



AFGHANISTAN AND ITS NEIGHBORS REGIONAL VIEWS

Edited by Radha Kumar and Dnyanada Palkar



A DELHI POLICY GROUP PUBLICATION

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Preface

This small compendium of regional prospects for Afghanistan from 2014 onwards grew out of a series of conferences organized by the Delhi Policy Group in 2012-13, looking at Afghanistan and its neighbors with participants from ten Heart of Asia countries.

The authors in this volume are members of government or think tanks and analysts. The views expressed are sometimes those of their governments and sometimes their own. The structure of the volume departs from the norm: it starts with an introductory section by Afghan authors, the first of whom, Ghulam Jelani Popal, spelled out his government's hopes and plans for regional cooperation. The remaining two sections comprise regional analyses, approaches and aid for peace and stabilization in Afghanistan.

There is by now a vast amount of regional writing on Afghanistan, but relatively little of it published in India. While this volume comprises a sketch of regional views, perhaps it will help stimulate more thoroughly researched publications.

Radha Kumar

December 2013

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan and Its Neighbors

Ghulam Jelani Popal

Afghanistan's achievements since 2001 have been significant. It is a sovereign country. It has a constitution, a legitimate government, and a dynamic, if nascent democracy. For Afghanistan to continue on its path of development and stability, it needs an environment that is conducive to economic growth. If the menace of terrorism and narcotics is put to an end, we shall have moved a long way towards this goal.

With regional cooperation, the Afghan government's goal of bringing peace to the country can be realized considerably faster. And since the problems Afghanistan faces have consequences that are not limited to its borders, there is reason for its neighbors to help. The opportunities offered by a stable Afghanistan too are incentive for neighbors to contribute to an Afghan-led peace process.

Afghanistan's neighbors should prioritize joint counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization strategies. Islamist extremism is not just a problem for Afghanistan, and we need to address the external factors exacerbating our problems. How, for example, do we deal with terrorist sanctuaries that are not within our borders?

Though it might be hard for the peace process in Afghanistan to progress as fast as it should, until India and Pakistan resolve their issues;

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trilateral cooperation between Afghanistan-India-Pakistan can benefit Afghanistan and should not be put on hold. The liberal democratic forces in the three countries should create a network to put more pressure on their governments to ensure mutually beneficial opportunities are not lost.

The Government of Pakistan has more control over its decision-making processes now. This is a positive sign, and we are confident that a stronger civilian Government in Pakistan will increase the prospects of peace in Afghanistan.

It is also worth mentioning that despite the presence of international troops for over a decade, we have not allowed Afghanistan to be used against our neighbors, especially Iran. Afghanistan has an independent relationship with Iran. Trade has increased, and we have largely ignored the sanctions the West has placed on Iran.

“Afghans have always talked with Afghans, but talking to people from different walks of life will help bring a fuller understanding of the problems we face.”

The West came to Afghanistan without much information. They incorrectly assumed that women’s rights and cultural tolerance were alien to us. Afghanistan is of course a collection of different tribes, but to say they are fighting a common enemy for now but when the enemy is gone they will fight each other is wrong.

Afghans have always talked with Afghans, but talking to people from different walks of life will help bring a fuller understanding of the problems we face in the long-term. We believe that concerted, constructive engagement can help in the gradual reduction of tensions. Intellectual and cultural exchanges as well as scholarly discussions between the members of various faiths will also promote mutual understanding and strengthen the culture of tolerance and mutual coexistence.

Kabul feels the way forward is for the Taliban to directly hold talks with the Afghan government. The only conditions are that the Taliban should denounce violence and break ties with Al-Qaeda. The Hizb-e-Islami and other groups have agreed to these conditions.

A condition that the Taliban has placed for negotiations is that its members be allowed to travel freely. Despite the setbacks and the assassinations, for example of the chairman of the High Peace Council Burhanuddin Rabbani, the Afghan government has complied in many instances.

The talks at Chantilly were an excellent opportunity for the Afghan government, political parties, civil society organizations, the Taliban and the Hizb-e-Islami to share their views on the various steps needed to resolve

the conflict in Afghanistan, and to bring sustainable peace to the country. But what hinders negotiations with the Taliban is their consistent denouncement of Afghanistan's achievements over the last decade. The many divisions within the Taliban also make negotiating harder. We need to be certain about the credibility of the 'representatives' that we talk to.

Regardless of whether reconciliation takes place, Afghanistan will go to the polls in April 2014. The country will require technical and financial help from its partners during the elections. It is also important that there be no interference. Pressure should particularly be put on Pakistan in this regard.

We look forward to the double transition in 2014 that will allow the emergence of a stronger Afghanistan that is responsible for the security of its own people. The pledge by the international community to train and equip Afghanistan's security forces beyond 2014 is a big step towards ensuring this.

For now, Afghan forces are responsible for the security of the population of Afghanistan, and they have effectively deterred attacks in the region they control, making it difficult to argue the ANSF is not yet up to its task. The ANSF has taken responsibility for the entire nation, allowing for the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force by the end of 2014.

Apart from the immediate neighbors, it is noteworthy that the international community has shown their willingness to sustain broader development efforts in Afghanistan after the transition. The pledge to provide USD 16 billion in economic aid to Afghanistan over the next 4 years by the U.S. and Japan among others, despite a less than ideal domestic economic climate, is evidence of this.

Unfortunately for Afghanistan, much of the economic and developmental assistance over the past decade was geared towards ISAF's military objectives. We hope that the international community will recognize this rarely creates infrastructure in line with the long-term needs of the Afghan people, and will take steps to redress their approach.

With respect to Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), we need to implement a lot more of what was stated in Istanbul in 2011. A common transit route between India, Pakistan and Afghanistan would be advantageous; and while India and Pakistan iron out their difficulties, each

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nation should develop the infrastructure for trade routes so that once political agreements are reached, transit can begin with minimal delay. The roads to Torkham on the Durand Line and Wagah on the India-Pakistan border for example, should be developed now.

We hope that as relations progress, and as Afghanistan develops, Kabul can renew its historical role as a land bridge for the continent.

Hope for Afghanistan increases if income levels are raised, living standards improved, schools built and the youth educated. India has played a major role in encouraging human resource development, and we hope this will continue. Besides India, Kabul has taken steps to solidify partnerships with many other countries in the region. Strategic partnership agreements with the USA, India, China, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Australia are in the interest of a more secure and prosperous neighborhood, and Afghanistan's continued role in OIC, SAARC, ECO, CICA, CAREC and RECCA among others, will be of considerable benefit as Kabul moves towards a post-war phase of long-term stability and development.

The Delhi Policy Group's work on Afghanistan over the past year has allowed us to successfully identify several areas of cooperation. We must continue to find ways to translate these recommendations to policy. The government of Afghanistan is receptive to many of the recommendations, and we are delighted that other governments have expressed similar views regarding their implementation.

Ideally, we need to continue to build on the successes of the past decade. Higher income, faster growth, better standards of living, more schools, access to healthcare, a better network of roads and state-of-the-art communication systems are what we hope to offer our citizens. If we can achieve these goals, Afghanistan will be ready to take on an important role in facilitating regional cooperation, and also contribute to an economically, socially and culturally vibrant neighborhood.

Afghanistan's Complex Women's Rights Discourse

Davood Moradian

Are women's rights and gender equality universal or culturally and geographically confined to the West? Are there certain cultures and political systems that are inherently misogynistic? Are the concerns of Western powers about women's rights sincere or are they an instrument to pursue their own political objectives against their rivals? Does women's empowerment help or hinder conflict resolution in entrenched conflict zones such as Afghanistan? Have significant and unprecedented gains in women's rights in Afghanistan since 2001 taken root among indigenous communities? Are these gains sustainable and protected in light of receding Western engagement with Afghanistan? Can Afghan men become essential stakeholders in the consolidation and promotion of women's rights?

The above questions illustrate the complexity and the multifaceted nature of the women's rights discourse taking place in Afghanistan today. And the answers to these questions reflect competing political and philosophical perspectives. Women's rights and emancipation must be understood in the ongoing universal struggle for creating a just and humane society. What is truly universal is "patriarchy," a system that treats women as second-class objects, subservient to male domination. All cultures, religions, nations, and most political and economic systems have contributed to creating and sustaining a universal patriarchal system, though with different degrees. Women's emancipation has also been a universal endeavor across all nations, cultures and eras, with different rates of success. Therefore, neither women's rights nor patriarchy

“What we have yet to achieve is a universal understanding and definition of justice. Therefore, the discourse of women's emancipation and women's rights should be liberated from the realm of particularism, including a solely gender-based approach. The equality of men and women is the requirement of justice and an essential pillar of a humane and just society.”

should be seen as an exclusive feature of any given society or culture. They are humanity's shared heritage and responsibility. A trans-cultural understanding of women's rights is confirmed by the finding of The Asia Foundation's 2013 public opinion survey, in which nearly all Afghans (90 percent) agree with the idea that everyone should have equal rights under the law, regardless of their gender. In public imagination, Afghan men are seen as among the most misogynistic, if not on the top of such a list.

Patriarchy and its ensuing misogynistic manifestations are forms of injustice. Human beings are conscious of social justice and despise injustice. Even the most unjust and horrific acts and actors resort to justice to justify and legitimize their choices and behaviors. The love of justice and beauty, alongside other universal virtues has transcended all humanity's differences. What we have yet to achieve is a universal understanding and definition of justice. Therefore, the discourse of women's emancipation and women's rights should be liberated from the realm of particularism, including a solely gender-based approach. The equality of men and women is the requirement of justice and an essential pillar of a humane and just society. Patriarchy and women's subjugation are features of less-humane and unjust societies. Therefore, the "justice-lovers and believers" cannot and should not tolerate any form or justification for unjust institutions, laws, and acts that deny the inherent equality of human beings regardless of their gender, class, race, status, sexuality or religion.

Unfortunately, Afghan women have borne the injustices of entrenched patriarchal social, political, religious, and economic systems, far more than Afghan men. Nearly four decades of persistent conflict have brought immense physical, social, and psychological pain to the Afghan nation, men and women. However, there have also been positive developments. Chief among them are legal protection and recognition in the Afghan constitution, opening public spaces and offices for women's participation and overall improvement in Afghanistan's economy, governance, and politics and international solidarity.

However, these gains remain vulnerable and fragile. Their protection and consolidation require continuing and strengthening partnership among Afghans, both men and women, and the international community. To this end, we have to strive toward identifying legitimate, effective, indigenous, and sustainable ways to facilitate Afghan women's journey forward and contribution to creating a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan.

India's Strategic Interest: A Sovereign Afghanistan

Radha Kumar

In most Indian analyses, Afghanistan's ability to weather the inevitable challenges that the country will face post-2014 is heavily dependent on the nature and extent of international and regional support. Without such support the country could descend into war once again, propelled by economic and political failure. With concrete and timely support, however, the country would have a good chance of consolidating stabilization and moving towards peace.

India has three key strategic interests in Afghanistan, which have guided its policy over the past decade with varying degrees of success and/or failure, as follows:

- Preventing terrorist attacks against India (including training and sanctuaries);
- Supporting and strengthening a friendly neighbor (India's near abroad); and
- Gaining access to Central Asia.

These interests can best be protected, in the Indian view, by a two-pronged strategy: aiding Afghanistan to regain its sovereignty (including control over its borders and internal integration), and at the same time working with Afghanistan's neighbors and the wider Heart of Asia region

to provide the necessary support for Afghanistan's stabilization and recovery.

Until recently, the focus of India's support for Afghanistan was reconstruction and investment. India is today the largest regional donor to Afghanistan, with aid amounting to close to USD 2 billion as well as large promised investments in mining, and one of the top five donors internationally. The Government of India is active in most international forums for Afghanistan, including the International Contact Group comprising regional and international envoys, and the Istanbul/Heart of Asia Process, where it leads the CBM on economic and commercial opportunities. India was a founder of the RECCA economic cooperation association, whose fifth meeting was held in Tajikistan last year.

Over the past five years India's focus on economic aid has gradually expanded to include diplomatic initiatives, which are as yet modest, comprising active participation in regional and multilateral forums. India is engaged in a series of bilateral and trilateral processes aimed at removing misperceptions, expanding regional support and coordinating international initiatives for Afghanistan. Such efforts have taken place bilaterally with China and Iran, and trilaterally with Afghanistan and the U.S., China and Russia. In each of his summits with Pakistani leaders, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has sought to dispel Pakistani fears that India will misuse its relationship with Afghanistan against Pakistan.

As security tasks were largely controlled by ISAF, and will now pass into Afghan hands, India's role has been minimal in this area, comprising mostly training of army officers. This training program is likely to expand. President Karzai has asked India for arms, and India is exploring what it can do within the limits of Indian capacities and multilateral requirements.

With the coming international drawdown, however, many countries are asking whether India will seek a more prominent role in peace and stabilization initiatives for Afghanistan than it has done so far.

Will India's Position Change after ISAF Withdraws?

Most Indian analysts agree that India's policy will have to change to keep in step with changing realities in Afghanistan and the wider region. But they disagree on what this change should comprise. Some argue that India's role – which was difficult to achieve given Pakistani fears, and for which Indians and Afghans paid an unconscionably high price in

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terms of lost lives – will inevitably be more hotly contested once the international role downsizes. Thus India should itself downsize and focus where the need for peacemaking is most urgent, Pakistan.

Others argue to the contrary. As the international role downsizes the regional role will increase, since most of Afghanistan’s neighbors will abhor a vacuum. This role can either be unilateral or cooperative. In order to preempt the risk of neighbors’ interfering in Afghan affairs to impose or hedge their own interests, the region needs to work on a consensus and coordination basis. Regional powers such as China, India and Russia, therefore, need to take a lead to ensure that neighbors work on the principles of the Istanbul Declaration of 2011, many of which were also enshrined in the Declaration of Good Neighborliness in 2002.

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As the largest regional donor and with a close relationship of trust with the Afghan Government and people, India is well placed to play a larger role in mobilizing regional support than it has thus far. What can such a role consist of?

The Afghan Elections

The presidential election scheduled for April 5 is a key harbinger of 2014. International aid and support will, to a large extent, depend on the outcome of the election. The extent to which the election is free and fair (or “transparent and inclusive” in the new terminology) is a critical benchmark for Afghans domestically.

But who becomes President and who his ministers are, is equally if not more important for the international community. On this will depend the level and supply of aid. It is also important for those in government, as well as the new Afghan elites who are integrated into current power structures, and who may face displacement from power. Given that international and domestic interests are likely to differ in principle as well as detail on this issue, the interregnum between round one and round two of the Presidential election and the six months post election will be crucial periods to determine who will form the next government and what their approach to critical issues of governance and reconciliation will be.

Like India and Pakistan, Afghanistan’s electorate is largely young. Though they comprise a large voting constituency and are deeply engaged with the elections (as is to be expected), their votes will not constitute a game changer given the conflict dynamics that dominate Afghanistan.

India has good relations with all the Presidential forerunners and has offered whatever aid the Afghan Government requires for a free and fair or transparent and inclusive election. Clearly, given the breadth and depth of India's engagements in Afghanistan, the outcome of this election is of enormous interest to India, and India therefore has reason to offer both expert and technical aid in conducting the election.

Nor should we forget the Parliamentary elections to follow in 2015. India has invested heavily in the Afghan Parliament, with frequent visits by Afghan legislators of both houses to India and a yet to be completed new parliament building in Kabul. With the development of political parties in Afghanistan, this is the time for Indian political parties to engage with their Afghan counterparts.

