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Afghan VP Danish Calls Foreign Troop Pullout 'Unforgivable Mistake'

Afghanistan's Second Vice-President Sarwar Danish has criticized withdrawal of foreign troops from the country, calling it "hasty" and an "unforgivable mistake." In a post on Facebook, Danish suggested that the international community committed mistake by pressuring the Afghan government to release thousands of Taliban prisoners. Danish also criticized invitation of the Taliban to international conferences as "wrong behavior" toward the group, saying it was legitimizing the group. Danish said that the Taliban have not changed as they have committed human rights abuses in areas under their control. He said that the international community now recognizes that the Taliban do not want peace. The United States is expected to end its military mission in Afghanistan on August 31. The Taliban have made rapid territorial gains in the last couple of months amid foreign troop withdrawal.



Quetta Base for Insurgency: French Ambassador

French Ambassador to Kabul, David Martinon, has said that the base for insurgency is in Quetta, adding that Afghan leaders and people should show unity against any foreign interferences. "The base for insurgency is in Quetta, everyone knows that and that is a fact that cannot be discussed," he told The Kabul Times, in response to a question on Pakistani support to Taliban insurgency, adding that the Taliban is seeking absolute power in the country. In an interview with The Kabul Times, replying to a question on release of Taliban prisoners and the intensification of war by the group, the French ambassador said: "Taliban want to control the country... P3

China, Pakistan to Take Joint Actions to Ensure Peace in Afghanistan



China and Pakistan, both neighboring countries of Afghanistan, will take joint actions to tackle the spillover effect from the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Saturday. The US' hasty troop withdrawal from Afghanistan neither achieved the

goal of anti-terrorism, nor brought peace to the country, but created a new security black hole there, Wang said when meeting reporters, together with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in Chengdu, Southwest China's Sichuan Province. China and Pakistan are facing a direct effect from the worsening situation in

Afghanistan, and it was one of the important agendas of Qureshi's visit to China to enhance cooperation and deal with the situation, Wang said. China and Pakistan will pursue the hope for peace in an attempt to prevent a civil war in Afghanistan, and mediate for negotiations between the Afghans, Wang said. He added that the

two countries will jointly combat all terrorist forces, push for the cooperation between Afghanistan's neighboring countries, help Afghan peaceful rebuilding and invite the international community to help bring about peace and stability in Afghanistan. That includes urging the US in carrying out its responsibility.

Afghan Swimmer Gets Name Etched in History

Abbas Karimi, a 22-year-old young Afghan swimmer in the United States, is scheduled to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics next month. For the first time since the championships, city officials in the United States have dedicated July 20 as the day to honor Karimi. The official Twitter page of the city of Fort Lauderdale, a coastal city in the US state of Florida, has published pictures of the occasion and said that July 20 was celebrated as Abbas Karimi Day. Karimi, a young Afghan swimmer from Bamyan province, was born without hands. However, despite the absence, he grabbed the first place in several national... P3



UN Warns of Expanding Threat from Daesh, Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan

The United Nations in a new report is warning that the threat from terror groups such as Daesh and al Qaeda is expanding in many places in Afghanistan where the security situation remains fragile with uncertainty surrounding the peace process and a risk of further deterioration. The report by the UN Security Council, published Thursday, says that despite territorial, leadership, manpower and financial losses during 2020 in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces, Daesh's Khorasan branch, or ISIL-K, has moved into other provinces, including Nuristan, Badghis, Sar-e-Pul, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz and Kabul, where fighters have formed sleeper cells. The report says that the group has strengthened its positions in and around Kabul, where it conducts most of its attacks, targeting minorities, activists, government employees and personnel of the Afghan National



