including al-Qaida and the Islamic State, and from which they are able to launch attacks against the United States and Europe. But if the United States withdraws its personnel and infrastructure, it will have little leverage to influence that landscape, and it will be difficult to return, as Pakistan will not open a supply route and Russia is no longer an option.

While the war in Afghanistan is deeply unpopular with the American people, because of its devastating loss of life and the massive money spent, the incoming Biden administration needs to pull out of the failed agreement between the Trump administration and the Taliban, and stop supporting the intra-Afghan peace talks. Peace with the Taliban does not lead to a favorable outcome for the United States, and while the status quo is far from optimistic, the consequences from either an Afghanistan dominated by Pakistan or an Afghanistan without the support of the American military is far worse.

From the 1960s, the Pakistani Army has been influenced by the military doctrine of strategic depth, whose origin and justification is not in Afghanistan but in India. After the loss of its eastern wing, now known as Bangladesh, the Pakistani Army had to reconsider its strategy in respect to India. For Pakistan, Afghanistan thus became an area from where the Pakistani armed forces could withdraw, regroup and stage a counterattack. But this strategy would require



a friendly Afghan government that would be willing to see its territorial sovereignty violated in case of a war between India and Pakistan.

The success of jihad and the mujahideen against Soviet troops in Afghanistan led the Pakistani army to use them against India in India-administered Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan's objective was to make those territories impossible to govern and to force the deployment of many Indian troops to combat a local insurgency, while reducing India's capacity for a conventional conflict between both countries. These plans were put into effect in 1988, and in order to deny Pakistani involvement, the insurgents were trained in Afghanistan. But these plans required an Afghanistan that was friendly or at least incapable of confronting Pakistan.

Afghanistan has always viewed the Pashtuns in Pakistan as part of the same Pashtun nation. So, during the presidency of Muhammed Zia-ul-Huq, Pakistan sought to control Pashtun nationalism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, along with implementing policies of Islamization. Then, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of the Central Asian republics, Afghanistan became a gateway for the Central Asian energy markets. But the fall of the communist regime in Afghanistan, and the emergence of a civil war, frustrated those economic and political ambitions. Nevertheless, when the Taliban surged in Kandahar, the group became Pakistan's best bet. With the Taliban, Pakistan finally obtained the means for the doctrine of strategic depth, even though

disagreements about the Durand Line remained. In the aftermath of 9/11, Pakistan was pressured to break its relations with the Taliban in Afghanistan, and to support the Afghan government instead. But Pakistan has allowed the tribal regions on the border to become a sanctuary for thousands of Taliban militants. The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence has also been involved in terrorist attacks inside Afghanistan, in particular against Indian interests. Pakistan has always perceived the Afghan government in Kabul to have a small chance of survival once it no longer has international support. And the increasing Indian presence in Afghanistan has led Pakistan to maintain a strong relationship with the Taliban.

While the doctrine of strategic depth has evolved and adapted according to the times, there should be little doubt that the Taliban are still a tool for Pakistan's aspirations. It is clear that the Pakistani military considers Afghanistan an extension of their battle plans in its conflict with India, and it has been a grave mistake to involve Pakistan in the U.S.-led negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

While neither total victory or peace might be possible in Afghanistan, with U.S. forces still on the ground, Washington can forge an outcome more preferable to its interests and its security.

Carlo J.V. Caro is a researcher on U.S. foreign relations and terrorism. He holds masters degrees in both Security Studies and Islamic Studies from Columbia University.

By: Feminist Majority Foundation

Despite Warnings, Trump Pushes for Afghanistan Withdrawal

Soon after President Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper in a tweet, he appointed his apparent loyalists and strong opponents of US presence in Afghanistan; Retired Army Col. Douglas Macgregor has been appointed as the senior advisor to the new acting Defense Secretary Chris Miller, who has been against US troops' presence in Afghanistan. Macgregor has advocated for a complete withdrawal of the US troops and even the removal of the US Embassy in Kabul. Along with the firing of Mark Esper, three other senior civilian officials either resigned or were fired.

The changes in the leadership of the Defense Department worried many in the US and Afghanistan. These changes also come at a time that many top generals and security officials have repeatedly warned against a rushed and a complete withdrawal

from Afghanistan. A number of current and former both security and civilian officials have repeatedly called a complete withdrawal "reckless" and dangerous. US security officials have also repeatedly warned of the existence of terrorist groups and leaving a security vacuum in Afghanistan.