The Afghanistan-U.S. Bilateral Security Arrangement (BSA)

Most observers expected the BSA to have been signed by now. Under negotiation for the best part of a year, the BSA allows for a relatively small U.S. and NATO contingent of troops to remain in Afghanistan post-2014, with the mandate to train and assist Afghan troops and fight terrorism, including its cross-border avatar (Article 6: "External Aggression").

The BSA is widely regarded as a confidence booster for international commitment to Afghan security, both for Afghans and for the wider region. Most importantly, it commits the U.S. to ensuring funding for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), without which even salaries could not be paid. Moreover, the NATO aid and assistance agreements are also to be signed after the BSA is signed, and will therefore be held up until it is.

The majority of Afghans welcomed delays in finalizing the BSA, because the prolonged negotiations were seen as ensuring that Afghanistan's interests were defended. There is little doubt that President Karzai and NSA Spanta's negotiating team produced a remarkable agreement; indeed it is noteworthy that few governments in a conflict and dependency situation have so vigorously defended the national interest, as has the Afghan Government with the BSA.

Nevertheless, the indefinite postponement of the BSA risks creating more problems than it will solve. Firstly, it risks making the BSA an elec-

"The interregnum between round one and round two of the Presidential election, and the six months post election, will be crucial periods to determine who will form the next government and what their approach to critical issues of governance and reconciliation will be."

“The delay in signing the BSA risks making it an election issue, which could play into the hands of those who say the government and elections are illegitimate. Secondly, it introduces further ambiguity into the already grey area of Afghan security, and could negatively impact the morale of the ANDSF if they do not know where 2015 salaries will come from.”

tion issue, which could play into the hands of those who say the elections and government are illegitimate. Secondly, it introduces further ambiguity into the already grey area of Afghan security, and could negatively impact the morale of the ANDSF if they do not know where 2015 salaries will come from. Thirdly, it has for the first time called into question the relationship between the Afghan Government and its people: the draft BSA was approved at a Loya Jirga called by President Karzai in November 2013, but he is yet to implement its decision.

Apparently there is one final issue that remains: President Karzai’s demand that the Obama administration pressure the Pakistan Government into fast-track cooperation for High Peace Council talks with the Taliban, preferably before the elections. Indubitably this would be an outcome that would be enormously welcomed in Afghanistan and the region at large; but is it achievable?

A deep Afghan anxiety underlies this demand, that the U.S. may quietly agree a power-sharing deal that will give the Taliban control over southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan, in effect partitioning Afghanistan. One way out of the BSA impasse could be to assure the Afghan Government and people that the international community will not countenance partition.

Peace and Reconciliation

The issue of peace and reconciliation, as has been pointed out by experts over the past decade, depends on three tracks: inter-ethnic, Taliban and Afghanistan-Pakistan. Considerable progress has been made on the former, but less on the latter two, which are interdependent. While several countries and actors have taken initiatives for talks with the Taliban, the Doha debacle indicates how fragile each initiative is. Since the election of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan in 2013, the focus has shifted to Pakistani assistance with the Taliban, but there have been no breakthroughs as yet. It is, thus, unlikely that substantial progress can be expected before the elections – unless they are postponed. Postponement, however, would send a predominantly negative message throughout Afghanistan and would risk reopening ethnic fissures.

Irrespective of timelines, most of the Heart of Asia countries recognize that a peace process between the Afghan Government and the Taliban would benefit the country and the region. Their fears are over whether the red lines set by the Loya Jirga will be followed or compromised, and to what extent. Over the past year, some fears have abated, largely

due to the Afghan Government's, U.S. and European efforts to assure regional countries that their security concerns will be taken on board, along with the latter two's persuasion of the Taliban to seek to reassure regional countries.

Nevertheless, several countries have sought to develop their own channels to the Taliban to hedge their interests, for example Iran and China.

India's own position towards the Taliban has altered considerably. Despite a hostile and immensely traumatic encounter with the Taliban in 1999, when a planeload of Indians were held in Afghanistan, and repeated assassinations of Indians working in Afghanistan, mostly by the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network, India has generally supported the Afghan Government's position, citing our own experience of negotiating with domestic militant and/or insurgent groups. India also supports the red lines drawn by the Loya Jirga.

The biggest sticking point for negotiations with the Taliban is their refusal to speak directly with the Afghan Government. Afghan analysts point to the fact that such a dialogue did take place in Chantilly in December 2012, albeit under international auspices and with international presence. They ask why no follow up along the lines of that meeting has occurred.

Conclusions

Though India has been reticent on taking a leading role in regional processes, the country has been a leader on the ground as far as humanitarian aid and economic reconstruction is concerned. With international engagement due to downsize post-2014, the onus for supporting Afghan stabilization will transfer to regional countries. India is not likely to shirk the responsibilities that accrue from its position as a close friend of Afghanistan's and regional power: indeed the Indian Government has already started discussions with two other great and regional powers, China and Russia, as well as the CARS countries, on how to further spur and coordinate existing regional initiatives such as the Istanbul/Heart of Asia process, the agreed CBMs and broader issues of regional security and economic growth. Each of these actions is first discussed with the Afghan Government.

As the Indian Prime Minister said, India is with Afghanistan for the long haul; and as the Indian Foreign Secretary said, India's effort is create a "narrative of hope" for the country.

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A Chinese Perspective on Afghanistan Post-2014

Wang Xu

Afghanistan is a country abundantly rich in natural resources. Emerging economies like India and China are eager to help develop the minerals sector in this war-torn country. Since 2001, China alone has become a major foreign investor in Afghanistan, for example through the MCC's Aynak copper mine project and the CNPC's Amu Darya project. Moreover, given its strategic geographical location, linking China's Silk Road economic belt in Central Asia, the China-Pakistan economic corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor in South Asia, a peaceful and stable Afghanistan could play a constructive role in achieving these economic plans. This paper focuses on how China could share its national interests along with the international community in Afghanistan post 2014, based on a brief analysis of Afghanistan's current situation and possible scenarios beyond the U.S. & NATO withdrawal.

Challenges in the U.S. & NATO Withdrawal

As the final withdrawal of foreign combat troops is fast approaching, there are still some uncertainties regarding the future of a U.S. and NATO military presence in Afghanistan. Can the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) be signed in time and will U.S. troops stay in Afghanistan beyond

2014? Besides, it is still unclear how many U.S. and NATO troops will remain in Afghanistan.

Facing a great security threat and the possible return of the Taliban to power post 2014, a unanimous majority of the 2,500-member Loya Jirga called on President Hamid Karzai on November 24, 2013 to sign the BSA with the U.S. by the end of this year. But the Afghan president still insists on three pre-conditions for the U.S. before he agrees to sign the security pact: transparent elections in April, no raids on Afghan homes and a breakthrough in talks with the Taliban.

Although the current military transition seems to progress smoothly, there are still some challenges left. With the Afghan-led takeover of security, the military goal has shifted to a layered defense mixing ANA, ANP and ALP to hold most population centers, key lines of communication and security areas. But how long can ANSF hold these after complete withdrawal of ISAF troops? The growing capabilities of the ANSF as they progress towards fully independent operations still need time to test their intelligence gathering, logistics and air support capacity.

More importantly, the coming cut in U.S. and NATO aid and military spending post 2014 will be a primary challenge to Afghan government. Given the lessons from Soviet withdrawal, that the collapse of the Najibullah regime happened only when the Soviet Union itself collapsed and the funding was ended to the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the international community needs to take this challenge very seriously. Therefore, securing peace in Afghanistan and continuous financial support to the Afghan government post 2014 are top priorities for the international community.

Internal Challenges

The ongoing political and economic transitions to complement the military transition, pose political, security and economic challenges in Afghanistan.

Political reconciliation has stalled. In fact, peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government have almost stopped after the assassination of Burhanuddin Rabbani, Chairman of the High Peace Council, in 2011, despite efforts at Doha to restart them. Besides, there are conflicts among different stakeholders in the Karzai government as well as in the Northern Alliance, due to different political interests amid the

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final withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2014. Meanwhile, there is still a long way to go for the Afghan government to improve its efficiency, transparency, and accountability. More seriously, the coming Afghan presidential election to be held on April 5, 2014, in the same year as the U.S. final withdrawal, will most likely create social and political turbulence in Afghanistan.

“There are conflicts among different stakeholders in the Karzai government as well as in the Northern Alliance, due to different political interests amid the final withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2014. Meanwhile, there is still a long way to go for the Afghan government to improve its efficiency, transparency, and accountability.”

Apart from these political challenges, the security challenges in Afghanistan are more critical. It's not a good choice to pull out all foreign combat troops before reaching a final political settlement. Furthermore, in April 2012, the U.S. announced a new plan to cut ANSF down by roughly one-third to 230,000, which may not meet the needs to secure stability in Afghanistan. The Afghan government had expected support for around 500,000 or at least 300,000 Afghan security forces. NATO's decision to reduce the ANSF numbers was based on financial concerns and not a realistic assessment of Kabul's security needs. Moreover, due to the increasing insider attacks or so called “green on blue” attacks that brought the number of NATO soldiers killed to 51 for 2012 alone, the senior commander for Special Operations forces in Afghanistan has suspended training for all new Afghan recruits (ALP) until the more than 27,000 Afghan troops working with his command are re-vetted for ties to the insurgency. Besides, the sophistication and firepower of suicide attacks and ambushes by Taliban in the last two years, including well-planned assaults in Kabul's heavily protected diplomatic and government district have shown the increasing capability of insurgents. Instead of a direct fight against the ISAF or Afghan government, Taliban took to major attacks and tactics like insider attacks to speed U.S. and NATO withdrawal; push aid workers and NGOs out and further weaken already hostile popular support for the war.

According to an updated World Bank analysis of the economic situation in Afghanistan and the impact of aid, challenges to the Afghan economy are as follows. Firstly, Afghanistan's economy relies heavily on the service sector related to the ISAF. For instance, outside aid and military spending have equaled some 90 percent of market GDP, while aid alone, less military spending, has equaled 40 percent of GDP. Therefore, after the final withdrawal, an economic drop down seems to be inevitable beyond 2014. Secondly, unemployment (8 percent) and underemployment (48 percent) total 56 percent of the labor force, and the economy is under constant pressure from additions to the work force coming from a very young and rapidly growing population. Thirdly, due to the global economic crisis, European debt crisis, and the shifting of the U.S. strategic focus to the Asia Pacific, there might be a significant

reduction of international financial support in the coming years. More importantly, the above-mentioned political and security challenges will bring numerous uncertainties in the future of Afghanistan, while peace and stability are the primary conditions of any economic development.

The Reconciliation Process

Encouraging progress has been made in Afghan reconciliation processes, such as a multi-ethnic political coalition among the Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara for presidential candidates. For example, Zalmay Rasoul (Pashtun) with his first vice-president Ahmad Zia Massoud (a younger brother of Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Tajik legendary resistance leader against the Soviet invasion) and second vice-president Habiba Surabi (a Hazara politician, and governor of Bamyan Province).

However, given the deep ethnic divides in Afghanistan, the reconciliation process still has a long way to go. For example, the Coordination Council of Political Parties of Afghanistan (CCPPA), consisting of more than 23 political parties, had started detailed discussions regarding the upcoming Afghan presidential elections in July 2013, but still could not identify a consensus candidate in time.

Besides, consensus on peace talks between the leaders of the Taliban and its field commanders is also badly needed, which is critical for the implementation of any political settlement between the Taliban and the Kabul regime in the future.

The well-known proxy politics in Afghanistan is a political legacy from the times of the Great Game some 200 years back. It reflects geopolitical gaming not only in the region, but the Middle East and beyond. It is notable that the major ethnic groups in Afghanistan have their co-ethnics living right across the borders of the country. This has provided Afghan groups as well as neighboring countries with a certain socio-political leverage and has therefore also allowed continuing interference. As a matter of fact, involving more countries in the Afghan peace talks could just create more problems than solutions. The core group of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S. is very crucial to Afghan peace talks. Therefore, Pakistan, through its role as facilitator, holds the key to the reconciliation process in Afghanistan post 2014.

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In April 2012, Pakistan agreed with Afghanistan and the U.S. on a mechanism of “safe passage” for those Taliban officials who decided to join the peace process. “Safe passage” for the Taliban and their families was put in place in view of complaints by the Karzai government that those Taliban who intended to join the peace process are either killed or arrested in Pakistan. In the wake of the process of “safe passage,” all freed Taliban prisoners were allowed to go to Pakistan, Afghanistan or any other country with the promise that they would neither be stopped nor arrested.

“Since November 2012, Pakistan has so far freed 33 Taliban detainees at the request of the Afghan High Peace Council, including some high-profile figures like Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the senior most Afghan Taliban in Pakistan’s custody, amid the hope that he could be the game-changer for the stalemated reconciliation process in Afghanistan.”

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At the London summit in 2013 Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed on the urgency of the Afghan peace process and committed themselves to take all necessary measures to achieve the goal of a peace settlement over the next six months. The Taliban were called upon to open an office in Doha, the capital of Qatar, and enter into dialogue with the Afghan High Peace Council.

Despite all these efforts, the Taliban still publicly refuse to deal with the Karzai government. They have also shown no willingness to participate in the Afghan presidential election. Instead, their readiness to negotiate with the Americans about a prisoner swap has only infuriated Karzai, who in late August asked Pakistan to help find a direct channel of communication. However, recently a senior Pakistan Taliban commander Latif Mehsud was seized in U.S. operations in Kunar province of Afghanistan. He was reportedly returning from talks over a possible prisoner swap deal with the Kabul government. This incident will negatively impact the already intertwined relations between the twin brothers.

Possible Scenarios in Afghanistan Post 2014: Messy but Manageable

If the U.S. and its NATO allies are not able to fulfill their commitments to an estimated annual budget of USD 4.1 billion for the ANSF, or the BSA is not signed in time (which will define the shape of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan for years to come), or some major breakthroughs

are not made in the reconciliation process, a civil war will be inevitable in Afghanistan, shortly after the complete withdrawal of foreign troops.

It will lead to a “Power Rebalancing Process” in which the Afghan Taliban would face a reality away from its misperception of western defeat, and rebalance its relations with the Kabul regime and other stakeholders.

Security Challenges to the Region and Beyond

There are three main concerns in the region including terrorist attacks, Islamic extremism and drug trafficking. The most severe challenge would be security threats originating from Afghanistan. Afghanistan, the Afghan-Pakistan border and FATA areas in Pakistan, particularly North Waziristan, have become a safe haven for terrorism, extremism and separatism. These impose major security threats to South Asia, Central Asia, China, and even far beyond the region.

Pakistan, an all-weather friend of China, has witnessed increasing cross-border attacks from Kunar province of Afghanistan in this year, launched by the Pakistani Taliban that were defeated by Pakistan’s military operation in Swat two years ago. Given the increasingly numerous terrorist attacks in Pakistan, peace in Pakistan could hardly be secured without peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Central Asia, the rising source of China’s energy imports, is also facing challenges in counter-terrorism and anti-narcotics. Islamic terrorist groups like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) impose huge threats to China’s energy corridor in Central Asia. Besides, drug trafficking to China, Russia and Europe through the Central Asian Republics has always been an important source of funding to terrorist groups in the region.

Due to its geographic location, it seems unlikely that China would face critical direct terrorist threats from Afghanistan. However, the instability of Afghanistan and its implications for neighboring countries would have a negative impact on the security situation in the West of China and on regional stability. Meanwhile, China’s investments, especially those Chinese personnel working at different projects in Afghanistan, need careful protection.

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“Afghanistan is located at the heart of Asia and therefore the expected energy corridor, road transportation and trade transition cannot be achieved without peace and stability in Afghanistan and its neighboring countries. Given its geostrategic significance, Afghanistan is expected to play an active role in the construction of the Silk Road economic belt, and make due contributions to overall economic prosperity of the region.”