Defense and Security Forces. The report says that most recently, Daesh claimed responsibility for the brutal attack of 8 June, when 10 humanitarian deminers working with HALO Trust in Baghlan Province were killed and 16 were injured. "In its efforts to resurge, ISIL-K has prioritized the recruitment and training of new supporters; its leaders also hope to attract intransigent Taliban and other militants who reject the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan

between the United States and the Taliban and to recruit fighters from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and other conflict zones," the report says. The report states that the estimates of the strength of Daesh's Khorasan branch range widely, with one member state reporting between 500 and 1,500 fighters and another stating that it may rise to as many as 10,000 over the medium term. "One member state stressed that ISIL-K was largely underground and clandestine," the report... P3

Iraqi Ex-Detainee...

shoot you in the head." Weeks later, al-Hamad was arrested and his journey began through the U.S. investigation and detention centers. He was transferred between six detention centers that lacked the most basic human rights. According to a report called "costs of war" by Brown University, over 100,000 prisoners passed through the American-run detention system in Iraq, with most prisoners lacking effective methods to challenge their imprisonment. Al-Hamad recalled when he was transported from Tikrit to Baghdad with other detainees, he was handcuffed and squatting in the helicopter, which caused damage to his back that lasted for years. His suffering worsened a year after his arrest when the U.S. troops told al-Hamad that they had conclusive evidence that he had nothing to do with the accusation against him, but they continued to detain him for more than a year. "One soldier told me that it has been proven to us with conclusive evidence that you are innocent, but you will continue your imprisonment," said al-Hamad. Al-Hamad, who currently works for a humanitarian organization, described life in the prison as hell, saying that "the food they (U.S. troops) provide is just food that keeps detainee alive," and the visits by detainees' families are very few, as he could not recognize his son during one of the visits due to his difficult psychological condition. He added that one of the many horrific violations committed by U.S. troops was solitary confinement, when they shut a detainee in for a month, preventing him from seeing anyone, and exposed him to extreme winter cold or summer heat. "The Americans were making the Iraqis torture each other, as they brought a detained policeman, and put him among the extremists. The militants tortured him, broke his hands and feet and tried to kill him, and this goes beyond violating human rights," he said. During the period of his detention, al-Hamad was not brought before a judge, nor was he allowed to seek a lawyer to defend him, which are the most basic rights of a detainee. After being released, a nightmare kept haunting al-Hamad for more than a year due to the negative impact of torture on his psychological state -- he dreamt that U.S. troops were raiding his house, handcuffing him, and putting a black bag on his head, or he dreamt that the troops were arresting him again at a U.S. army checkpoint. "I am convinced that human rights, freedom, and democracy are false American slogans that they use against anyone who opposes them," he concluded.

By: Shishir Gupta

Pakistan's Great Game in India and Afghanistan

it is a worn-down cliché to say that the 1999 Kargil war is a reminder to India that Pakistan can never be trusted. Can an enemy ever be trusted is the logical question to this surmise. On the eve of the 22nd Kargil Vijay Diwas, it is obvious that the Pakistani army's perfidy in the rarefied heights of Mushkoh, Drass, Kaksar and Batalik sectors of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was aimed at exploiting the Indian fault lines with Srinagar in mind. With the Narendra Modi government dividing the erstwhile state into two union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and abrogating the special status of the former J&K state, the fault-line has virtually been erased. For the past three decades, Pakistan has also been using terrorism as another weapon to create fissures within India and polarize the communities.

However, the surgical strikes post the 2016 Uri terror attack and Operation Bandar after the 2019 Pulwama bomb strike have severely blunted Pakistan's plan to use terror as a weapon against India. Much to the chagrin of the Pakistani deep state, not only is India under Narendra Modi unfazed by Pakistani nuclear prowess but it is Islamabad that is on the backfoot with Indian overt and covert response. The surgical strike and airstrike at Balakot terror camp in hinterland Pakistan show that the Indian response was massive to the initial terror strike and caught Islamabad unawares. Rawalpindi GHQ's new weapon is an unmanned aerial vehicle or drone, used to drop weapons and explosives to foment terror and violence in the border state of Punjab and UT of Jammu and Kashmir. Behind this overt motive is to ensure that Indian use of drones for surveillance of borders with Pakistan and beyond is also stopped or severely restricted. Besides, the Pakistani ISI will constantly target the fault-lines within communities to widen the rift in the name of religion or economic disparity or ideology and try to destabilize India.