Sources close to CNN have told the TV station that the changes in the Defense Department were prompted by Esper disagreeing with Trump on a "premature" and complete withdrawal from Afghanistan. Esper and his aides advocated for two major conditions to be met before the US withdrew its troops from the country: the Taliban cutting its ties with Al-Qaeda, and agreeing to come to an agreement with the Afghan government. Both conditions are not met. Several reports of the UN and other sources indicate that the Taliban continues

to enjoy strong support from Al-Qaeda, and the group has been vocal on not recognizing the Afghan government or making any progress in the ongoing peace talks in Doha, Qatar.

Despite the lack of progress in peace talks and the deteriorating security situation on the ground across Afghanistan, the Trump Administration continues to push for a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan, something that has worried many Afghans and allies across the world. France's Foreign Minister recently said that in an upcoming meeting with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, he will make it clear to Pompeo to not withdraw from Afghanistan or Iraq because of the continued presence of terrorist groups, threatening global security. NATO Secretary-General made similar statements, on considering the reality on the ground. ... **P3**

Reporters Without Borders Urge Afghan Authorities to Give Journalists Better Protection

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

FOR PRESS FREEDOM

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has firmly condemned the increase in violence against media personnel in Afghanistan and urged the Afghan authorities to give them better protection.

Mohammad Aliyas Dayee – who worked for the Radio Azadi, the Afghan offshoot of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) – was killed in Lashkargah, the capital of Helmand province. Aged 32, Dayee had worked for the US government-funded RFE/RL since 2008. He was the father of a little girl.

"This shocking action must not go unpunished and must not recur," said Reza Moïni, the head of RSF's Iran-Afghanistan desk. "A fully transparent investigation is needed to identify and punish those responsible for this targeted bombing. And it is not just the Afghan state,

police and security services that must do everything possible to protect journalists and media. The international community must also take all necessary measures to protect journalists who are brave enough to work for international and local media."

RSF also condemned the government's inaction and the international community's indifference, which in its view have contributed to the increase in the climate of terror in Afghanistan – terror targeting civil society activists, political actors and the military as well as journalists.

RSF has registered at least 20 threats against journalists and media since the start of the year. Afghanistan is ranked 122nd out of 180 countries in RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index.

Flour, sugar, gold prices down in Kabul

The prices of flour, sugar and Russian gold have dipped while other items' rates remain steady during the outgoing week in the capital Kabul, market sources said Saturday.

Hamid Sufizada, a wholesale store owner in Dahn-i-Bagh locality, said the wholesale price of 50 kilograms of Indian sugar dipped from 2,350 Afghanis to 2,270 Afghanis, 50 liters of Malaysian ghee from 1,400afis to 1,350afis and a bag of 49kg of Kazakh flour from 1,750afis to 1,730afis this week.

However, he said that the price of a kilogram of African black tea increased from 250afis to 320afis.

He sold a 24kg of Pakistani rice for 2,300afis and a kilogram of Indonesian green tea for 300afis, the same rates as previous week.

Mohammad Omid Hussain, a retailer

in Mandavi Market, said the retail price of 49 kilogram bag of Kazakh flour was 1,750afis, 49-kilogram of Indian sugar 2,320afis, 24-kilogram of Pakistani Sela rice 2,400afis, 16-litre of Malaysian Oil 1,450afis, one kilogram of Indonesian green team 320afis and one kilogram of black African team 350afis—higher than wholesale rates.

Russian gold price decreased Mohammad Javed, a jeweler in the Layci Maryam Market, said the price of one gram of Arabic gold 3,700afis, the same rate of last week. However, he said that the price of one gram of Russian gold was decreased from 3,200afis to 3,000afis.

Fuel prices remain unchanged

Mohammad Sharif, a gas seller in Kolola Pushta area of Kabul, said that the price of one kilogram of gas



was 60afis.

According to Ahmad Javed, owner of a petrol pump in Wazirabad area, one litre of diesel cost increased and the same quantity of 38afis of petrol 35afis.

Abdul Hakim, a firewood seller, said that the price of 560kg of peeled

oak was 7,500afis and the same quantity of cedar 7,800afis.

Haji Hussain, owner of Sadaqat money exchange service, said the value of one US dollar was 76.90afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupee exchanged for 489afis, against last week's 76.90afis and 479afis.

Food Crisis Deepens...

men and working sons are usually given priority," said Ms O'Grady.

Climate change is another factor driving food insecurity. Afghanistan is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change and one of the least equipped to manage the impact. "I've lived in Afghanistan for many years and during that time, we've seen less and less snow falling in the north of the country. Snow is a key source of water for agricultural production. Less snow means less crops and higher prices. It's another blow for the Afghan people and another factor driving the hunger crisis," explained Ms O'Grady.