China needs to further develop economic relations with Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The strategic concept proposed by President Xi during his visit to four Central Asian countries this September, to jointly build the Silk Road economic belt has brought unprecedented opportunities for regional development and revitalization. Afghanistan is located at the heart of Asia and therefore the expected energy corridor, road transportation and trade transition cannot be achieved without peace and stability in Afghanistan and its neighboring countries. Given its geostrategic significance, Afghanistan is expected to play an active role in the construction of the Silk Road economic belt, and make due contributions to overall economic prosperity of the region.

China needs to further develop its western region. Under this strategy, more Free Trade Zones need to be established and more border trade needs to be encouraged. These cannot be fulfilled unless regional stability is achieved. Given the export of Islamic extremism and re-networking of terrorist groups in the region, security cooperation is the common need of all. China could advance security cooperation with neighboring countries, actively participate in regional and sub-regional security cooperation, and enhance cooperation mechanisms and strategic mutual trust.

Possible Measures for China

Facing the above-mentioned challenges, only political means and inclusive peace talks could secure a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Besides, the focus should also be on ensuring that enhancing the capabilities of ANSF and a secure presidential election, are of equal importance to reconciliation. Therefore, China could take possible measures as follows to further Afghan reconstruction.

Firstly, to enhance international cooperation on Afghanistan’s reconstruction under the framework of the UN and other International multi-lateral cooperation mechanisms, China will host the 4th Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan in 2014.

Secondly, existing regional cooperation organizations like the SCO could play a more important role in the areas of counter-terrorism and anti-narcotics in Afghanistan: after the establishment of the SCO-Afghan contact group in 2005, for instance, the SCO initiated a joint anti-terror drill as well as intelligence sharing.

Thirdly, China could use regional political leverage, like bilateral and trilateral cooperation, to facilitate the “Afghan-led and Afghan-owned” peace talks, providing assistance to improve the counter-terrorist capabilities of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics.

Finally, Afghanistan is China’s old friend. Ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955, China always firmly supported the efforts of the Afghan government to safeguard its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In view of the current Afghan situation, the top priority for China is to firmly support an “Afghan-led, Afghan-owned” reconciliation process, and play a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan. The visit of Afghan President Karzai to Beijing last year witnessed the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement and acceptance of Afghanistan’s observer membership of SCO. During the recent visit of Karzai to Beijing, China has committed to offer more assistance and aid to help with Afghanistan’s reconstruction and promote regional peace and development post 2014.

Conclusion

According to the recent conference on diplomatic work in Beijing, the strategic goal of China’s neighborhood diplomacy is to serve the cause of national rejuvenation, for which China must strive to make neighboring countries more friendly in politics, more closely tied economically, and have deeper security cooperation and closer people-to-people ties, thereby making the best use of this period of important strategic opportunities to safeguard sovereignty and development interests. China’s current neighborhood policy towards Afghanistan well reflects these demands. A peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is vital to regional stability and prosperity. Stability in Afghanistan needs social, political and economic reconstruction, in which China could play an important role.

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Russia's Approach to Afghanistan: Current Politics and Post-2014 Scenarios

Vladimir Boyko

“One of the most negative factors of discontinuous developments in Afghanistan after World War II was a failed experiment to establish political parties in the late 1940s-early 1950s, which led to the emergence of radical political movements of both the leftist and Islamist sort.”

Despite manifold engagements for an Afghan settlement since the USSR broke down, Russia is a marginal player in Afghanistan. This is partially due to the fact that after re-emerging as a sovereign country, Russia became the successor of the union state in legal terms. Accordingly, many in the international community perceived Russia as a country inheriting all obligations and sins of the Soviet Union, including military invasion in the late 1970s-80s. Afghanistan is considered in this, and in the broader historical context as an evil of superpowers or smaller external players. This is only part of the truth, which complicated the search for an exit from the Afghan knot.

Indeed, despite internationalization of the Afghan problem, connected with the Soviet invasion in December 1979, following occupation and multinational foreign interference, this conflict has domestic origins and dimensions too. It emerged in the course of extraordinary developments and efforts to strengthen statehood in the first half of the twentieth century (in the 1970s). A high price for this breakthrough into the new century was an output of political usurpation of power networks by the Pashtun elite, which split themselves on clan and personal lines. One of the most negative factors of discontinuous developments in Afghanistan after World War II was a failed experiment to establish political parties in the late 1940s-early 1950s, which led to the emergence of radical political movements of both the leftist and Islamist sort. By

the middle of the 1970s the partially re-grouped government (republican coup of 1973) began to lose opposition, although the authoritarian regime of M. Daud maneuvered through the crisis and achieved tactical successes. An instant threat to the life of leftist opposition leaders provoked spontaneous action among their followers, the assassination of the legal president and the advent of power fractures in the national-democratic party. In the series of coup d'états that followed, divisions within Afghan society deepened. This initially occurred with minimal external interference. The increasingly active role of external players turned it into a large-scale civil war.

The events of the 1990s, such as the downfall of the NDPA/Watan regime, coming to power of Mojahed groups and the victory of the “Islamic revolution” were accompanied by the return of the U.S. to Central Asia along with increased tension in this part of the world. One more powerful force – religious and politico-militarist groups of Talibs – emerged as an instrument of restoring order in war-torn Afghanistan and implementing large geo-economic and political projects of the U.S. (allied with Pakistan). Amidst the sudden gain of state power and announcing of a theocratic emirate, the Taliban failed as a ruling force towards the end of the twentieth century. This was as a result of corruption as well as the inability to solve the ongoing and strategic problems of Afghanistan. The start of anti-terrorist campaigns by an international coalition led by the U.S. in fall 2001 breathed new life into them. They began to promote themselves as a national liberation movement, whereas their combat forces won obvious gains in the course of guerilla activities against occupation forces. Consequently, the Taliban is a direct outcome of U.S. intervention in Asia, in cooperation with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other countries.

There is some evidence that this force will be exploited in the course of the new alignment of power in the first decades of the twenty-first century. What direction will be chosen by Afghanistan in cultural, civilizational and geopolitical terms? After the downfall of the British Empire and emergence of new states in Asia, Afghanistan found itself isolated – its leadership consciously avoided block politics, but was actually involved in regional intrigues. One of the patterns of involvement might be the British project of making an alliance of Muslim states (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey). The project was suspended on geopolitical grounds, owing to the fact that the U.S. had different preferences. The anti-Soviet and initially anti-Chinese leanings in their regional politics were a cause of the same. The U.S. supported a new sovereign state, Pakistan, which was converted into their main stronghold in West Asia.

“Afghanistan can and should cooperate with all regional and international political players, including the U.S. It will gravitate to Eurasian cultural, civilizational and geopolitical space, although economic imperatives will draw it to East and South Asia.”

New strategic options for Afghanistan will be generated by taking into account that Asia is now the arena of two mega-states – India and China. The majority of Asian economics and politics are played out in the East and South of the continent. Central Asia, which is often at the bottom of the pyramid in regional politics and analysis, including the Afghan context, cannot pursue an independent line. It has developed as an integral part of the vast Eurasian landmass. Afghanistan can and should cooperate with all regional and international political players, including the U.S. It will gravitate to Eurasian cultural, civilizational and geopolitical space, although economic imperatives will draw it to East and South Asia.

“In case there is further escalation of the Afghan conflict the expenses of many states will increase for security, which will influence investor decisions negatively. Besides, there will be an increase of drug traffic, arms smuggling and geopolitical competition between major international military-political forces.”

Afghanistan, with its reduced experience of centralized government, faces the complicated tasks of state building and national unification. After more than a decade of military intervention in Afghanistan, one may conclude that the U.S. project surpassed the Soviet one in certain aspects (such as technology, time and resources devoted to the intervention). This does not change the fact that it failed. The late modifications of the intervention into a strategy for cohesive action in the AfPak region, the search for exit from deadlock (fraught with escalation of military operations and a deepening of regional confrontation) are indicators of the failure of the project.

It has not been successful on the economic front either. In the last decade of the twenty-first century, the U.S. had to go up against several offensives, which they had not experienced before. The U.S. and groups that gained new political technologies (and reaped the first harvests of their innovation in some Asian regions), should realize that an Afghan settlement is possible. Beyond the ambitions of single states or even coalitions, a settlement can be achieved only on the basis of comprehensive collaboration from the international community. This work should be done with the participation of states and peoples of Eurasia; including the first and second tier neighbors of Afghanistan, as well as forces suffering from adverse consequences of the Afghan conflict.

Russia’s politics in Afghanistan is influenced by historical heritage, which includes positive as well as negative experiences. However, according to General Anatoly Kulikov, Chairman of the National Chieftain’s Club, “Russia will support the international strategy of complex settlement and post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan and is planning to take active part in this work”.

On October 9, 2012 the UN Security Council extended the mission of the international coalition under NATO's leadership in Afghanistan for one year – that is the ISAF was to remain in Afghanistan till October 13, 2013. Essentially there is a dyarchy in Afghanistan. On the one hand, as a result of the efforts of the international community, all attributes and institutions of government are established and elections are held at different levels of government. On the other hand, a large part of the country is still ruled by the Taliban. According to General Kulikov, if the situation in Afghanistan does not improve within the next two years, several negative factors will influence it:

- It will not be possible to establish transport and energy corridors via Afghanistan to Pakistani ports – this will be an impediment to exports, economic goals and the geopolitical significance of this region.
- In case there is further escalation of the Afghan conflict the expenses of many states will increase for security, which will influence investor decisions negatively. Besides, there will be an increase of drug traffic, arms smuggling and geopolitical competition between major international military-political forces and organizations in Central Asia and this very region will be transformed into a buffer zone.

General Kulikov and many other Russian military experts believe that the U.S. will not leave Afghanistan as it occupies a favorable geographic location and plays a strategic role in the geopolitics of Eurasia as well as the entire world. The U.S. has spent billions of dollars and suffered human and material losses. According to reliable sources, the U.S. is negotiating with the Karzai government regarding opportunities for establishing permanent military bases (with several thousands of military instructors, combat and aircraft forces) that will remain till 2024. If centrifugal trends dominate, direct geopolitical fighting will begin in Afghanistan. Since the NATO mission was established, the West monopolized the search for a solution to the Afghan problem, whereas before, other regional and international players could weigh in on it.

In the 1990s, the Afghan war was, in fact, a war of external geopolitical interests being fought by Afghan groups. If this scenario is repeated, the U.S. and NATO will not be the exclusive contenders for controlling the developments in Afghanistan but instead they will become one of the many players on the Afghan geopolitical field.

Cooperation between Russia and the West on the Afghan problem is seriously complicated by competition for influence in post-Soviet Central Asia. The gap in values as well as ideologies of both is a further impediment. If these complications were to be overcome, Russia could contribute to the Afghan settlement via the Northern Distribution Network, providing legal assistance to the Afghan government, increasing military and economic assistance for Central Asian states in the context of “security belts” on the borders of Afghanistan and uniting the efforts of TCS and SCO with the EU and NATO.

“It is Russia, which is providing multi-dimensional support to the coalition from the very beginning of the anti-terrorist operation. On a regular basis Russia provides military, technical and humanitarian assistance to its Afghan partners. Russia provides training to civilian, police and military cadres (more than 160 officials of the defense ministry, more than 300 officials of the Afghan anti-narcotic police).”

Russia insists that the international coalition should apply for a new UN mandate in Afghanistan, not replace it by the US-Afghanistan bilateral security agreement. Economically, Russian businesses whether state-run, joint stock or state-private, do not predict profit in Afghan projects.

Meanwhile, it is Russia which is providing multi-dimensional support to the coalition from the very beginning of the anti-terrorist operation. On a regular basis Russia provides military, technical and humanitarian assistance to its Afghan partners. Russia provides training to civilian, police and military cadres (more than 160 officials of the defense ministry, more than 300 officials of the Afghan anti-narcotic police). In 2012 Russia contributed 100 million rubles to the trust endowment of the Russia-NATO council on technical service of Russian helicopters in Afghanistan and training of technical personnel.

During the last several years, political, legal and logistical conditions were put in place for transit such as the Northern Distribution Network (NDN). Russia concluded bilateral inter-government agreements that waived the cost of air transit of arms, munitions and personnel for the needs of their forces.

In April 2008, at the Russia-NATO Summit in Bucharest, agreements were concluded on waiving railway transit costs for ISAF non-lethal cargo via Russian territory to Afghanistan. Since February 2009 more than 70,000 containers from US, UK, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Sweden and other countries have been delivered. In November 2010, a simplified method was proposed for railway transit of non-lethal cargo in reverse – that is, from Afghanistan – and was implemented to transport armored vehicles with enhanced mine protection. Finally, in July 2012 a new agreement was concluded for extension of these simplified rules for combined transit – railway, auto and air – on the basis of the infrastructure of the airport “Vostochny”. The Northern Distribution Network has never failed in terms of the time and safety of deliveries.

The length of the northern route is 4,500 kms, with half of that distance located within Russian territory. Russia is interested in increasing the flow of cargo on this route and expects that upon completion of military operations in Afghanistan it might be converted into a commercial network connecting Central Asia and Europe.

Some leftist media (such as the Communist daily "Pravda") are posing far-reaching ideas. Keeping in mind Russia's significance in the Northern Distribution Network, they speculate whether Russian can extend its reach to southern routes (from Karachi to Chaman and Torkham) with access to the Indian Ocean through the Arabian Sea and ports of Gwadar or Karachi and then to the Strait of Hormuz, bypassing the alliances with Iran and Pakistan.

The Head of the Carnegie Endowment Moscow office, Dmitri Trenin pointed out: "No matter how desirable seemed the presence of the grouping of U.S. forces in the Hindu Kush, Afghan realities likely will not allow it". Experts are sure that Washington already foresees this situation and seeks to strengthen its position in Pakistan and Central Asia, bearing in mind a rapidly growing China, rather than Afghanistan itself. The irony is that despite the U.S.' proper "framing" of China, American soldiers are already being replaced by Chinese business companies.

Currently Russia's stand on the Afghan problem has drawn criticism from external and domestic entities. Yury Krupnov, known for his numerous statements and projects-from-above on Afghanistan, laments that "Russia is already not a player, but just a figurehead" in Afghanistan.

NATO thinks that Russia could supply the Afghan army with small arms, armor, helicopters, artillery, ammunition and even fuel. Russia could do this, but for a charge, whereas NATO believes that supplies should be granted to Afghans free of charge. NATO, on account of not being able to supply Afghans, itself is interested in extending the agreement on the Northern Distribution Network. Russia, in her turn, would supply helicopters only on a commercial basis. Right now these are used on contracts and sub-contracts via intermediaries. Russia is also ready to reconstruct 142 industrial and infrastructural projects undertaken by the Soviets. However the expectation is that Russian companies have a privileged right to these projects, without any tenders, as all international competitions are deemed to follow semi-corrupt procedures by corporations. Russia rejects providing financial cover for these projects,

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as it has already written off Afghanistan's debt of USD 10.38 billion and cannot be philanthropic anymore.

The Khorasan project is a new Afghan-Indian proposal presented recently at an international conference in Herat (October 2012), which evidences growing regional interest in an Afghan settlement. Khorasan, in the current and future context entails a multi-dimensional phenomenon: firstly, it is a reference to the rich historical, cultural and political heritage of a wider region which included areas of the modern states of Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In its heyday the concept and practices of inclusive cultures were promoted with mutual positive impact for peoples and rulers.

“The Khorasan project provides a role for Iran – this key country may be integrated into regional schemes due to its considerable soft power in culture. Simultaneously, this would reconcile Iran with its counterparts worldwide and in the region.”

