

Trump renews Afghan commitment, sees no speedy exit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reversing his past calls for a speedy exit, President Donald Trump renewed the United States' commitment Monday to the 16-year-old war in Afghanistan...

In a prime-time address to unveil his new Afghanistan strategy, Trump said the U.S. would shift away from a "time-based" approach, instead linking its assistance to results and to cooperation from the beleaguered Afghan government, Pakistan and others.

"America will work with the Afghan government as long as we see determination and progress," Trump said. "However, our commitment is not unlimited, and our support is not a blank check."

Still, Trump offered few details about how progress would be measured. Nor did he explain how his approach would differ substantively from what two presidents before him tried unsuccessfully over the past 16 years.

Although Trump insisted he would "not talk about numbers of troops" or telegraph military moves in advance, he hinted that he'd embraced the Pentagon's proposal to boost troop numbers by nearly 4,000, augmenting the roughly 8,400 Americans there now.

"We will ask our NATO allies and global partners to support our new strategy, with additional troop and funding increases in line with our own. We are confident they will," Trump said. His comments were echoed by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who said in a statement that several of those allies had joined the U.S. in committing to boost troop levels.

While Trump stressed his strategy was about more than just the military, he was vague on other aspects. He offered no specifics on ensuring Afghanistan's economic development or on securing a new diplomatic partnership in the region.

Yet on one point — the definition of victory — Trump was unequivocal. He said American troops would "fight to win" by attacking enemies, "crushing" al-Qaida, preventing terror attacks against Americans and "obliterating" the Islamic State group, whose affiliate has gained a foothold in Afghanistan



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster

President Donald Trump speaks at Fort Myer in Arlington Va., Monday, during a Presidential Address to the Nation about a strategy he believes will best position the U.S. to eventually declare victory in Afghanistan.

as the U.S. squeezes the extremists in Syria and Iraq.

Trump's definition of a win notably did not include defeating the Taliban, the group whose harboring of al-Qaida led the U.S. to war in Afghanistan in the days after the 9/11 attacks.

"Someday, after an effective military effort, perhaps it will be possible to have a political settlement that includes elements of the Taliban in Afghanistan," Trump said.

Trump said his "original instinct was to pull out," alluding to his long-expressed view before becoming president that Afghanistan was an unsolvable quagmire requiring a fast U.S. withdrawal.

At its peak, the U.S. had roughly 100,000 there, under the Obama administration in 2010-2011. Trump said the American people are "weary of war without victory."

"I share the America people's frustration," Trump said at the Army's Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, in Arlington, Virginia, across the Potomac River from the White House.

Trump's speech concluded a months-long internal debate within his administration over whether to pull back from the Afghanistan conflict, as he and a few advisers were inclined to do, or to embroil the U.S. further in a

war that has eluded American solutions for the past 16 years. Several times, officials predicted he was nearing a decision to adopt his commanders' recommendations, only to see the final judgment delayed.

The Pentagon has argued the U.S. must stay engaged to ensure terrorists can't again use the territory to threaten America. Afghan military commanders have agreed, making clear they want and expect continued U.S. military help.

As a candidate, Trump criticized the war and said the U.S. should quickly pull out, but he also campaigned on a vow to start winning wars. Exiting now, with the Taliban resurgent, would be impossible to sell as victory.

"I think there's a relative certainty that the Afghan government would eventually fall," said Mark Jacobson, an Army veteran and NATO's former deputy representative in Kabul.

And while Trump has pledged to put "America First," keeping U.S. interests above any others, his national security advisers have warned that the Afghan forces are still far too weak to succeed without help.

As officers advocated for the troop increase, the Pentagon did not claim it would end the conflict. But military officials maintained it could help stabilize the Afghan government and break a stalemate with the Taliban.

BRIEFLY

Fugitive suspected in Barcelona attacks is killed

SUBIRATS, Spain (AP) — The lone fugitive from the Spanish cell that killed 15 people in and near Barcelona was shot to death Monday after he flashed what turned out to be a fake suicide belt at two troopers who confronted him in a vineyard not far from the city he terrorized, authorities said.

Police said they had "scientific evidence" that Younes Abouyaqoub, 22, drove the van that barreled through Barcelona's crowded Las Ramblas promenade, killing 13 people on Thursday, then hijacked a car and fatally stabbed its driver while making his getaway.

Abouyaqoub's brother and friends made up the rest of the 12-man extremist cell, along with an imam who was one of two people killed in what police said was a botched bomb-making operation.

After four days on the run, Abouyaqoub was spotted outside a train station west of Barcelona on Monday afternoon.

Two officers found him hiding in a nearby vineyard and asked for his identification, according to the head of the Catalan police. He was shot to death when he opened his shirt to reveal what looked to be explosives and cried out "Allah is great" in Arabic, regional police chief Josep Luis Trapero said.

Feds: Texas man tried planting bomb on Confederate statue

HOUSTON (AP) — A Houston man who's previously been convicted on explosives-related charges has been arrested after allegedly being caught trying to plant explosives on a Confederate statue at a Houston park, authorities

said Monday. Prosecutors allege 25-year-old Andrew Schneck was caught on Saturday evening near a statue of Richard Dowling, a lieutenant in the Confederate army. A Houston park ranger found Schneck holding two boxes with duct tape and wires as well as a bottle and a small tube containing compounds that tests later revealed were explosive materials, according to a criminal complaint.

Schneck was charged with attempting to maliciously damage or destroy property receiving federal financial assistance. He made his initial court appearance on Monday and was to remain in federal custody until a detention hearing on Thursday.

Search underway for missing sailors; Navy orders probe

SINGAPORE (AP) — The U.S. Navy ordered a broad investigation Monday into the performance and readiness of the Pacific-based 7th Fleet after the USS John S. McCain collided with an oil tanker in Southeast Asian waters, leaving 10 U.S. sailors missing and others injured.

It was the second major collision in the past few months involving the Navy's 7th Fleet. Seven sailors died in June when the USS Fitzgerald and a container ship collided in waters off Japan.

Vessels and aircraft from the U.S., Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia were searching for the missing sailors. Four other sailors were evacuated by a Singaporean navy helicopter to a hospital in the city-state for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries, the Navy said.

A fifth was taken to the hospital by ambulance after the destroyer arrived in Singapore under its own power, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

Table with columns for time slots (12 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 3 PM, 4 PM, 5 PM, 6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various channels (FOX, KPTV, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, etc.) listing programs like 'Paid Program', 'The Dr. Oz Show', 'Judge Judy', etc.

AUGUST 22, 2017

Large grid table for August 22, 2017, listing programs across various channels (A&E, AMC, ANPL, CMT, CNBC, CNN, DISC, ESPN, ESPN2, FOX, FOO, FREE, GOLF, GSN, HALL, HGTV, HIST, LIFE, NICK, ROOT, SPIKE, SYFY, TBS, TCM, TLC, TNT, UNI, USA, WE, WGN, HBO, HBO2, HBO3, MAX, SHOW, STARZ, STZENC) and time slots (12 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 3 PM, 4 PM, 5 PM, 6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30).

TUESDAY LATE NIGHT & WEDNESDAY MORNING

Table with columns for time slots (12 AM, 1 AM, 1:30, 2 AM, 2:30, 3 AM, 3:30, 4 AM, 4:30, 5 AM, 5:30, 6 AM, 6:30, 7 AM, 7:30, 8 AM, 8:30, 9 AM, 9:30, 10 AM, 10:30, 11 AM, 11:30) and rows for channels (FOX, KPTV, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS) listing programs like 'Friends', 'The Tonight Show', 'Late Night', 'The Muppet Show', etc.