While the strategists would have us believe that the rise of the Sunni Deobandi Taliban in Afghanistan will create problems for India in Jammu and Kashmir, Islamabad's motives in Kabul are radically different. Islamabad knows that even when at the peak of its power in Kabul between 1996-2201, the Taliban did not utter a word on Jammu and Kashmir and hence there is no reason to believe that they would do it now under influence of the



Pakistani army. Besides, the Indian military and security are quite competent in handling jihadists as they have battle-field experience now running into 30 years since the 1990s. The Pakistani game in Afghanistan in ensuring that the Taliban come to power after eliminating the Ashraf Ghani regime are two-fold. It wants connectivity to Central Asia through Afghanistan so that its trade with Europe increases manifold. Islamabad's big brother China is also waiting for this opportunity as the CPEC corridor will link the Communist Nation to Central Asia via Afghanistan for not only trade but exploitation of natural resources including precious heavy metals and copper in Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. The present Afghan regime is all for opening the trade route but the sole condition is that India is also a partner in the land corridor exercise as it is the largest importer-exporter of goods from Afghanistan. It is this condition that is unacceptable to both Pakistan and China. The most important use of the Taliban for Pakistan is to formalize Durand Line as the international border with Afghanistan. The Durand Line, which divides the Afghan Pashtuns on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghan border, was established in 1893 and took its current shape in 1919 as per the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of the same year. More than a century later, the Durand line

claim has expired as per the treaty and the present Afghan regime is totally opposed to the British drawn line as the international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The present regime and the Afghan people want all the Pashtun majority areas to come under Afghanistan with no artificial divide as ordained by British imperialists by the name of Mortimer Durand, ICS. The Taliban, however, refused to recognize the Durand Line during their first term in power. To add to growing Pakistani discomfort on both fronts, the US has seen through Islamabad's game to use the Taliban as leverage to improve ties with Washington at the cost of India. With US President Joe Biden and NSA Jake Sullivan deciding to hold hands with the present regime in Kabul, the Afghan security forces have gained confidence and are now pushing back the Taliban on the battlefield and retaking district centers. Just as the Kargil intrusions were tactically a good manoeuvre by then army chief Pervez Musharraf but strategically a military and diplomatic blunder for Pakistan, the Taliban move is also destined to blowback on Islamabad with a huge number of Afghan refugees and accompanying violence due to the proliferation of the latest US-made weapons and ammunition across the Khyber and Spin Boldak pass. The bounty is on Pakistan.

By: APP

CPEC's Extension into Afghanistan to Boost Local Exports, Journey of Peace

As officials from China, Pakistan and Afghanistan revealed an inclination to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project into Afghanistan, experts said that such projects could help boost Afghanistan's exports, which is conducive to the country's journey of peace, but the feasibility of the project depends on whether the Afghan government and Taliban forces can reach a consensus on protecting overseas investment. Although no concrete progress has occurred when it comes to the project, it seemed that the political leaders of the countries involved in the project all expressed a supportive attitude toward China's investment in Afghanistan, according to Global Times on Wednesday. A government official and deputy spokesperson for the president of Afghanistan told media recently that the country's president had "instructed authorities

to facilitate necessary cooperation" in certain areas between China and Afghanistan. She made the comments as a number of Chinese firms were reportedly poised to pump \$400 million into a coal-fired electricity generation project in the war-ravaged nation. On the other side, Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said in a recent interview with the South China Morning Post that they "welcome" China's assistance in reconstruction and development of Afghanistan with the departure of US troops, calling China "a friend to Afghanistan." Among such cooperation, the potential extension of CPEC seems to be the one project that has caught the most attention globally, particularly after the US withdrew military forces from Afghanistan and demands surged for reconstructing the country. Previously, the foreign ministers of China, Pakistan and Afghanistan held a dialogue in September 2019. They