In modern terms, Khorasan would entail renewing the concept and framework for intercultural ties and [re-] integration within the geographical area west of the Heart of Asia. Spatially it complements a Central and South Asia connection and suggests symbiosis of Iranian (Persian), post-Soviet Tajik and Uzbek (Turkic) cultures. Above all the Khorasan project provides a role for Iran – this key country may be integrated into regional schemes due to its considerable soft power in culture. Simultaneously, this would reconcile Iran with its counterparts worldwide and in the region.

The New Silk Road project, as it was advertised in early 2000s and has been performed now by the U.S. and their close partners, is in high demand, but is a spatially focused scheme. As far as the classic expression “Silk Road” is concerned, the noted British expert on Central Asia, Shirin Akiner, calls it one of the “wonderful, 19th century metaphors about the region”. She refers to German analyst Ferdinand von Richthofen's phrase of 1877 that “brilliantly encapsulates the mystery, sensuousness and exotic splendor of the ancient trade which criss-crossed Europe and Asia”. Thus, the renewed term “New Silk Road” is essentially a metaphor for reconnection in accordance with a historical web of trade and transport routes, adjusted for present circumstances, infrastructure and linkages.

The geopolitical conundrum in and around Afghanistan has led Russia to adopt multilateral policies towards Afghanistan in and after 2014 – the alliance with Iran as well as cooperation with India on the Afghan problem in the 1990s were not sufficient. The most appropriate framework might be a Russia-India-Iran-Pakistan quadrangle and existing international schemes such as the Heart of Asia group. This new international project concerning Afghanistan is to be undertaken by Heart

of Asia states – participants of the Istanbul conference of 2011. It is a more recent program of stabilization in Afghanistan, which emphasizes certain geopolitical and cultural aspects of the Afghan settlement with a hierarchy of tasks and participants. The Heart of Asia project is based on openness and inclusiveness and its main driving force should be the first and second tier neighbors of Afghanistan, including Russia. References to the Kabul declaration on good neighborly relations, signed on December 22, 2002 by the interim administration of Afghanistan and the governments of China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan do not close the way for other regional states. For example, Russia, being a significant part of the Northern Distribution Network, not only facilitates the delivery of cargo of an international anti-terrorist coalition, but can also approve routes for a future Eurasian bridge in the period following 2014.

The timeframe of projects-in-progress for Afghanistan is an important matter. The main point of suspicion is that the “Decade of Transformation” (2015-2024), which will be under supervision of extra-regional powers, suggests their extended presence in the region for security and development purposes. What kind of security will ground foreign involvement in Afghanistan and the nearby region? As American diplomats J. Herbst (former U.S. ambassador to Uzbekistan and Ukraine) and W. Courtney (former U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan and Georgia) warn: “...Central Asians want continued Western support to forestall IMU and IJU subversion, counter narcotics smuggling and help them balance Russian and Chinese power”. This statement underlines, besides obvious security considerations, some geopolitical calculations as well. Moreover, Western roles may be extended to manage some domestic challenges – together with the point that “Central Asia will need help in securing its people against external dangers, but autocratic rule and weak governance are just as serious a threat”.

The Peace Process Roadmap to 2015, drafted by the High Peace Council of Afghanistan, is among the recent domestic programs of action. With all its shortcomings and generalizations, this Roadmap provides a step-by-step scheme for an Afghan settlement with an emphasis on direct talks with the Taliban and their re-integration into the peace process and government structures. Currently dominant domestic and external forces in Afghanistan accept only infrequent participation of Russia in these developments. Russia herself follows a low-intensity approach to the country. In the context of growing uncertainties, Russia should be far more active in all initiatives, even small-scale projects, relevant to Afghanistan.

“The failures of the Western coalition have renewed Afghan interest in Russia as a reliable partner country with a similar mentality and culture. However, this interest should be maintained on mutually beneficial and concrete work in different fields of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The failures of the Western coalition have renewed Afghan interest in Russia as a reliable partner country with a similar mentality and culture. However, this interest should be maintained on mutually beneficial and concrete work in different fields of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This trend faces political and propaganda impediments – in Afghanistan and around it there are forces seeking to focus the historical memory and public consciousness of Afghans exclusively on the conflicts of the 1980s. Through their efforts, the restoration of Afghan independence is associated not with the Anglo-Afghan war of 1919 and the following treaty of 1921, but with the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989.

This is not the entire truth, although such an approach opens the door to further debates about new independence dates, connected to those beyond 2014. Russia must implement applied projects in diplomacy, economy, culture and education and conduct research and information work on and in Afghanistan. This would not only maintain Russia's presence in this historically and geopolitically connected area, but also save related fields of scholarship and training or education, focused on Afghanistan and the wider Central-South Asian region. The generation crisis and the lack of cadres, as well as the lack of support for the 100,000 strong Russia-based Afghan diaspora may negatively affect Russian-Afghanistan relations and the linkages with Afghanistan – the crossroads of Asia.

Afghanistan and Regional Cooperation: Adoption of a Constructive and Good-Neighborly Approach

Hossein Sheikh-ul-Islam

Over the past three decades, due to the invasion of the country by foreign forces as well as unceasing civil wars and violence, Afghanistan is considered one of the crucial hotbeds in regional and international contexts. The absence of political stability and sustainable security in Afghanistan, coupled with widespread civil wars, has led to devastating consequences with adverse ramifications domestically and regionally. In consideration of the fact that any measures aimed at ensuring stability and security in the region are affected by Afghanistan's internal situation, regional countries should help this country as a regional partner to overcome its problems, by adopting a constructive approach based on the principle of peaceful co-existence and good-neighborliness. Encompassing efficient solutions, such an approach is intended to introduce regionalism as a feature for growth, development, stability and security within the context of collective cooperation, conducive to regional interests, which may be composed of the following ingredients:

“Regional countries should avoid interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and should adopt collectively coordinated measures in order to avoid raising claims of personal interests. The aftermath of regional countries' interference will not only lead to further exacerbation of negative competition among regional powers, but also to the loss of national self-confidence within Afghanistan, accompanied by a failure to focus on fundamental goals and the spread of discord within the country.”

a) Respect for the National Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Afghanistan

What can further exacerbate the already fragile situation within Afghanistan is foreign interference, particularly the intervention of trans-regional forces in its internal affairs, which constitutes infringement of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Taking into consideration the current complicated situation, regional countries should avoid interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and should adopt collectively coordinated measures in order to avoid raising claims of personal interests. The aftermath of regional countries' interference will not only lead to further exacerbation of negative competition among regional powers, but also to the loss of national self-confidence within Afghanistan, accompanied by a failure to focus on fundamental goals and the spread of discord within the country. The primary outcome of such a situation will cause the current state of instability and insecurity in Afghanistan to continue, which will lead to the dissemination of instability and insecurity in the region. In the aftermath of such a situation, an atmosphere of distrust among the countries of the region will deepen, leading to serious negative competition, and will pave the way for trans-national powers to change the regional structure. Decades of political manipulation in the regional arena have proved that such measures are doomed to fail if the interest of the Afghan nation as well as the collective interest of regional countries is disregarded, even though certain countries of the region may only have a temporary interest.

b) Accelerate the Complete Withdrawal of Foreign Forces and Enhance the Role of Regional Countries

Just as the presence of foreign forces can be considered to exacerbate insecurity and spread instability in Afghanistan, so will an incomplete, irresponsible, hasty and unplanned withdrawal of foreign forces. Without adequately preparing the Afghan army and police in terms of training and equipment, there will be grave concerns over the future of Afghanistan.

Consequently, in its interaction with regional countries, Afghanistan can bridge the power gap. It can do so under a constructive and planned work program, in cooperation with the countries of the region, taking place in the course of responsible and complete withdrawal of foreign forces. In such a context, regional countries can give more confidence

and hope to decision-makers in Afghanistan. They can do so by adhering to their duties and obligations and using existing regional potential. This will ensure a strong foundation for constructive cooperation and create a win-win situation leading to the decline of future threats and a stronger role for regional players in future developments.

c) Strengthening the Role of the Central Government and Upholding Enhancement of National Reconciliation

The complicated situation currently dominating Afghanistan requires a logical understanding on the part of regional and extra-regional countries. This entails cooperation with the central government of Afghanistan and avoiding unilateral actions (by other countries), which can hamper the achievement of a comprehensive peace. Such hasty unilateral actions, while weakening the position of the central government towards extremism, may cause extremists to get the wrong idea of their role in the future of Afghanistan, for example by giving rise to over-expectations by extremists which would seriously jeopardize the peace process in Afghanistan. The international community and regional countries should, within the framework of a specific program, render support for the achievements gained recently in Afghanistan. They should also lay the foundation of constructive cooperation with the central government in various fields, including security and information, in order to maintain the authority of the central government and to avoid any abuse of extremism due to divergent views of influential countries.

“In its interaction with regional countries Afghanistan can bridge the power gap. It can do so under a constructive and planned work program, in cooperation with the countries of the region, taking place in the course of responsible and complete withdrawal of foreign forces.”

d) Enhancing the Role of Regional Organizations in the Future Development of Afghanistan

Taking into consideration the present socio-economic and political structures at the regional level and the consequent formation of related organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and others with similar structures within regional arrangements, a future cooperation between such organizations and the central government of Afghanistan can play a constructive role in the enhancement of security and economic stability of this country. Such a partnership will not only help transfer a country’s experiences and capacities to the Afghan government, but also assist the government to overcome future obstacles and prob-

lems. It can also ensure maintenance of stability and development in various fields, and pave the way for regional cooperation to counter the unconstructive role of international powers in regional arrangements. With the promotion of national self-belief in Afghanistan, regional partnerships will help the country to rely on its domestic and regional potential, thus removing the grounds for interference by international players as well as any imposition of foreign arrangements in the region.

e) Strengthening Fundamental Infrastructure in Afghanistan and Connecting it to the Regional Economic Infrastructure

“The promotion of national self-belief in Afghanistan through regional partnerships will help the country to rely on its domestic and regional potential, thus removing the grounds for interference by international players as well as any imposition of foreign arrangements in the region.”

Afghanistan is a land locked territory with unique climatic conditions and geopolitical features. This necessitates that regional countries try to activate the economy of this country by connecting it to the economic structure of the region. In this context, preparing a written framework to encompass necessary economic bedrocks and related facilities in various sectors such as road, rail, harbor and transit carriages for the growth of Afghanistan’s exports and cutting import expenses, is very important. Regional countries can play a crucial role in strengthening stability and security in Afghanistan by providing short-term programs that will lay the grounds for proper economic growth and job creation. A medium term follow-up of this goal should be a decline in the Afghan government’s reliance on foreign aid. Post this, we will witness economic flourishing in this country and in the region.

Conclusion

Regional cooperation within a work program, based on collective interest, will not only maximize regional interests, but also pave the way for the development of Afghanistan’s economic, political and security aspects. The current situation in the region and the development of Afghanistan needs primarily a pattern of good-neighborliness in order to overcome problems and create new opportunities for cooperation. This regional pattern, with due respect to the viewpoints of the regional countries, including Afghanistan, can introduce a confident roadmap for the future of Afghanistan and the region.

A Pakistani Analysis of the Present and Future Situation

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi

This year is supposed to be critical for Afghanistan, and by extension for its neighborhood and region. The U.S. “drawdown” is supposed to be completed by the end of the year. What does that mean? The end of the presence of U.S. combat-troops in Afghanistan would effectively mean the so-called “zero option” which the U.S. Administration including the U.S. military has rejected. A lot will depend on if and when the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) is signed between the U.S. and Afghanistan. It was approved by the Loya Jirga, which was politically necessary but not legally essential. President Karzai has delayed signing off on it for a variety of reasons, including his standoff with the Obama Administration, which has sought to either remove or reduce him to irrelevance. U.S. threats to implement the zero-option and cut off vital economic and security assistance have not so far overawed him or elicited the necessary domestic pressure on him to conform to U.S. strategic requirements.

The U.S. mishandling of President Karzai has been part of its mishandling of Afghanistan ever since it invaded and occupied the country in 2001. In fact it has been part of its misguided and destabilizing policies towards the region as a whole. Every single American or Western prediction about the Taliban has turned out to be wrong. Afghan political, social and economic infrastructure has been rendered dysfunctional,

“The BSA was designed – at least according to some western analysts – to be complemented by the commencement of a peace process with the Taliban whose power may have been curtailed and to some extent contained, but has certainly not been overcome.”

“Pakistan, which is indisputably Afghanistan’s most important neighbor with regard to the amelioration or exacerbation of Afghan crises centered in the south and east of the country, has yet to put in place the domestic building blocks for a credible and sustained Afghan policy that can positively impact Afghan perceptions.”

and its viability as a state – nearly three hundred years after it came into existence – is for the first time being called into serious question. Meanwhile the curse of ideological, sectarian, ethnic resistance, criminal extremism and violence has spread and intensified in Afghanistan to the point where the writ of the elected government is practically non-existent in large swathes of the country. Responsibility for this state of affairs must primarily rest with criminally corrupt and irresponsible governance throughout the country and through most of its governance institutions, which have deliberately or abjectly failed to provide even basic public goods and services to the people.

The BSA was designed – at least according to some western analysts – to be complemented by the commencement of a peace process with the Taliban whose power may have been curtailed and to some extent contained, but has certainly not been overcome. The situation is ambiguous in the extreme, as the following unanswered questions indicate:

- To what extent does the relevance of the Taliban in Afghanistan critically depend on its ability to maintain safe havens, sanctuaries and supply lines in Pakistan?
- To what extent do the Taliban have a peace option consistent with their continued command and organizational coherence?
- To what extent do the Kabul government and establishment view political engagement with the Taliban through a peace process as consistent with their survival strategies?
- To what extent is reconciliation possible in the absence of positive answers to the two foregoing questions?
- To what extent can the ANSF (assisted by residual U.S. financial, combat and black-ops cross-border support) or the Taliban (assisted by the continued inability of Islamabad to deny them essential support on its territory) significantly alter the parameters in which the current stalemate has developed and congealed?
- To what extent can the Afghan economy be propped up, given the likely severe reductions in jobs providing foreign defense and economic expenditures, the absence of any foreseeable prospect of a credible peace process, continued external intervention in support of various contending Afghan groups, and the significant possibility of another civil war or collage of conflicts resulting in greater than ever flows of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, Iran and other neighboring countries?

There are no credibly certain answers to any of these questions at the moment, except that negative outcomes currently appear more likely than positive ones.

In such a situation, what can an Afghan election deliver besides greater polarization? The myth of “Afghan-led” processes has so far covered the reality of U.S.-led confusion and disaster. Pakistan, which is indisputably Afghanistan’s most important neighbor with regard to the amelioration or exacerbation of Afghan crises centered in the south and east of the country, has yet to put in place the domestic building blocks for a credible and sustained Afghan policy that can positively impact Afghan perceptions with regard to its role and influence. This can only emerge as a result of movement towards a broad-based domestic transformation, including institutionalized, human resource development, human rights and human security based governance systems.

There is widespread intellectual acknowledgement and rhetorical political commitment towards the initiation of such a transformation in the concept and reality of national security. But the range of obstacles remains formidable and continues to overawe a political leadership that privileges its longevity and security over performance and service. An increasingly articulate and informed, if as yet insufficiently confident and organized, civil society is emerging as a credible critic of governmental stasis and establishment misdemeanor. The potential of such welcome developments will inevitably take time to bear fruit, and in the meantime threatening scenarios are developing at a rate that is much faster than more hopeful ones.

