

Headlines:

- **Little Progress in Afghanistan**
- **Saudi Dissident calls for Palace Coup**
- **Court Sentences 104 Army 'Plotters' to Life**

Details:**Little Progress in Afghanistan**

The inspector general has issued a new report openly scorning Pentagon claims of progress in the war in Afghanistan, noting the continued large attacks from the Taliban and ISIS, and that available data simply doesn't show progress in much of anything. That's been a recurring theme in the war, now 17 years in. Pentagon officials have claimed in recent months that they see progress being made, and that they've "turned the corner," but they've made similar claims dozens of times with nothing to show for it. Meanwhile, the Taliban are able to carry out major attacks even in supposedly secure districts. The Taliban controls broad swathes of the country, and recently the Afghan senate admitted that roughly half of the country is outside their direct control.

Saudi Dissident calls for Palace Coup

Prince Khaled bin Farhan, a dissident Saudi prince in Dusseldorf, Germany has made an appeal to Prince Ahmed bin Abdulaziz and Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz, saying that the damage being done to the Saudi royal family and the Kingdom by Salman's "irrational, erratic and stupid" rule had gone beyond the point of no-return. The prince said that recent statements by Mamduh bin Abdulaziz, one of the eldest surviving brothers of King Salman, indicated wider resentment within the family as a whole. "There is so much anger within the royal family," Prince Khaled said, "I took this information and appeal to my uncles Ahmed and Muqrin, who are the sons of Abdulaziz and are highly educated, well versed and able to change things for the better. I can say that we are all behind them and support them." The call for a coup comes as mystery continues about bursts of heavy gunfire which were heard outside the king's Ouja palace in Riyadh in April. The official explanation was that security guards had shot down "a toy drone". But the anonymous Saudi blogger Mujtahidd said that the palace had been attacked by heavy guns mounted on two SUVs, during which six security staff and two assailants were killed. Prince Khaled belongs to the al Farhan branch of the Saudi royal family. It dates back to the 18th century, when Farhan was one of the three brothers of Muhammad bin Saud, from who Abdulaziz, the major branch of the family, descended. The rift began after Khaled's father, who became known as the Red Prince, advocated a constitutional monarchy.

Court Sentences 104 Army 'Plotters' to Life

A Turkish court handed life sentences to 104 suspects over their involvement in the July 2016 attempted coup, according to state media. The former military personnel were given "aggravated life sentences" by a court in the western province of Izmir, state-run Anadolu news agency said, for "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order". In total, 280 military staff are on trial over the failed coup bid. Among the suspects receiving life sentences were former air force chief of staff lieutenant general, Hasan Huseyin Demiraslan, and ex-Aegean army command chief of staff major general Memduh Hakbilen. The court gave 21 suspects a 20-year jail sentence for "assisting the assassination of the president" while 31 were given sentences between seven years and six months and 10 years and six months for being a member of an armed "terror" group.