agreed then that the three countries should increase mutual connectivity and push the extension of CPEC to Afghanistan, China's foreign minister Wang Yi disclosed. Zhou Rong, a senior researcher at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, said that if the CPEC is extended into Afghanistan, China could help build or improve infrastructure between Afghanistan and Pakistan to facilitate their economic exchange. One project he particularly mentioned is the highway between Peshawar and Kabul, which he said is being built but is not qualified and wide enough for transport. "China can help build bypasses to that road, as well as expanding relevant customs to make the connectivity between Afghanistan and Pakistan smoother," Zhou told the Global Times. With such infrastructure facilities, goods manufactured in Afghanistan will manage to find

their way into the abundant markets in Pakistan, which Zhou said is important because only when Afghan people manage to make some money first and have their buying powers can the economic interaction between the two countries develop in a healthy direction. He also said that Chinese companies could help invest in energy infrastructure in Afghanistan such as building electricity plants and water irrigation channels. Those completed, then cooperation could be enhanced to a further stage such as the construction of processing areas and industry parks in the two countries' neighboring areas, where overseas capital can be directed in. Liu Ying, a senior BRI researcher, also said that the CPEC has apparent positive spillover effect in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan. "Connectivity embodied by BRI will facilitate the flow of goods and people and via CPEC's key transportation routes, and it is not hard to see that Afghanistan's post-war reconstruction, industrial and digital buildup and economic growth could benefit," Liu said,

adding that CPEC's industrial parks, many invested by Chinese investors, could provide the goods and products needed by reconstruction process in Afghanistan. According to Liu, such economic construction, with benefits including the addition of local jobs, will be "conducive to the country's security and its journey to peace." Afghanistan has become the first among several landlocked Central Asian countries to benefit from using the Chinese-invested Gwadar Port in Pakistan in transshipment trade. In 2020, the country imported 43,000 tons of fertilizers via the port, contributing to its agricultural development. There have also been precedent efforts in tapping for the potential of Gwadar Port as a deep-water port that may open a coveted sea trade option for landlocked Central Asian countries for exports. In May, Uzbekistan, one of the world's leading cotton exporters, sent a high-level delegation to the Gwadar Port to look for logistics opportunities that might help it export its cotton. A Chinese executive at the port told the Global Times that the... **P3**

Afghanistan's Exports to China Increase by 64%

Afghanistan's Ministry of Industry and Commerce has announced on Wednesday an increase in Afghanistan's exports to China, saying that in the first quarter of the 1,400 solar fiscal year, Afghanistan's exports to China increased by 64 percent, compared to the same period in 1399 (2020). According to the ministry, Afghanistan has exported \$ 24.93 million worth of fresh and dried fruits, precious and semi-precious stones, saffron, black cohosh, medicinal plants and handicrafts worth \$24.93 million this year. Last year, that figure was \$ 8.98 million. China and Afghanistan trade through the port of Hairatan by land, the port of Gwadar in Pakistan by sea, and air corridors, and China is Afghanistan's third largest trading partner after Iran and Pakistan. Electrical and electronics, factory

clothing, footwear and raw materials are some of the goods exported from China to Afghanistan. In May of this year, the Afghan Ministry of Public Works announced that construction of a 50kilometer-long road between Afghanistan and China in Badakhshan was underway. This road starts from the "Boz Haya Gonbad Khord" area in the Pamir of Badakhshan and extends to the end of Wakhan district of Badakhshan, which almost reaches the Chinese border. According to the Afghan Ministry of Public Works, according to the Afghan government's plan, the road will form part of the Wakhan Corridor, a step towards connecting the regions of Afghanistan and turning the country into an economic policy-oriented country. The cost of building the road is estimated at more than 369 million afghanis (about \$ 5 million), which



has been contracted with 22 local councils and will be paid for by the Afghan government. Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) announced that after efforts by the CAA and Afghan Embassy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), transit flights through UAE resumed, so that compatriots can travel from