Moreover, 2014 is the year President Obama will become a lame duck, to what extent will of course depend on the outcome of the U.S. mid-term Congressional elections. His room for foreign policy initiatives will be significantly curtailed. He will worry whether Democratic candidates covet his personal endorsement and support or give him a broad berth. The dangers of an increasingly inflamed Saudi-Iran conflict as a result of the bloody uncertainties of Syria and Iraq, the rising profile of an Iran-obsessed Israel in any American election campaign, and the temptations for a politically besieged U.S. administration to garner votes through foreign military adventures offer up the prospect of a very dangerous year for the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

It is in this far from encouraging context that the prospect for an Afghan peace process will need to be assessed and assisted. There is yet another critical factor that will impinge on such a peace process. This is

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the state of India-Pakistan relations. As long as it is more zero-sum than positive sum it will play negatively into any Afghan scenario. Within such a scenario, one of the two countries may gain more than the other in the short term, but over the longer run both will miss out on critical opportunities for transformation, peace and stability, and the increasing welfare of well over a billion people.

“What is actually required is a “region-enabled and Afghan-led” peace process. None of Afghanistan’s neighbors can be excluded from a region-enabled Afghan-led peace process without the whole process breaking down. None of Afghanistan’s neighbors can play favorites with particular Afghan parties and/or zero-sum games with each other.”

So where do we go from here? While India-Pakistan relations are a separate and larger question than peace in Afghanistan, their impact on the prospects for peace in Afghanistan will be as critical as the development of democratic and civilian controlled governance in Pakistan itself. For similar reasons, Indian policies that are either conceived in response to perceived Pakistani hostility, or are seen by Pakistan to be unfriendly or hostile, will be severely handicapped in making any positive contribution towards peace in Afghanistan. Arguably, the best contribution that India and Pakistan can respectively make towards Afghan peace, is a commitment to sustain a steadily improved bilateral relationship and ameliorating the negative impact of long standing differences between them, pending their eventual resolution on a principled and mutually acceptable basis.

The Istanbul Process, including its elaboration in the shape of the Kabul and Almaty CBMs to be implemented through a Regional Compact by the Heart of Asia and other countries, can facilitate peace-making and peace building strategies that take account of existing Afghan and regional realities, and in tandem with the Tokyo framework, progressively mold them into compatibility with Afghan and regional aspirations. The slow pace of the implementation of CBMs is, of course, a reflection of the broader developments and uncertainties that have been referred to. Given its political distractions, short-term horizons, culturally and geographically distant location and other disabilities, the U.S. cannot successfully “lead” an Afghan peace process. And yet its active support remains essential for the success of any peace effort.

What is actually required is a “region-enabled and Afghan-led” peace process. This will require the broader regional and international community to acknowledge some home truths. None of Afghanistan’s neighbors can be excluded from a region-enabled Afghan-led peace process without the whole process breaking down. None of Afghanistan’s neighbors can play favorites with particular Afghan parties and/or zero-sum games with each other, without similarly undermining any Afghan peace process. These recognitions need to be embodied in specific commitments, many of which comprise the Kabul and Almaty CBMs.

Nor can international powers or other broader regional powers seek to exclude one or more regional countries from a region-enabled Afghan peace process without fatally harming it and being responsible for the regional chaos that would likely ensue. The commitments of the international and broader regional community will need to be articulated, endorsed and guaranteed by a regional compact that covers their security, political and economic commitments to peace-building and peace-keeping in Afghanistan. In other words, peace in Afghanistan can only be addressed through peace in the region, even if the resolution of all regional issues cannot be made a condition for an Afghan peace. Regional success in enabling the emergence of a stable Afghan peace that opens up the way to multi-faceted and significant twenty first century regional cooperation will in turn provide an environment far more conducive to the management and resolution of other regional and bilateral issues within the region.

Any policy vision and prescription, however well conceived, detailed, self-consistent, costed and resourced, must assume the availability of political leaders who are ready to take the irreducible risks of implementation and to demonstrate the wisdom and commitment necessary to mold public opinion in support of their regional vision. This may sound like a tall order. But anyone familiar with the challenges confronting all the Heart of Asia countries over the next 50 years will know that when tall orders are critical to meet existential challenges, they have to be addressed in short order.

Fundamental Principles of Tajikistan's Afghan Policy

Hakim Abdullohi Rahnamo

“The neighbor and the neighborhood are objective realities; neither of the neighboring states can choose the other neighboring state. Rational understanding of this permanent phenomenon is the second feature of the principle of good neighborliness in Tajikistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan.”

The establishment of mutually beneficial relations with Afghanistan and contribution towards the resolution of situation in that country is one of the fundamental features of Tajikistan's foreign policy. Tajik policy is guided by national interests, good-neighborly relations, common geographic, historical and cultural links, as well as the complex nature of the political and geopolitical processes in the region.

The President of Tajikistan has unveiled several concrete proposals, initiatives and plans, including at the UN, which are aimed at resolving the situation in Afghanistan; these proposals in their totality reflect the basic principles of Tajik foreign policy. Tajikistan has also consistently supported the efforts of the international community in the given context. For instance: Tajikistan has given bilateral and multilateral cooperation to member-states of the “anti-terrorist coalition”, transit facility for the ISAF coalition and hosted the RECCA Conference in Dushanbe.

An overall analysis of Tajik positions, declarations and actions would show that Tajikistan's Afghan policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

Principle 1: Rational Good-Neighborliness

The principle of good-neighborliness between Tajikistan and Afghanistan has four elements:

- a) **The significance of “good-neighborliness” in the culture of the peoples of the two countries.** A gentle attitude towards one's neighbor is extremely important in the culture of the peoples of the two countries, who have common historical and ideological origins; a respectful attitude towards the neighbor is one of the key concepts of human relations in Afghan and Tajik society. This richness of traditional, cultural and religious practices is reflected in bilateral relations between our two states and has been converted into a fundamental principle of our relations,
- b) **Rationalism and political pragmatism.** In interstate relations, the neighbor and the neighborhood are objective realities; neither of the neighboring states can choose the other neighboring state. Therefore irrespective of emotions and desires, it is necessary to approach one's neighbor as an objective reality and build relations with it on this basis. Rational understanding of this permanent phenomenon is the second feature of the principle of good neighborliness in Tajikistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan.
- c) **Cultural and historical brotherhood.** The neighborhood between the two countries is not only a geographical reality: it is also bound by common historical, ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and other factors, which act together to cement our relations. This raises the role of “neighborhood” to the level of friendship and brotherhood, in the real sense of these phrases, and attaches special significance for these countries towards each other.
- d) **Mutual interests.** The principle of good neighborliness is also strengthened by the mutual interest of the two sides. All analyses show that good neighborliness helps in realizing the real interests of both sides in sectors such as political relations, economic and cultural development and security.

Thus, the principle of good neighborliness acts as the main and fundamental principle in bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Principle 2: Preserving the Unity and Independence of Afghanistan

Tajikistan unequivocally supports the preservation of the unity and independence of Afghanistan with a strong central state; it opposes all ideas, projects and plans which envisage division of Afghanistan and violation of its territorial integrity.

In this regard Tajikistan is guided by the principle of good neighborliness and norms of international law, as well as its own national interests. Only a united Afghanistan can ensure the realization of the most important interests of Tajikistan in the sphere of economy, politics and security.

Principle 3: Afghan Crises Cannot be Resolved by Military Measures

Another principled position of Tajikistan is that the crises in Afghanistan cannot be solved by direct military means. In this context, Tajikistan supports all Afghan and international initiatives for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. Of course we are not ruling out the significance of the military dimension in restricting the activities of warring groups and in averting the acts of terrorism: however, the final resolution of the crises in Afghanistan cannot be achieved through military means.

Principle 4: Importance of International Consensus on Afghanistan

In the Tajik view, the Afghan problem transcends the borders of Afghanistan, and its resolution demands an international consensus, besides an agreement at the national level. Till such time as every regional and world power in Afghanistan continues to pursue its own interests and hit at the interests of its regional or geopolitical opponents, it will be impossible to achieve peace in Afghanistan. Though under the current conditions "international consensus" appears unachievable, Tajikistan's own peace process, in which the Afghan government helped, shows that an international consensus can be decisive in the resolution of such crises as in Afghanistan.

“Another principled position of Tajikistan is that the crises in Afghanistan cannot be solved by direct military means. In this context, Tajikistan supports all Afghan and international initiatives for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan.”

Principle 5: Refrain from Ideological, Ethnic and Regional Politics in Afghanistan

Tajikistan's Afghan policy does not have any ideological, ethnic, religious or regional dimensions; further, the Tajiks do not support any individual political, religious, ideological or ethnic group in Afghanistan. This is one of the distinguishing features of Tajik policy as compared with the policies of certain other neighbors of Afghanistan. The central state of Afghanistan is the only body that Tajikistan considers to be the legitimate and official representative of Afghanistan. And it is the central government in Afghanistan with which Tajikistan has the closest relations. Afghanistan's policy in this regard also has its origins in the principles of good-neighborliness and rational assessment of the situation in Afghanistan.

In our view, if each superpower and each neighboring country supports a particular individual ethnic group in such a multiethnic and ideologically diverse country as Afghanistan, the Afghanistan crisis will become a never-ending phenomenon. Thus, the only, though difficult, way is that all interested countries must say no to the policy of supporting any one selectively chosen ethnic or ideological force in Afghanistan.

Principle 6: Afghanistan – Partner in Security

Tajikistan considers Afghanistan one of its main partners in the fight against terrorism and extremism. The two countries not only have the potential and experience to fight these phenomena; it is also inevitable. Cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in this area would serve the interests not only of the two countries but also of the whole region and the international community.

Principle 7: Real Fight Against Narcotics Within Afghanistan

From Tajikistan's perspective, the fight against narcotics within Afghanistan is significant for Afghanistan itself, for Tajikistan and also for the entire international community.

Being the northern neighbor of Afghanistan, Tajikistan falls on the transit route for the supply of Afghan heroin to Europe, and thus Tajikistan is required to incur heavy expenditure on preventive measures. Experience

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shows, however, that unless a solution to this problem is found within Afghanistan, efforts by neighbors will not help completely prevent the supplies of narcotics to Europe.

Moreover, drug money is one of the main sources of finance for terrorists and extremists, which in turn is one of the main factors of instability in Afghanistan as well as in neighboring countries. The nexus between narcotics and terrorism underlines the importance of waging a war against these phenomena in Afghanistan.

Principle 8: Focus on Social and Economic Restoration

“Tajikistan attaches special importance to Afghanistan as a bridge linking it with the South. The transit potential of Afghanistan can provide Tajikistan access to South and South-East Asia, the Persian Gulf and international ports. Such an access from Tajikistan’s perspective has economic, political, strategic and cultural significance.”

Tajikistan considers that the resolution of socio-economic problems is one of the basic factors for the stabilization of Afghanistan. Therefore, the international community must shift its focus from military issues to the social problems of Afghan society.

The main objective of Tajik foreign policy in this context is “humanizing” the Afghan problem. Under conditions where priority is given to political interests and there is a domination of ideologies as well as continued geopolitical rivalry, the condition and problems of the people of Afghanistan (simple citizens, children, mothers, students, poor people, physically handicapped) are being forgotten and ignored.

Principle 9: Afghanistan: A Gateway to the South

Tajikistan attaches special importance to Afghanistan as a bridge linking it with the South. The transit potential of Afghanistan can provide Tajikistan access to South and South-East Asia, the Persian Gulf and international ports. Such an access from Tajikistan’s perspective has economic, political, strategic and cultural significance.

At present, Tajikistan has three strategic aims: exit from communication bottlenecks, energy security and food security. Analysis shows that it is access to the South that can best guarantee the attainment of these aims.

For this, Tajikistan must have access to its southern partner who is friendly, secure, stable and accessible. In other words, without peace and stability in Afghanistan, Tajikistan cannot achieve its own strategic

objectives. This means that peace in Afghanistan is within the domain of Tajikistan's national interests.

Principle 10: Afghanistan as a Partner in the Energy Sector

Tajikistan attaches great importance to its cooperation with Afghanistan in the energy sector and considers Afghanistan as a major potential partner in the region for energy cooperation. Cooperation in this sector serves the genuine interests of both countries, and in the near future it could become a priority segment in bilateral relations. A partnership in the energy sector envisages cooperation not only in the field of electricity but also in other forms of energy.

It is important to underline that it will be possible to implement serious power projects in the south of Tajikistan only if there is one united and stable state with strong central authority in Afghanistan. Such projects cannot be implemented by dealing with ethnic leaders, field commanders or provincial heads. Once again, only under conditions of peace and stability in Afghanistan can Tajikistan think of realizing its national interests in the energy sector.

“A huge volume of humanitarian aid has been delivered to Afghanistan from Uzbek territory.”

Uzbekistan's Relationship with Afghanistan

Mirzokhid Rakhimov

“Central Asian nations are confronted by complex threats including international terrorism, religious extremism and illegal drug trafficking as well as transnational crime. Both economic and environmental problems as well as traditional and non-traditional threats in Central Asia are transnational. This implies that national and regional security is interdependent and interconnected.”

The collapse of the Soviet Union triggered considerable geopolitical change in the post-Soviet space. At present there are many factors that make Central Asia an important region in the world arena. Geographically Afghanistan is part of Central Asia and is therefore a participant in different regional projects.

Currently Central Asian nations are confronted by complex threats including international terrorism, religious extremism and illegal drug trafficking as well as transnational crime. Both economic and environmental problems as well as traditional and non-traditional threats in Central Asia are transnational. This implies that national and regional security is interdependent and interconnected.

For countries in Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan, restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan is a priority. Since the declaration of independence, Uzbekistan has often expressed its concern over the situation in Kabul at the UN, OSCE, NATO and other international organizations. The Republic actively promotes the development of an international political dialogue over Afghanistan. It is worth mentioning that among recent peacemaking initiatives is an offer by the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, where he proposed a reloading and widening of Uzbekistan's "6+2" initiative to include NATO and change to "6+3", at the NATO summit at Bucharest in April 2008. Uzbekistan's initiative originated from several important reasons, such as looking for ways of solving the Afghan problem through the development of mutually beneficial relations

with developed countries, international and regional organizations for the purposes of stability and security in Central Asia.

After the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, Central Asian countries were among the first to sympathize with the United States. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan agreed to ISAF's military use of their infrastructure for the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan. Since 2002, after the beginning of the international anti-terrorism operation, Uzbekistan has taken an active role in the process of reconstruction in Afghanistan. The same year, Uzbekistan decided to open the Hairatan Bridge on the Uzbek-Afghan border for purposes of effective international assistance. As a result, a huge volume of humanitarian aid has been delivered to Afghanistan from Uzbek territory.

Uzbekistan established a political dialogue with the new leadership of Afghanistan. In 2002, for example, during a visit to Uzbekistan a delegation, including Vice-Chairman Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq of the provisional government of Afghanistan, signed interdepartmental documents for cooperation in the spheres of oil, energy, irrigation, transport and road construction. In January 2005, the Minister of Public Works of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, S.A. Safari, visited Uzbekistan. In the course of his visit, he took part in the first session of the Interstate Coordination Council (ICC) as a representative of Afghanistan for the creation of an International Trans-Afghan transport corridor, where the charter for the same was approved.

“A huge volume of humanitarian aid has been delivered to Afghanistan from Uzbek territory.”

Uzbekistan took active part in projects for the restoration of the highway from Mazar-e-Sharif to Kabul. In particular, Uzbek specialists restored and put eleven bridges, which were destroyed during the civil war, back into commission.

During 2002-2007, the dynamic of trade turnover between the two countries rapidly increased, for example, in 2007 the total turnover increased almost twice and totaled at USD 332.4 million. In 2010, the volume of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan trade turnover was USD 663.5 million, where exports reached USD 663.3 million and imports USD 0.2 million. Afghanistan is one of Uzbekistan's top ten trading partners. In 2011, the volume of Uzbek-Afghan trade was USD 798.6 million (exports USD 797.7 million, imports USD 0.9 million). Uzbekistan supplies agricultural produce and groceries to Afghanistan, and also provides construction services.