Sven Harmeling, CARE's Global Policy Lead for Climate Change and Resilience, said, "Man-made climate change has been projected to significantly reduce precipitation in Afghanistan during spring, an important season for food production. As 2020 marks the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement on climate change, we are still not seeing sufficient climate action by major emitting countries, nor adequate support for vulnerable countries like Afghanistan, to protect food production from the harmful impacts of the climate crisis. With the current global lack of ambition to slow global warming, Afghanistan is facing the risk of a 7° Celsius (44° Fahrenheit) average temperature increase by the end of this century, which would render catastrophic impacts. CARE calls on the G20 countries to deliver more ambitious climate plans in 2020 to put the world on track with the Paris Agreement limit of 1.5° Celsius (34° Fahrenheit) of warming."

Libya talks set...

agreement, but efforts for a long-term political settlement failed due to a military offensive by forces loyal to warlord Khalifa Haftar. The UN recognizes Fayeze al-Sarraj's government as the country's legitimate authority, as Tripoli has battled Haftar's militias since April 2019 in a conflict that has claimed thousands of lives.

Turkey also supports the al-Sarraj government.

Despite Warnings,...

Afghans and experts on Afghanistan hope that with the departure of Trump, there will be a change, more clarity, and accountability on Afghanistan in the Biden Administration. Afghan negotiator and a former Member of Parliament, Fawzia Kofi, hopes that the new administration will consider the reality on the ground and will have better clarity so that the Afghan government can be better prepared for any reduction in numbers of troops. Biden and his team have yet to announce a strategy on Afghanistan, but there is hope that he will not create a complete security vacuum in Afghanistan

or the Middle East.

On the other hand, the Taliban has increased its attacks on the Afghan people and uses the increased violence as leverage in the peace talks. The group warned that if the new administration in the US does not abide by the Doha agreement, signed between the US and the Taliban in February of this year, they will further intensify their war against the Afghan people. In the last two months since the negotiations began on September 12 in Doha, the Taliban has increasingly targeted women leaders, members of civil society, students in educational centers and a university, and recently assassinated two

well-known journalists. There is no progress reported on the Afghan government and the Taliban peace talks in Doha. The Taliban argues to base their negotiations on the agreement signed between the group and the US. However, the Afghan government was not a part of the Doha agreement, is not a signatory to the agreement, and refuses to accept the Doha agreement as the base for the negotiations. The Afghan government has suggested to the Taliban to respect the will of the Afghan people and the several bilateral agreements between the Afghan government and its international allies, including the US.

Afghanistan,...

areas as development of medical personnel, medical education and science, pharmaceutical science, medical tourism, e-healthcare and many other areas.

Meanwhile Ahmad Jawad Osmani, in turn, thanked his Kazakhstani colleague for the meeting and expressed interest in the development of bilateral partnership.

Following the results of the

meeting, the sides signed the Memorandum of Mutual Understanding between the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Public Health of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Mark Esper:...

Chris Miller, issued a Friday memo for Defense Department employees saying, "it's time to come home," from the war against Al Qaida. Miller's memo, obtained by McClatchy's Washington, DC bureau, explained that "we are not a

people of perpetual war — it is the antithesis of everything for which we stand and for which our ancestors fought." "All wars must end," it added. Trump's projected replacement, President-elect Joe Biden, has signaled he would be willing to withdraw US forces but only at

the right time. "Americans are rightly weary of our longest war — I am, too," Biden said during a foreign relations panel earlier this year. "But we must end the war responsibly, in a manner that ensures we both guard against threats to our homeland and never have to go back."

Former U.S....

Four senior officials at the Pentagon, including Defense Secretary Mark Esper, were fired or resigned on Monday and Tuesday. Trump loyalists took their place. Two senior officials at the Department of Homeland Security were forced to resign this week as well.

After a purge at the Pentagon, former national security officials are worried about the fallout if President Trump were to launch an unprovoked military action against Iran or make big

changes in Afghanistan in his waning days in office.

That's in addition to the ways that President Trump's refusal to concede and to give President-elect Biden access to intelligence materials are already damaging national security.

"The scenario most national security people are worried about is a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities," says Kori Schake, who served on George W. Bush's National Security Council and also in

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Turkish, Russian military hold technical talks on Karabakh

Turkish and Russian military delegations held technical talks at the Turkish Defense Ministry headquarters, the Defense Ministry said on Saturday.

A ministry statement said the two sides discussed the work to be carried out after the cease-fire in Upper Karabakh region, and the situation in Syria.

"Technical talks between the Turkish and Russian military delegations at the Turkish Defense Ministry headquarters have completed. Talks are planned to be continued in the coming days," the statement said.

Relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia have been tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Upper Karabakh, a territory recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions.

Fresh clashes erupted on Sept. 27, and

the Armenian army continued its attacks on civilian and Azerbaijani forces, even violating humanitarian cease-fire agreements for 44 days. Baku liberated several cities and nearly 300 of its settlements and villages from Armenian occupation during this time.

Before the second Karabakh war, about 20% of Azerbaijan's territory had been under illegal Armenian occupation for nearly three decades. On Nov. 10, the two countries signed a Russia-brokered agreement to end the fighting and work toward a comprehensive solution.

Turkey welcomed the truce, terming it a "great victory" for Azerbaijan.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday welcomed the agreement on a cessation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

The UN chief said in a statement that he ... **P2**



A look at the world

Libya talks set December 2021 date for elections

Libya's warring sides agreed Friday to hold elections on Dec. 24, 2021, on Libya's independence day, according to the head of the UN support mission in the country.

The decision came during a UN-sponsored Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) which began Monday in Tunisia between representatives of the internationally recognized Libyan government and warlord Khalifa Haftar.

The participants agreed to establish a new Presidential Council and executive body to manage the transition period and hold national elections, Stephanie Turco Williams told reporters.

The duties and authority of the government and Presidential Council, which will manage



the transition process, were also discussed during the meeting, Williams said.

Williams added that the UN will provide technical support for the elections to be organized by Libya's own independent election board.

The LPDF is a fully inclusive intra-Libyan political dialogue established by the Berlin Conference Outcomes, which were endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolutions 2510 (2020) and 2542 (2020).

Participants invited to the forum are drawn from different constituencies based on the principles of inclusivity and fair geographic, ethnic, political, tribal, and social representation.

The meeting came at a time when an overwhelming sense of hope has emerged in Libya after the signing of a permanent countrywide cease-fire agreement between the Libyan parties on Oct. 23 in Geneva.

Williams announced on Oct. 23 the signing of a "permanent" and immediate cease-fire agreement between military delegations from Libya's warring parties, calling it "an important turning point towards peace and stability in Libya".

Libya has been torn by civil war since the ouster of late ruler Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

The Government of National Accord was founded in 2015 under a UN-led ... **P3**

French forces kill al-Qaeda-linked 'top military in Mali



French forces have killed a "top military jihadist" in Mali, according to the country's defence ministry.

France's Defence Minister Florence Parly said Bah Ag Moussa, a member of an Al-Qaeda-affiliate group, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), was responsible for attacks against both local and international forces in the West African nation and was in charge of training new recruits.

While his death was announced on November 13, he was actually killed three days earlier in an operation by France's anti-jihadist forces, which required the use of land troops and helicopters.

Bah Ag Moussa's death is also symbolic, as it was announced on the fifth anniversary of the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks.

Parly added on Twitter: "I congratulate our soldiers for this success which deprives Iyad Ag Ghali [the leader of JNIM] of one of his main assistants."

"Their commitment, their courage and their selflessness make us strong and proud."

Other successful assassinations have been carried out by French forces over the past couple of months, including the killing of Abdelmalek Droukdel in June.

Droukdel was the leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) before he died. However, his death was considered a symbolic victory more than a practical one, as he was not directly involved in ground operations when he died.

By comparison, Bah Ag Moussa's death is considered far more strategically important. A seven-year war

French forces have been stationed in Mali for more than half a decade, with the military action starting in 2013.

There are currently 5,100 French soldiers and an additional 13,000 United Nations troops attempting to root out multiple jihadist groups in the area.

However, according to analysts, France has made little ground towards a military victory in Mali, as the conflict has extended to the country's neighbors, specifically Burkina Faso and Niger.

AFP also reported that France wants ... **P2**

UK to ban sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to announce next week a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030, five years earlier than previously planned, the Financial Times reported on Saturday.

Britain had originally planned to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel-powered cars from 2040, as part of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and in February Johnson brought this forward to 2035.

Citing unidentified industry and



government figures, the FT said Johnson now intended to move the date forward again to 2030 in a speech on environmental policy he is expected to give next week.

The BBC reported a similar plan earlier on Saturday, without giving any sources. A Downing Street spokeswoman declined to comment on the reports or the content of Johnson's upcoming speech.

The FT said the new timetable was not expected to apply to some hybrid cars which use a mixture of electric and fossil fuel propulsion and could still be sold until 2035.

An end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars would mark a huge shift in Britain's automotive market.

Industry figures show that petrol and diesel powered cars accounted for 73.6% of new car sales so far this year, while just 5.5% of sales were for pure electric vehicles, which are typically more expensive. Hybrid vehicles of various types made up the remaining sales.



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