Kabul to the UAE and later to their 3rd destination. Only flights from Kabul to the UAE (point to point) are currently suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It should be noted that direct flights from Kabul to the UAE will resume in the near future, with a decline in the spread of the virus in Afghanistan.

UN Warns...

says. "Its leader, Shahab al-Muhajir, alias Sanaullah, cooperates with Sheikh Tamim, head of the al-Sadiq office." The report says that Tamim and his office are tasked by Daesh core to oversee the network connecting the Khorasan branch with Daesh presences in the wider region. The UN report says that as reported by the UN Monitoring Team in its twelfth report to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), al Qaeda is present in at least 15 Afghan provinces, primarily in the eastern, southern and south-eastern regions. The report says that al Qaeda's weekly Thabat newsletter reports on its operations inside Afghanistan. Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) operates under Taliban protection from Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz provinces, the report says. Since the death of Asim Umar in 2019, AQIS has been led by Osama Mahmood, the report says, adding that the group consists mainly of Afghan and Pakistani nationals, but also individuals from Bangladesh, India and Myanmar. On 30 March, AQIS commander Dawlat Bek Tajiki (alias Abu Mohammad al-Tajiki) was killed by Afghan forces in Gyan district of Paktika province. "Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri is assessed by member states to be alive but ailing in Afghanistan. Sayf Al Adl, his most likely successor, is reported to remain in the Islamic Republic of Iran," the report states. Member states differ as to what Al Adl's options would be if he was called upon to succeed al-Zawahiri, but most assess that he would have to move and that basing himself in Afghanistan might not be an option, the report says. The leadership succession calculations of Al Qaeda are complicated by the peace process in Afghanistan where, under the Doha agreement of February 2020, the Taliban is committed to suppressing any international terrorist threat, the report says, but adds that it is unclear whether Sayf-Al Adl would be able to travel to Afghanistan to take up the position of leader of Al Qaeda. The report mentions that some member states point to his history of living and operating in Africa and assess that he might choose to base himself there. The report also says that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, IMU, faces financial difficulties and a Taliban that is less accommodating than it used to be.

Quetta Base...

and they want to cease power; it is not about prisoners. It's just an excuse and is just a fake reason. "About lifting the UN sanctions, we see absolutely no reason to change our position on the question of release of the prisoners. But on these matters, we do not have a say, this is the responsibility of the Afghan government, and we understand that they are not prepared, fortunately, to release these five or seven thousand prisoners." Hinting at destruction of infrastructure, Martinon said that they [Taliban] should start considering that this is their own country and avoid destruction of vital infrastructure. "There is no assurance that we will commit to

do that again. When they destroy a bridge, how they can assure that this bridge will be rebuilt? If they destroy a road, how they will be assured that anyone will get interest to rebuild that, which was destroyed by Taliban? "They should consider that this is their own country. If they pretend that they act on behalf of the Afghan people, they should have in mind, most of all the prosperity of their people," he added, as per The Kabul Times. The ambassador also called on Taliban to respect the progress made so far. "We call on the Taliban to respect the progress, the progress that Afghan people made during the last 20 years. We know that Afghan people are extremely attached to these rights. They may have been

disappointed sometimes, but they do not want to go back to a regime that actually belongs to other centuries," he added. The remarks come at a time when the Taliban fighter have destroyed buildings, bridges, IT infrastructure and telecommunication towers in territories under their control. "The position of France on the delisting of the sanctions is that we haven't got any indication that it would be to legitimate, according to international human rights, to lift these sanctions, precisely because of what the Taliban are doing now. If they want to see change in the position of the United National Security Council, maybe they should start changing their behavior and stop violating human rights," he added.