“In June 2003, during the official visit of President Islam Karimov to Tehran, Uzbekistan, Iran and Afghanistan signed a trilateral agreement for the creation of an International Trans-Afghan transport corridor, which would go through Tashkent–Termez in Uzbekistan, to Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat in Afghanistan and then on to the Iranian ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar.”

Uzbekistan takes active part in the elaboration and realization of a trans-Afghanistan transport network. In June 2003, during the official visit of President Islam Karimov to Tehran, Uzbekistan, Iran and Afghanistan signed a trilateral agreement for the creation of an International Trans-Afghan transport corridor, which would go through Tashkent–Termez in Uzbekistan, to Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat in Afghanistan and then on to the Iranian ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar.

In November 2003, the frontier point of Termez was put into operation with the opening of the Hairatan customs complex. The complex plays an important role in customs clearance of freight traffic to Afghanistan. In 2011, Uzbekistan railways put into operation its first project outside the country, a new railway line between Hairatan and Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan. The total length of that line is 95 kms, with 75 kms of main lines and 20 kms of station lines. All the work, from design and exploratory work to balancing and commissioning, was carried out by the State Joint-Stock Railway Company “Uzbekiston Temir Yullari” (“Uzbekistan Railways”). The project financing of USD 129 million was fulfilled by support from the Asian Development Bank. Uzbekistan’s President Islam Karimov said, “We have supported the ADB in the implementation of the project on construction of the railway between Hairatan and Mazar-e-Sharif, and consider it necessary to further develop railway infrastructure in Afghanistan. This will allow us to implement the project of construction of the Trans-Afghan corridor and open the shortest route for railway transit of cargo from Central Asia to the nearest ports of the Indian Ocean and will promote the economic development of Afghanistan”.

In 2011, about 2.5 million tonnes of freight was delivered into Afghanistan through Uzbekistan, provisional data for 2012 shows that the figure has doubled. At present, the Navoi free economic zone created in Uzbekistan and its international airport have become an important logistics center for air delivery of humanitarian freight to Afghanistan. Uzbekistan fully supports other projects of the ADB aimed at the economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan. For instance, the construction of the Surkhan-Naibabad-Kabul power line in 2009 helped increase the volume of power supply from Uzbekistan by six times and ensured round-the-clock supply of electricity to Kabul. In 2010, the volume of electricity additionally increased twofold, including supply to other parts of Afghanistan.

In 2012, it was accepted “On approval of the concept of foreign policy activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan” that Tashkent pursues a tradi-

tional good-neighborly and friendly policy with respect to Afghanistan, taking into consideration the historical past and adherence to long-term stability and peace in the country. It was also declared that Uzbekistan stands for adherence to principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and intends to have bilateral relations, with due regard for the national interests of both countries, and follow the generally accepted standards of international law as well as respect for the choice of the Afghan people.

It should be noted that since 2003 Central Asian countries, along with India, Japan and other countries, have actively participated in the reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghanistan. The U.S. made structural changes at the administrative level and grouped countries of Central and South Asia under a new bureau in the State Department. An initiative called the “New Silk Road”, which was declared by Hillary Clinton for the first time in her speech in Chennai, India on July 20, 2011, provides for the creation of a network of trade and transport corridors, which will pass through Afghanistan and tie together the markets of South and Central Asian countries. The initiative also lets land-locked countries of Central Asia gain access to foreign markets.

An Uzbek-American agreement signed on March 28, 2012 allowed for air transit of goods and U.S. personnel through Uzbekistan as part of efforts to provide security and restoration of Afghanistan. The agreement foresees that transit will be through specially defined routes in Uzbekistan’s airspace without a stopover in Uzbekistan territory. Moreover, the airspace will be used with permission by Uzbek authorities in accordance with requests through U.S. diplomatic channels.

There are challenges in the relations between Central and South Asia, including limited direct surface transportation routes that have posed a major handicap in the further development of economic and trade ties. Existing flight connections from Almaty, Ashgabat and Tashkent have potential for expansion in terms of capacities and frequency. There is very limited flight connection from Central Asian capitals to Kabul. The role of Afghanistan in connecting Central and South Asia is very important. There are different projects, including the development of the International North South Transport Corridor, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline and others.

In 2011, during the visit of the President of Uzbekistan to India, the evolving situation in Afghanistan was also discussed and the grave necessity for the establishment of peace and stability in that country as

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soon as possible was reaffirmed. Both countries averred that stability in Afghanistan would open up wider vistas for regional cooperation and help institute and advance cost-effective routes, reducing the distance between the markets of India and Central Asia. In this regard, as the two sides noted, prospects emerging from setting up a Central Asia-Persian Gulf land transport corridor as well as a Trans-Afghan access strip have been telling.

Improvements in Afghanistan-Pakistan and India-Pakistan relations, together with stability in Afghanistan, will be crucial towards linking South and Central Asia. In this regard, active dialogue and cooperation between Russia, China, the U.S. and Iran is necessary. South and Central Asian countries need to develop bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation, through joint efforts and dialogue, including the 'Platform 6+3' initiated by Uzbekistan. Joint reconstruction efforts of infrastructure in Afghanistan would help the region gain political stability and economic prosperity. India and Uzbekistan could jointly lead South and Central Asia to future multilateral cooperation as tangible regional anchors.

“South and Central Asian countries need to develop bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation, through joint efforts and dialogue, including the ‘Platform 6+3’ initiated by Uzbekistan. Joint reconstruction efforts of infrastructure in Afghanistan would help the region gain political stability and economic prosperity.”

Conclusions

Therefore, we can conclude that Uzbekistan is an important partner of Afghanistan and renders great assistance in the restoration of its peacetime economy. It is clear that the future stabilization of Afghanistan is a positive process for wider regional cooperation. For the broadening of cooperation between Central Asia and developed countries, regional and international organizations, and for the greater involvement of Afghanistan in that process, we believe the following steps will be useful:

- Firstly, joint research on Afghanistan, Central Asia and links between Central and South Asia;
- Secondly, Afghanistan has great potential for the development of transport links between Central and South Asia. Therefore, international institutions and donors should rationally increase assistance to the country. Political dialogue must continue in different formats. It is necessary to widen the usage of communications infrastructure of Central Asian countries to assist Afghanistan; and,
- Thirdly, international organizations such as the EC, NATO and OSCE should effectively implement joint projects with countries of the region, as well as regional organizations like the CIS, SCO and ECO on the challenges facing stable development of Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Turkey's Contribution to the National Consolidation Process of Afghanistan

Selçuk Çolakoğlu

Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Afghanistan, which gained its independence in 1919, first began in 1921. Delegations from the two countries signed the first Turkey-Afghanistan Alliance Agreement on March 1, 1921 in Moscow. Turkish-Afghan relations have always been amicable since the establishment of this relationship. Turkey has always endeavored to provide all manner of political and economic support to ensure the development and stability of Afghanistan. We can evaluate Turkey's support for Afghanistan in the period after 2001 under three main subject headings, which can be listed as follows: (a) the support provided in the area of security to ensure stability within the country; (b) diplomatic support for ensuring friendly relations with neighboring countries and reconciliation in domestic politics; and (c) support for economic cooperation and reconstruction activities.

Turkey's Contribution in the Area of Security

In the area of security, Turkey provides support to Afghanistan both through the ISAF and within the framework of the training and equipment provided to the Afghan police department and army.

Turkey's Activities within the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

On October 10, 2001, the Turkish Parliament authorized the government to assign the Turkish Armed Forces to Afghanistan. During the first period of the ISAF operation under the command of the UK, Turkey participated with a force of 267 personnel in total, including army staff, a squad team and training personnel. Turkey assumed command of ISAF from the United Kingdom during the Second ISAF period from June 2002-February 2003. During this period, Turkey's contribution in troops was raised to the level of a battalion, and the number of personnel increased to 1350. In addition, Turkey assumed responsibility for the operation of the Kabul Airport. Turkey's experiences with counter-terrorism have played a major role in its assignment of this task. Unlike other soldiers of the ISAF, Turkish military personnel, who serve by building close relations with the public, have gained considerable respect among the Afghan people.

The responsibility for the operation of the Kabul Airport was taken over by the Turkish Air Force Command between January 31 and August 1, 2005. Turkey also commanded the ISAF for a second time between February 13 and August 4, 2005, assuming leadership during the ISAF-VII period. In this context, the 3rd Corps commanded the ISAF-VII Operations as a NATO Corps, and the 28th Mechanized Infantry Brigade served as the Kabul Multinational Brigade. Command was assumed by the 3rd Corps, and the contribution of the Turkish Armed Forces reached 1450 personnel during this period.

The Kabul Regional Command, which is in charge of the Kabul province, began its duty on August 6, 2006 under the leadership of Turkey, Italy and France. Its command rotates respectively between Turkey, France and Italy for 8-month periods. In 2007, Turkey contributed with nearly 1150 personnel to the ISAF operation. As of January 2013, 998 Turkish troops are on duty in Afghanistan. Turkey's responsibilities include providing security in Kabul and also in the Wardak Province, where it leads the Maidan Shahr PRT. For a certain period, Turkey had the third largest contingent within the ISAF. Turkish troops are not engaged in combat operations, and Ankara has long resisted pressure from Washington to provide more combat troops.

The former Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin was appointed on November 19, 2003 as the NATO Secretary General's Senior Civilian

“As of January 2013, 998 Turkish troops are on duty in Afghanistan. Turkish troops are not engaged in combat operations, and Ankara has long resisted pressure from Washington to provide more combat troops.”

Representative in Afghanistan, which is the highest-level political representative of NATO in the country. He held command of the ISAF starting from August 11, 2003, taking office in Kabul on January 26, 2004, and serving two consecutive terms until August 24, 2006.

Turkey's Military Aid to Afghanistan

The Turkish Armed Forces granted USD 7.1 million worth of military materials to the Afghan Armed Forces between 1993 and 2007. Turkey has donated approximately USD 6 million of military material, and provided minimum material requirements including ammunition within the scope of a project for the establishment of three 155mm towed howitzer batteries that will independently serve the Afghan National Army.

Turkish Armed Forces granted USD 328,344 for the modernization of the military clothing factory in Afghanistan, and the installation of this facility was also carried out by the Turkish Armed Forces. In addition, the Turkish Armed Forces donated USD 1,601,265 worth of excess military material to the Afghan National Army.

Within the context of cooperation between the Turkish Armed Forces and the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), buildings and facilities were constructed for the modernization of the Afghan Military High School into a modern educational institution, with nearly USD 8 million of aid materials being provided in the process. As of April 2008, the total sum of the aid and materials provided for the Afghan National Army has reached almost USD 52 million. The logistic assistance that was planned and executed as part of the Foreign Military Assistance Program is as follows: between 2004 and 2007, USD 3.5 million of aid was provided from the budget.

A nearly USD 550,000 portion of the yearly allocated resources is utilized for the clothing needs of the students in the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, where thirteen personnel of Turkish Armed Forces are assigned as counselors and instructors. The remaining resources are to be used to equip an infantry battalion, and provide the requirements of three 155mm towed howitzer batteries. A USD 160,924 portion of the resources allocated within the context of the Foreign Military Assistance Program of 2005 was dispatched to Afghanistan along with a supply of completed materials. The provision of the further remaining resources and materials is currently ongoing.

“Within the context of cooperation between the Turkish Armed Forces and the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), buildings and facilities were constructed for the modernization of the Afghan Military High School into a modern educational institution, with nearly USD 8 million of aid materials being provided in the process.”

The training of 116 Afghan personnel for the twenty-four 155mm towed howitzer batteries, which were donated to form an artillery unit in the Afghan National Army, was completed in Turkey. Eighteen Afghan personnel who will be serving as instructors in the Commando Battalion of Afghanistan have been trained in Turkey.

Since 2005, thirteen counselors and instructors from the Turkish Armed Forces have been assigned to conduct training in the National Military Academy of Afghanistan. By 2009, 171 Afghan personnel had been trained in Afghanistan, and 384 personnel had been trained in Turkey.

The Turkish Contribution to the Political and Diplomatic Process

Afghan and Pakistani leaders, who were in disagreement on the methods for fighting against the increasing effectiveness of Taliban forces after 2005, were brought together by Turkey in Ankara on April 29, 2007. At the end of the meeting hosted by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and performed with the participation of the Afghan president Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, the Ankara Declaration was issued in order to increase the cooperation between the three countries. In the Ankara Declaration, it was emphasized that the bilateral relations of Afghanistan and Pakistan would be strengthened on the basis of good neighborhood relations, mutual respect for territorial integrity and non-interference in domestic affairs.

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This trilateral cooperation was continued in the following years. At the time of the second trilateral summit held on December 5, 2008, two of the Presidents who participated in the initial meeting had changed. In Turkey, the new parliament convened on August 2007 to elect Abdullah Gül as president in Ahmet Necdet Sezer's place, whose term had ended. On the other hand in Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, the spouse of Benazir Bhutto, took over the presidency from Musharraf, who had been obliged to resign from office on August 18, 2008.

Held in Istanbul on December 5, 2008 with the participation of the Turkish President Abdullah Gül, the Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, the second Trilateral Summit focused on the means for enhancing trilateral cooperation.

During the fourth Trilateral summit held in Istanbul on December 24, 2010, it was decided that the railway network between Pakistan and

Turkey would, in time, be extended to Afghanistan, and that the communication, airways, trade and energy connections between these countries would be strengthened. The sixth Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit was held in Istanbul on October 31, 2011, with the participation of the same presidents. The 7th Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit was then held in Ankara on December 12, 2012. Initiatives have been launched during these trilateral summits for cooperation on counter-terrorism, and also for enhancing the political, economic and cultural ties between the three countries.

Turkey's Contribution to the Reconstruction of Economic Infrastructure

“During the fourth Trilateral summit held in Istanbul on December 24, 2010, it was decided that the railway network between Pakistan and Turkey would, in time, be extended to Afghanistan, and that the communication, airways, trade and energy connections between these countries would be strengthened.”

Following the NATO Secretary General's visit to Turkey in December 2005 and President Karzai's visit in January 2006, the decision was taken for the establishment of a Turkish Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Wardak. The Turkish PRT in Maidan Shahr, the capital of the Wardak Province, was established in October 2006. The Wardak PRT is composed of two administrative structures, one being the Civilian Coordinator, and the other being the Military Unit Command. The Military Unit Command comprises 29 civilian and 79 military personnel.

The objective of the Turkish PRT in Wardak is to support the development of Afghan society and infrastructure in Wardak Province, and also to strengthen the provincial administration and to increase their effectiveness and capability in security-related areas. The civilian component of the PRT includes advisors from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education and the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), who assist in the planning and implementation of reconstruction and development projects.

In close coordination with Afghan authorities, the Turkish PRT in Maidan Shahr aims to contribute significant additional capabilities and resources to the region that would supplement and augment the current development, reconstruction and capacity building efforts in Wardak province. Furthermore, the PRT will also contribute in the area of security through the training of the Afghan National Police, by contributing experienced Police Trainers to the educational program of the Turkish-Afghan Police Training Center founded by Turkey in 2008.

The second Turkish PRT in Afghanistan is in the Jawzjan Province, which was established in Shibirghan in July 2010 in close consultation

with ISAF member-states following the invitation of the Afghan Government. PRT Jawzjan is one of the 27 PRTs operating in Afghanistan, and one of the 6 PRTs under the Regional Command-North. PRT Jawzjan operates in the Jawzjan and the Sar-i-Pul Provinces. On April 15, 2010 Turkey and Sweden agreed that the Swedish-led PRT Mazar-e-Sharif (MeS) and PRT Jawzjan would have “concurrent responsibilities” for the development and capacity building efforts in both the Jawzjan and Sar-i-Pul Provinces.