Afghan...

and international swimming competitions. Karimi has proven that disability cannot hinder progress. In Bamyán, Abbas Karimi first showcased his skills in driving and writing with his feet. Then, he turned to martial arts and swimming. In a very short time, he was able to develop his swimming skills under the supervision of the officials of the national water sports team and win a gold

medal for the first time among the physically challenged. Karimi participated in the 2013 International Swimming Competition in Turkey and won the gold medal in the competition. Karimi also won a gold medal at the 2018 World Swimming Championships in Indianapolis, USA. Earlier, in 2017, he won a silver medal in the swimming competition at the World Championships in Mexico City. Karimi also won

four gold medals in 2019 by participating in a nationwide inter-state competition in four swimming styles. These medals and championships paved the way for him to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. He is now set to compete in the Tokyo Olympics next month, and there is hope that he will also win. Karimi had said two years ago that he was preparing to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.

CPEC's...

Gwadar Port will "definitely play a major role" in the reconstruction of war-torn Afghanistan after the situation in the country stabilizes. "However, at the moment, the situation in Afghanistan is severe, and the Pakistan government is also concerned that any security spillover from the country could impact the local security situation," the executive said. Zhou stressed that the push of such projects could only happen when the internal political status of Afghanistan is stable enough for overseas investment to proceed without safety hazards. But this seems to be increasingly difficult considering Afghanistan's current political situation.

According to media reports, the Taliban is rapidly retaking land across Afghanistan as the US missions remove its troops outside the country. "Who should we talk with to push the project? And can the two sides reach an agreement not to ruin the project no matter which side seizes the land where the project is based?" Zhou questioned. "The trend of CPEC extending into Afghanistan is trend that must happen, but the time is not ripe now to push the project," Zhou said. According to experts, China has been investing in Afghanistan in multiple forms, but the cooperation has already borne the brunt of Afghanistan's political chaos as well as the pandemic hit. "As far as I know,

the number of Chinese investors in Afghanistan are less than 300, which are primarily made up of large companies like Huawei and ZTE. There's also China town and Confucius Institutes in there, but apart from those there seems to be none (Chinese elements)," Zhou said. According to him, although it's not likely that a single project like CPEC could directly improve the peaceful process of Afghanistan, it might help stimulate both Taliban and the current Afghan government to agree on the protection of certain infrastructure projects from military warfare for the country's own good, and the projects can in turn benefit the country's economy. "It would be a virtuous cycle," Zhou said.

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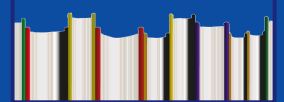
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Another Round of Russian-US Strategic Stability Dialogue to Be Held in Geneva on July 28

Another round of the Russian-US dialogue on strategic stability will be held in Geneva on July 28, the Russian foreign ministry said on Friday. "In furtherance of the agreements reached at the June 16 talks between Russian and US Presidents, Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden, another round of the Russian-US strategic stability dialogue will be held in Geneva on July 28," the ministry said. According to the ministry, the Russian delegation will be led by Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. "The sides will discuss issues of maintaining and strengthening strategic stability, as well as prospects for arms control," the ministry added. Ryabkov told TASS earlier that the Russian side planned to discuss in detail all the aspects of strategic stability, potential risks and threats, and to elaborate

a mechanism of further joint activities in the sphere, including the working format and the agenda. A Russian-US summit took place in the Swiss city of Geneva on June 16. The initiative came from Washington. Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Joe Biden of the United States discussed the current state of and prospects for further development of bilateral relations, issues of strategic stability, international matters, including cooperation in combating the Covid-19 pandemic and ironing out regional conflicts. Meanwhile, the US Department of State said on Friday that the US delegation will be led by US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Bonnie Jenkins will be among the members of the delegation.



A look at the world

Five Cultural Sites in Saudi Arabia, Europe Inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List

Five cultural sites in Saudi Arabia and Europe have been inscribed on the world heritage list, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) announced on Saturday. The decision was made during the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's 44th session held online and chaired from Fuzhou, China. Hima Cultural Area in an arid, mountainous area of southwest Saudi Arabia won the status as it contains a substantial collection of rock art images depicting hunting, fauna, flora and lifestyles in a cultural continuity of 7,000 years, said UNESCO in a press release. Travelers and armies camping on the site left a wealth of rock inscriptions and petroglyphs through



the ages and until the late 20th century, most of which are preserved in pristine condition. The transnational site, "The Great Spa Towns of Europe," comprises 11 towns located in seven European countries -- Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The spa buildings and facilities of this site "are all integrated into an overall urban context that includes a carefully managed recreational and therapeutic environment in a picturesque landscape" and "embody the significant interchange of human values and developments in medicine, science and balneology," said the committee. The other sites include the Lighthouse of Cordouan on a shallow rocky plateau in the Atlantic Ocean in France built at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries as "a masterpiece of maritime signaling"; the Darmstadt Artists' Colony in west-central Germany, established in 1897 as a center for emerging reform movements in architecture, arts and crafts and now "a testimony to early modern architecture, urban planning and landscape design." In Italy's historic walled city of Padua, a selection of fresco cycles painted in the 14th century by different artists for different types of patron and within buildings of diverse functions, was inscribed because they "illustrate how, over the course of a century, fresco art developed along a new creative impetus and understanding of spatial representation." The World Heritage Committee session reviews candidates for entry to the list and examines the state of conservation of existing sites. The inscription is scheduled to continue through July 28.

Mexican President Calls for "New Coexistence" of American States



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador called on Saturday for "a new coexistence" of all the countries of the Americas after stating that the model imposed more than two centuries ago "is exhausted; it has no future." The Mexican president proposed that Latin American states do "something similar to the European Union, but attached to our history, our reality and our identities." The president made his comments on the 238th anniversary of the birth of Simon Bolivar at Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City, during the 21st foreign ministers meeting of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Lopez Obrador highlighted Cuba's forbearance in the face of the United States' blockade imposed more than 60 years ago. "The people of Cuba deserve the prize of dignity," he said. In his speech, he called for the Organization of American States to become a truly autonomous body, "not a lackey of anyone but a mediator at the request and acceptance of the parties to conflicts in matters of human rights and democracy." Marcelo Ebrard, the foreign minister of Mexico, which holds the presidency of CELAC this year, thanked the representatives of the organization's 33 member countries for attending the event in which challenges facing the region as well as those faced by each individual nation are addressed.

Iraqi Ex-Detainee Recounts Torture by U.S. Troops

The Americans have nothing to do with human rights. It is a concept they use to seek interests," said Bedu al-Hamad, a former Iraqi detainee who was jailed by the U.S. army for more than two years. Al-Hamad, 59, who was head of the reconstruction committee of the Municipal Council of the town of Duluiyah, Salahuddin province, spent 26 months and 20 days in



U.S. detention despite not having committed any crimes. The Sunni-dominated town of Duluiyah is a symbol of resistance to U.S. occupation, where U.S. troops were confronted with countless attacks and ambushed by armed groups in the town along the Tigris, especially in 2008 when the attacks reached their peak. On August 21, 2008, U.S. troops accused al-Hamad of supporting terrorism and arrested him, weeks after al-Hamad attended a meeting at the Municipal Council in Duluiyah. "Before the end of the meeting, the Americans came and told us: What right do you have to meet and decide to change the mayor without our knowledge? We've brought you to power and liberated you," al-Hamad said, who had a heated argument with a soldier. Then the soldier threatened al-Hamad with a gun and said, "I would... P2



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