Economic and Commercial Relations

In addition, commercial relations between Turkey and Afghanistan have begun to develop over the course of the last decade. Trade volume increased from USD 8 million in 2000 to USD 281 million in 2011 (see Table 1). However, it would not be accurate to claim that the current trade figures represent the actual commercial potential of these two countries.

Table 1: Turkey’s Trade with Afghanistan

Year	Exports (Million \$)	Imports (Million \$)	Total (Million \$)
1990	1	1	2
2000	8	0	8
2005	113	8	121
2010	260	5	265
2012	290	6	296

Source: Turkish Ministry of Economy

Of the Turkish companies operating in Afghanistan, 95 percent are active in the construction industry. The total value of the undertakings assumed and currently performed by Turkish medium and large-scale companies from 2002 until the end of 2009 has exceeded USD 2.5 billion. In terms of numbers, Turkish companies rank first among foreign investors in the contracting business, with approximately 60 construction companies registered and active in Afghanistan. The number of Turkish personnel working in Afghanistan currently exceeds 3000.

One of the major problems faced by contractors working in Afghanistan is in transit transportation. To this day, transportation by Afghan trucks of goods and construction equipment delivered from Turkey after they are unloaded at the borders has led to a considerable loss of both time and materials, with up to 20 percent of the materials being lost during transportation. At the same time, the fact that some routes such as the Iran-Afghanistan/Islam Qala and Iran-Turkmenistan/Torghundi border gates are unsafe, and the fact that routes such as the Georgia-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan route to Afghanistan covers difficult terrain connected with rough roads, lead to problems in transportation, and thus adversely affect the competitiveness of Turkish goods.

Conclusions

“The emergence of a stable and strong Afghanistan is one of the highest priorities of Turkey in the region.”

Turkey has until now continually supported the establishment of a sound state structure and a strong and sustainable national economy in Afghanistan. Ankara will likewise continue its support in the period after 2014. Turkey has not stated a withdrawal date for Turkish troops within the ISAF. Hence, if the Afghan government considers it necessary, Turkish troops will continue to stay in the country after 2014.

Turkey is foremost among the countries that can provide significant support for the establishment of a sustainable economic structure in Afghanistan. The Turkish private sector has extensive experience in contracting and organizing production in different parts of the world. In case the necessary infrastructure is provided, Turkish companies in Central Asia may easily transfer and shift their activities to Afghanistan. The establishment of a functional economic structure that increases the general prosperity of Afghan society is of vital importance for the integrity of the country.

Having strong and good relations with Afghanistan, Turkey will continue to assist Kabul in overcoming the problems it may encounter with its neighbors and support its integration into the international system. The emergence of a stable and strong Afghanistan is one of the highest priorities of Turkey in the region.

China and Afghanistan

Sun Zhuangzhi

China hopes that Afghanistan can achieve real peace. Afghanistan is a close neighbor of China and both sides have a well-established history of contact. Since 1955 when China and Afghanistan formally established diplomatic relations, both sides have close cooperation. China at that time provided selfless aid for Afghanistan's economic development.

New Developments in the Relationship Between China and Afghanistan in Recent Years

After the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001 and the establishment of the new Afghan government, friendly and cordial relations between the two countries have recovered and developed. China and other countries actively support the reconstruction of Afghanistan. In January 2002, Hamid Karzai as Chairman of the Afghan Interim Government visited China. Both sides signed a document that China would provide 30 million Yuan of emergency material assistance and USD 1 million cash.

The Chinese government committed USD 150 million in five years, half of which was free aid and the rest concessional loans. In the above-mentioned aid China funded the construction of the Parwan water conservation project, Kabul republic hospital for Afghanistan, and provided material assistance as well as training of human resources.

“Between June 18-21, 2006 President Karzai made a state visit to China. China and Afghanistan signed the Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Cooperation and an agreement on combating transnational crime, in addition to several other documents. They also issued a Joint Declaration announcing the establishment of a comprehensive cooperation partnership.”

China also provided other kinds of assistance to Afghanistan. For example, at the end of March 2004 the Chinese side provided USD 1 million in aid for the general election and announced the cancellation of debt valued at 9.6 million pounds. In early 2007 China provided USD 2 million in aid to Afghanistan. According to Chinese government statistics, in the period from 2001 to 2008 China provided nearly USD 180 million in aid for reconstruction.

China's Red Cross and civil society provided Afghanistan a total investment of 2 million Yuan, for example, several small donors like Guangdong Folk helped build two schools in the Kabul and Parwan provinces. As one of the main countries providing assistance to Afghanistan, Chinese aid is based on full respect for the principles of dignity, equality and sovereignty and without any conditions. Chinese investment in infrastructure construction lends more significance to the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan.

“Chinese aid is based on full respect for the principles of dignity, equality and sovereignty and without any conditions.”

Between June 18-21, 2006 President Karzai made a state visit to China. China and Afghanistan signed the Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Cooperation and an agreement on combating transnational crime, in addition to several other documents. They also issued a Joint Declaration announcing the establishment of a comprehensive cooperation partnership. In order to further strengthen economic and trade cooperation, the two sides signed the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, and announced the establishment of an inter-governmental economic and trade joint committee. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the exploitation of natural resources, power generation, road construction and other infrastructure construction.

For the expansion of merchandise exports from Afghanistan, China announced that from July 1, 2006 they would give zero tariff treatment for 278 items from Afghanistan. The two sides also worked to explore, expand and deepen bilateral trade and economic cooperation through new ways, such as the development of cultural cooperation, agriculture, education, transport, energy, investment, and other areas. To support nation-building in Afghanistan, the Chinese side decided to train 200 professionals for two years and annually provides 30 Chinese government scholarships for Afghans from 2007.

Bilateral trade relations have developed rapidly according to Chinese customs statistics. From USD 17.43 million in 2001, trade had grown to USD 52.77 million in 2005. In 2006, these figures exceeded USD 100 million and reached USD 179 million in 2010.

In addition to expanding economic cooperation, the Chinese government continues to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. In early 2008, China gave 4380 tonnes of wheat valued at 20 million Yuan to Afghanistan in the form of assistance. In June, the Chinese government announced at the international conference in Paris to support reconstruction in Afghanistan and that it would provide Afghanistan 80 million Yuan in the form of assistance. In September the same year, China decided to provide modern medical equipment valued at USD 2.5 million to equip the Republic Hospital in Kabul.

During June 5-8, 2012 President Karzai attended the 12th meeting of the Heads of State of the Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member-states and visited China. China and Afghanistan issued a joint declaration about establishing a strategic cooperation partnership. The Chinese side pledged that in 2012, their government would provide 150 million Yuan in aid to Afghanistan.

Deterioration of the Situation in Afghanistan and its Impact on China

In recent years, the domestic situation in Afghanistan has been one of instability where terrorist incidents continue to occur. As China is a neighbor of Afghanistan, the Afghan turmoil is bound to affect the vital interests of China.

First, it is a threat to China's economic investment. On the morning of June 10th, 2004 a group of armed men broke into the China Railway 14 Bureau's highway project in Kunduz (the asphalt mixing site), killed 11 people and injured 4 others.

Second, the impact on border security and social stability in the north-west region of China, especially Xinjiang, is most threatening. In recent years, drug smuggling and other transnational criminal activities in Afghanistan posed a great threat to China.

The third is a new challenge to the multilateral cooperation of the SCO. Until the Afghanistan problem is solved, formidable obstacles besetting the SCO cannot be removed.

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China's role in Promoting Afghanistan's Peace Process

China wants to play an active role in the UN and regional organizations with regard to the Afghanistan issue. It has advocated for international forces to work together to achieve stabilization of the ground situation and economic development of Afghanistan. China has always believed that regional issues should be resolved by countries within the region.

“To resolve the Afghanistan problem by relying on counter-terrorism is not possible. There should be a comprehensive solution first, to achieve national reconciliation as soon as possible, in order to reunify the country.

A second priority is to promote Afghanistan's economic reconstruction, expansion of foreign economic relations and solve the problem of cross-border traffic.”

China has a positive and pragmatic attitude towards the reconstruction of Afghanistan. In the spirit of common development and mutual benefit, it is willing to provide long-term assistance and cooperation. This includes: a) providing financial assistance, giving Afghanistan zero tariff treatment for the majority of exports to China; b) supporting the efforts of the Afghan government to combat terrorism and increased training of officers of national defence, police, law enforcement; c) participating in international cooperation with Afghanistan's neighbors, supporting the SCO to establish anti-drug security belts around Afghanistan and making efforts to carry out replacement planting and anti-drug cooperation; and d) supporting strong and reputable Chinese enterprises to contract projects, to participate in reconstruction, to invest in infrastructure, power, mining, transportation and other fields.

Facing Afghanistan's growing drug problem, China has actively established cooperation mechanisms for drug control. The two sides have established an anti-drug mechanism of information exchange. The Chinese government has actively helped police reconstruction and has so far donated USD 5 million dollars worth of police equipment.

To resolve the Afghanistan problem by relying on counter-terrorism is not possible. There should be a comprehensive solution to the problem. Firstly, to achieve national reconciliation as soon as possible, in order to reunify the country. Due to the close relationship of the tribes of Afghanistan with neighboring countries, there are a lot of cross-border nations. China has maintained friendly relations with Afghanistan's other neighboring countries, has not pursued special interests and is willing to maximize a coordinating and facilitating role. China is willing to contribute to negotiations with Afghan factions, to reach a national accord or agreement and achieve real peace in the country.

The second priority is to promote Afghanistan's economic reconstruction, expansion of foreign economic relations and solve the problem

of cross-border traffic. China is willing to provide more economic assistance to Afghanistan and most of China's projects in Afghanistan are associated with this purpose.

Third, China respects the authority of the UN and advocates the strengthening of cooperation between major powers and international mechanisms. China will comply with relevant resolutions of the UN and advocates that the SCO play a more active role in Afghanistan. After the founding of the new Afghan government, China has carried on the cooperation with Central and South Asian countries in efforts to create a good neighborhood environment for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. In December 2002, China and five other neighboring countries of Afghanistan signed the Declaration of Good Neighborliness and Friendship, which included respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and support for peace and reconstruction.

Regional cooperation is the only way in which the international community and neighboring countries can effectively help Afghanistan achieve stability, development and integration into the international community. The solution to the Afghan problem needs joint effort by the various regional countries and simultaneously mutual coordination by international organizations. China supports Afghanistan in strengthening the endeavour of regional cooperation and is prepared to carry out cooperation under the framework of SCO and other organizations with Afghanistan. The SCO has set up a contact group and formally accepted Afghanistan as an Observer state. It will take more practical steps to promote Afghanistan's political stability and economic development.

China is willing to pragmatically cooperate with Afghanistan within the framework of regional cooperation, but China and the SCO will not accept any military obligations. Military means alone cannot solve Afghanistan's long-term economic and social issues. China proposes that a regional transport network could be a priority for cooperation. It also proposes to make full use of existing regional cooperation mechanisms, develop close cooperation on anti-drug, anti-terrorism and border security issues and thus create favourable conditions for regional economic cooperation.

“China supports Afghanistan in strengthening the endeavor of regional cooperation and is prepared to carry out cooperation under the framework of SCO and other organizations with Afghanistan. The SCO has set up a contact group and formally accepted Afghanistan as an Observer state.”

Kyrgyz Proposals for Afghanistan

Sagynbek Ibraev

“The Kyrgyz government is interested in creating a regional agro-industrial complex or a consortium on production and export of food products, which would bring together partners from Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and other countries of the region. Kyrgyzstan has the ability to supply countries in the region with essential goods, food and placing orders in Kyrgyz enterprises.”

We all share one goal - a quick adaptation of Afghanistan into the regional economy, assistance in the reconstruction process and building a normal and civilized life for the Afghan people, to achieve stability and security in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

My country being a neighbor to Afghanistan sincerely aspires to the prompt establishment of the peace and stability there. We are committed to make our contribution to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. In this connection the Kyrgyz Republic proposes the following initiatives:

1. To take active part in the realization of the energy project CASA-1000, which will make it possible for Afghanistan to get cheap hydropower and develop its national economy.
2. One of the main priorities is the development of a regional transport system, particularly railroad infrastructure, as an important element of regional integration and reinforcement of trade and economic links. The long-term project in this context is the creation of an international rail route from China-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran.
3. The establishment of an Afghan Research Center in Bishkek which will unite experts on Afghanistan from all interested countries where they can exchange views, analyze the economic needs of Afghanistan, and identify the real potential and opportunities for foreign

countries to render social and economic aid to Afghanistan. This centre would prepare conceptual documents, recommendations and strategies for the development of Afghanistan. The OSCE is interested in this initiative, and Kyrgyzstan also hopes for financial support from other donor countries.

4. The Kyrgyz government is interested in creating a regional agro-industrial complex or a consortium on production and export of food products, which would bring together partners from Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and other countries of the region. Kyrgyzstan has the ability to supply countries in the region with essential goods, food and placing orders in Kyrgyz enterprises.
5. Kyrgyzstan can establish Vocational Training Centers, which, with appropriate financial support from donor countries, can be transformed into international centers for teaching and training young men and women from Afghanistan on target specific programs.
6. Kyrgyzstan has had good opportunities to participate in projects on gender issues. In this regard, we are ready to develop educational programs and training for Afghan women on democratic institutional development, free media and NGOs, good governance, crafts, needlework and economic education among women in Central Asia and Afghanistan.
7. Within the Afghan reconstruction program and international donor assistance, we suggest considering the possibility of providing socio-economic, cultural and humanitarian assistance to the ethnic Kyrgyz people of the Great and Little Pamirs of Afghanistan.
8. The issue of assistance to Afghanistan has become especially important in connection with the planned withdrawal of ISAF troops in 2014 and the shift of aid focus from military components to economic.
9. In this context, Kyrgyzstan has proposed the exchange of its foreign debt in return for assistance to Afghanistan (country-creditors to the Kyrgyz Republic could waive its debt).
10. Under this proposal the Kyrgyz side will assist the Afghan side on behalf of the country-creditor, which will write-off the relevant part of the Kyrgyz side's debt. Kyrgyz assistance could comprise commodities and services, such as construction materials, food, clothing, medicines, specialists, schools, hospitals, roads, education in schools and universities of the Kyrgyz Republic, etc. The spectrum

“Kyrgyz assistance could comprise commodities and services, such as construction materials, food, clothing, medicines, specialists, schools, hospitals, roads, education in schools and universities of the Kyrgyz Republic”

of possible cooperation between Afghanistan and Kyrgyz Republic in the scope of an exchange of the external debt for assistance to Afghanistan is quite wide.

These proposals and initiatives have been put forward at relevant conferences and meetings on Afghanistan. Some international organizations are interested in them and Kyrgyzstan is in negotiations on these proposals.

We welcome the commitment of Afghanistan to take part in regional integration processes and call on international organizations for more active engagement with the Afghan Government to implement regional projects and regional cooperation and to more fully exploit the potential of Kyrgyzstan for Afghanistan's reconstruction needs.

India's Development Assistance to Afghanistan

Embassy of India, Kabul, Afghanistan (Edited)

India has played an important role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. Indian policy in Afghanistan is based on the understanding that democracy and development are key instruments to ensure that Afghanistan becomes a source of regional stability and does not slide back into extremism. The cumulative level of committed Indian assistance to Afghanistan amounts to USD 2 billion. For a country like India, which is not a traditional donor, this is a significant contribution.

1. Most of India's development projects in Afghanistan can broadly be divided into four categories: Large infrastructure projects; humanitarian assistance; capacity building initiatives; and 'Small Development Projects'.
 - (a) Government of India has taken on a number of medium and large infrastructure projects in its assistance programme in Afghanistan. Some of these are: Construction of a 218 km road from Zaranj to Delaram for facilitating movement of goods and services to the Iranian border (completed and handed over); Construction of 220kV DC transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul and a 220/110/20 kV sub-station at Chimtala, completed and handed over; two more sub-stations are being constructed at Doshi and Charikar from the 220KV transmis-

“Indian policy in Afghanistan is based on the understanding that democracy and development are key instruments to ensure that Afghanistan becomes a source of regional stability and does not slide back into extremism.”

sion line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul. Cost of the project: INR 186.71 crores. Construction of Salma Dam in Herat province (ongoing project), following approval of the revised project cost (INR 1457.56 crores) Construction of Afghan Parliament (ongoing project, scheduled date of completion: June 2014. Sanctioned cost = INR 710 crores; Setting up of 5 toilet-cum-public sanitation complexes in Kabul (completed and handed over); upgrading of telephone exchanges in 11 provinces (completed and handed over); Expansion of national TV network by providing an uplink from Kabul and downlinks in all 34 provincial capitals for greater integration of the country (completed and handed over). The above list is not exhaustive.

- (b) India's humanitarian assistance initiatives include provision of free medical services and medicines through Indian Medical Missions (IMMs) located in Kabul and other cities of Afghanistan (Only the IMM in Mazar is currently functioning while the IMMs in Kabul and Kandahar are temporarily closed, and, the Mission had recommended the shutting down of IMMs in Herat and Jalalabad last year); Provision of food assistance of 1 million MT of wheat in the form of High Energy Biscuits (HEB) distributed to approx. 2 million school children across Afghanistan, daily under a 'School Feeding Programme' administered by the World Food Programme (WFP). Announced in October 2001, 452, 893 MT of wheat (including wheat used for production, and, the wheat equivalent of production costs, overheads and Gol cash support) have been delivered with over 500,000 MT of the 1 million MT pledge remaining. Assistance of 250,000 MT of wheat to Afghanistan (the supply of the first tranche of 100,000 MT was completed in February 2012. For the second tranche of 150,000 tonnes, the Afghan government has appointed an agent to lift the wheat from Kandla port and transport it to Afghanistan [through land from Karachi]. Approx. 66,000 MT have already been delivered at Kabul; Cost of the project=INR 300 crores; Reconstruction and renovation of Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH) in various phases – Repairs, maintenance and painting of IGICH have been undertaken recently. A voltage stabilizer has been provided for the entire hospital and the incinerator has also been repaired. Heating and Plumbing systems remain to be fixed. The setting up of the Maternity Ward and the purchase of equipment for the Diagnostic center remain pending; gifting of 10 ambulances.

- (c) The sector of education and capacity development has been a significant area of attention in India's assistance portfolio. Some Indian activities in this sector include: reconstruction and renovation of the Habibia School in Kabul; award of 500 ICCR long-term university scholarships (for undergraduate and post graduate degrees) and 500 short-term Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) vocational training slots for Afghan nationals annually from 2006-07 onwards (since 2009, both ICCR and ITEC slots were increased to 675 annually and it has been decided to grant 1000 scholarships for Afghan Nationals (administered by ICCR) during the period 2012-13 to 2020-21.); up to 258 Special Discretionary ITEC slots have been offered to Afghan Ministry officials for training programmes in India – over 5 such training programmes have been organized and the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, the Ministry of Agriculture, etc have already had their personnel trained in various disciplines under this new scheme; deputation of 30 Indian civil servants under UNDP's Capacity for Afghan Public Administration (CAP) programme; ongoing Indian contribution to UNDP's National Institution Building Programme (NIBP) which finances attachment of Indian civil servants as Capacity Development Advisors (CDAs) in Afghan government institutions – there are 10 Indian CDAs currently working in various important Ministries of the Afghan Government; signing of 'twinning agreements' between related Indian and Afghan Ministries; setting up of an India-Afghan Vocational training center for training 3,000 Afghans in carpentry, plumbing, welding, masonry and tailoring; as well as a similar project by Indian NGO SEWA for setting up Women's Vocational Training Centre in Bagh-e-Zanana for training 1000 women in garment making, nursery plantation, food processing and marketing. 614 Agriculture scholarships (BSc, MSc and PhD) have been made available to Afghan students under an Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR)-administered scheme. 60 Afghan agriculture students are presently studying in various Indian agriculture universities and more than 100 have been accepted for the academic year 2013-14.
- (d) A significant addition to India's development portfolio in Afghanistan was a special programme to foster community-based, Small Development Projects in vulnerable border areas, in the fields of agriculture, rural development, education, health, vocational training, etc. that can have direct and visible

“The sector of education and capacity development has been a significant area of attention in India's assistance portfolio.”

“A significant addition to India’s development portfolio in Afghanistan was a special program to foster community-based, Small Development Projects in vulnerable border areas, that can have direct and visible impact on community life, with a focus on local ownership and management.”

impact on community life, and with focus on local ownership and management. The Small Development Projects were implemented in two Phases – the first in July 2006 comprising projects worth USD 11,216,179/- and the second in June 2008 comprising projects worth USD 8,579,537/-. Till date, USD 13.135 million has been released to our Mission under Phase I & II of Small Development Projects. The implementation of the projects is done entirely by Afghan government agencies (with advisory inputs from Indian Embassy), which helps in building local capacity towards project management. An MoU for implementation of the Third Phase of the SDP scheme was signed during President Karzai’s visit in November 2012 with an additional provision of USD 100 million. Administrative and financial approvals for 60 projects, at an estimated cost of USD 14.223 million, under the third phase of the SDP scheme have been received. The Third Phase of SDPs is to be completed by 2015-16.

2. The future contours of the Indian assistance programme in Afghanistan were illuminated during the visit of the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in May 2011. Prime Minister had announced a further increase in India’s aid commitment to Afghanistan by USD 500 million, thus raising the cumulative Indian commitment to USD 2 billion. He also announced a number of new schemes that India would undertake in Afghanistan, to utilize the new financial commitment. These included:
 - Donation of 1000 buses for the Kabul and other municipalities with provision for maintenance support, training, and infrastructure. Afghanistan has selected Delhi Integrated Multi-modal Transit System (DIMTS) as the Consultant to manage the process of procuring the buses and creating the structures for their maintenance and running.
 - Donation of 500 tractors for Afghan farmers; Provision of seeds and other assistance for the agricultural sector.
 - A medical package consisting of the treatment of Afghan patients in select hospitals in India over the next three years to be implemented through the Afghan Ministry of Public Health; the rehabilitation and professional up gradation of the National Malaria and Leishmaniasis Centre of Afghanistan; and the up gradation of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health, including the Diagnostic Centre.

- Setting up of a National Agricultural University at Kandahar. The Government of India has appointed a Task Force headed by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan and comprising MEA and IARI. IARI's plan for phased development of the University has been shared with E/I Kabul. The first phase [2013-15] involves capacity building for faculty and establishment of an International Centre for Capacity Building (ICCB) at Kabul. A 6-month module for training of 25 Afghan resource persons in five different areas – Agronomy, Plant Protection, Horticulture including post-harvest methodologies, Extension including through the use of ICT, and Livestock Management, commenced in August 2013 at IARI, New Delhi. Two agronomy experts visited Kabul and Kandahar in October 2013 and held discussions with various stakeholders in order to finalize the syllabus, course structure and other requirements for starting the Agronomy faculty at the Afghan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University.
- The early finalization of a USD 50 million Line of Credit (LoC), to promote exports and attract Indian business to Afghanistan.
- A grant of USD 10 million for preservation and revival of Afghanistan's archaeological and cultural heritage and cultural exchanges.
- A grant of USD 4 million to the Government of Afghanistan for the restoration of the historic Stor Palace in Kabul.
- Assistance in setting up an Afghan National Institute of Mines. To begin with, the Government of India has offered training at ISM, Dhanbad for up to 180 resource persons in the Ministry of Mines, Government of Afghanistan. Training is to be imparted in 12 disciplines related to Mining, for batches of 15 each. 8 training modules (for 15x8= 120) resource persons have been completed.
- Assistance in setting up of a computer laboratory at Habibia School.
- Supporting the Second Phase of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Skills Development Programme for providing vocational training to Afghan nationals.
- Establishment of a Jawaharlal Nehru Chair of Indian Studies at Kabul University.

“MoUs/Agreements between India and Afghanistan are in place in the fields of diplomacy, media and information, civil aviation, agricultural research and education, health care and medicinal science, tourism, education, standardization, rural development, public administration, electoral management and administration, small development projects and local governance.”

3. Indian long-term commitment to Afghanistan was concretized with the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Hamid Karzai, during the latter’s visit to India in October 2011. The Strategic Partnership Agreement identified a number of development sectors in which India would continue to support Afghanistan in the long-run, including agriculture, rural development, mining, industry, energy, information technology, communications, transport, civil aviation, etc.
4. The Government of India again reiterated its commitment to support the development of Afghanistan, both through government-to-government support as well as by facilitating private trade and investment, at the Afghanistan Conferences in Istanbul (2 November 2011), Bonn (5 December 2011), Kabul (June 2012) and Tokyo (July 2012).
5. India also organized major ‘Investment Summit on Afghanistan’ which was organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in June 2012 in New Delhi, and by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in December 2013, aimed at attracting and promoting private investment in Afghanistan.
6. MoUs/Agreements between India and Afghanistan are in place in the fields of diplomacy, media and information, civil aviation, agricultural research and education, health care and medicinal science, tourism, education, standardization, rural development, public administration, electoral management and administration, small development projects and local governance. A series of fresh MoUs are being signed between Afghan Ministries and their Indian counterpart Ministries, under the aegis of UNDP’s ‘National Institution Building Programme’ to which India is a major financial contributor.
7. It has been India’s endeavor to act in conformity with the best aid-effectiveness principles, taking fully into account the local government priorities, in co-ordination with other donors, using local sub-contractors and materials as far as practical, and with minuscule proportion of budget on security and salaries. These ‘overhead costs’ are significantly lower in the case of Indian projects than in those undertaken by other donors.
8. As stated by the Indian External Affairs Minister in the Tokyo Conference on July 8, 2012, India does not see its development part-

nership with Afghanistan as conditions-based or transitory, or limited to the presently ongoing projects and schemes. Instead, India intends to progressively scale up its contribution to Afghan reconstruction and development, in line with the growing Indian economic capacities, and subject to the preferences, comfort levels, and absorptive capacities of Afghanistan.

H.E. Ghulam Jelani Popal, Former Minister of State For Governance, Afghanistan



His Excellency Ghulam Jelani Popal is former Governance Affairs Minister at the Presidential Palace. From 2007-2010 he was the Director General at the Independent Directorate of Local Governance. From 2003-2005 he was Deputy Minister for Revenue and Customs at the Ministry of Finance. From 1995-1999 he was a Representative of the Afghan civil society to several conferences. He graduated with a degree in Political Science from Kabul University. H.E. Popal speaks Dari, Pashto, English and Urdu.

Davood Moradian, Director General, Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies



Davood Moradian is the Director General of the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies, a think tank in Afghanistan. He was professor of political science at the American University of Afghanistan and an adviser to the Afghan Government. Moradian has worked for the Afghan Government since 2005, holding positions of Chief of Programs at the President's Office, Chief Policy Adviser to the Afghan Foreign Minister and the Director General of Afghanistan's Center for Strategic Studies. He has a Ph.D from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, where he also taught international relations for a number of years.

Radha Kumar, Director General, Delhi Policy Group



Radha Kumar, Director General of the Delhi Policy Group, is a specialist in ethnic conflicts, peacemaking and peace-building. Formerly Director of the Mandela Centre for Peace at Jamia Millia Islamia University (2005-10), Kumar has also been Senior Fellow in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York (1999-03). She is currently on the Board of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Foundation for Communal Harmony (Ministry of Home Affairs, India) and an Associate Fellow of the Asia Society in New York. She has recently completed a mission as one of the three Kashmir Interlocutors of the Government of India (2011-12).

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Vladimir Boyko, Professor of Asian Studies at Altai State Pedagogical Academy



Vladimir Boyko is currently Professor of Asian Studies at Altai State Pedagogical Academy, Russia. He received his Ph.D and Habilitus degrees in History from the Institute of Oriental Studies, USSR/Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. His research is primarily focused on recent Afghanistan and Central Asian history, politics and development. He has held visiting positions at the London School of Economics & Political Science, Cambridge University, Harvard University, Ruhr University and Center of Modern Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. His writings on these subjects amount to about 200 research works, including 10 authored/co-authored/edited books in Russian, English and Farsi.

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Professor Bahram Amirahmadian's fields of study are geopolitics and strategic issues in Eurasia. He is a member of strategic centers in Iran, a member of the scientific council of IRAS (Iran Eurasia Studies Institute), the Center of Caucasian and Central Asian Studies affiliated to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran. He has visited Eurasian countries several times. He works on issues related to Iran's foreign policy, and also with Mehr and Khabar online news agencies. He has participated in several international conferences and has published 20 books (in Persian) and more than 200 articles in scientific quarterlies, journal and newspapers. He has worked on the Encyclopedia Islamica (Persian), and lectures in several universities. He has had several TV, radio and newspapers interviews (including many live TV interviews).

H.E. Hossein Sheikh-UI-Islam, Senior Advisor to The Majlis and Director of its International Affairs Department



His Excellency Hossein Sheikh-ul-Islam is Senior Advisor to the Majlis and Director of its International Affairs Department. He is also the Secretary General for Support of the Palestinian Intifada. Prior to this he was Acting Foreign Minister (2008-2009) and has also served as Iran's Ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic. From 1981-87, he was the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran.

Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Former Director General Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad

Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi was the Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad from 2011 to 2013. He joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1965. During his career, he served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Syria, East Germany, the Soviet Union/Russia, China, India and the U.S. He was also the special Representative of the Secretary General (UNSG) and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (Baghdad) and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (Khartoum). His last post at the Foreign Office was as Additional Secretary (Afghanistan, Soviet Union and Policy Planning).



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He completed his M.A. in International Relations at the Kyrgyz State National University in 2000 and is pursuing his Ph.D in Political Science at the Diplomatic Academy of Kyrgyz, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Ibraev has also been head of the Consular Section at the Kyrgyz Embassy in Tehran and has served as a merchandising manager in Afghanistan in between 2005-2006. He is fluent in Kyrgyz, Farsi, English, Russian and Arabic.



Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANASTU	Afghan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Forces
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
BSA	Bilateral Security Agreement
CAREC	Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation Program
CARS	Central Asian Republics
CASA-1000	Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project
CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
CCPPA	Coordination Council of Political Parties of Afghanistan
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
EC	European Commission

ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ETIM	East Turkestan Islamic Movement
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IARI	Indian Agricultural Research Institute
ICC	Interstate Coordination Council
ICCR	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
IJU	Islamic Jihad Union
IMM	Indian Medical Missions
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISM	Indian School of Mines
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MCC	China Metallurgical Group
MT	Million Tonne
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDN	Northern Distribution Network
NDPA	National Democratic Party of Afghanistan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSA	National Security Advisor
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OTCS	Organization of the Treaty of Collective Security
PDPA	Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RECCA	Regional Economic Cooperation Conference for Afghanistan
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Agreement
SDP	Small Development Project
TAPI	Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline
TIKA	Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WFP	World Food Program



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The Delhi Policy Group

The Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is an independent think tank based in New Delhi, India. It seeks to build a non-partisan consensus on issues of critical national interest.

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