

Unofficial Translation of Dr Spanta's Speech at the "Afghanistan-Central Asia Dialogue-1"

Kabul, 19.12/2013

Dr. Moradian, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning; let me wish you a successful conference. I hope discussions and recommendations of the conference are projected in activities of central Asian countries' policy-makers, including Afghanistan in favor of people of these countries for having a stable region, based on cooperation and integration. At the outset, I would like to appreciate Dr. Moradian and his colleagues for the value they have given to dialogues on regional integration and its concerning discussions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Along with my pervious theoretical approach, my work with the government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has enabled me to become more familiar with the issues related to regional and international politics. Actual impasse, which inherited from colonial periods, poverty, backwardness, crisis of post-colonial states and many other factors still affect the on-going policies of our world and specially our region. Regrettably, I have to acknowledge that our region is still suffering from opposing factors, including obstacles ahead of cooperation, specifically in the area of security. These barriers stem from both post-colonial contradictory factors and also from unilateral actions of certain states and state-based institutions in order to fulfill hegemonic policy. The hegemonic measures, and using terrorism as means of intervention in the affairs of other nations result in continued fragmentation and degradation in regional integration. It is with regret to say that after the end of the Cold War and ideological rivalry era, we are gradually losing the opportunity for commencing a new start in the regional and global politics.

The ground reality of Afghanistan and central Asian countries demonstrate that our region is full of so much commonality that we can use to acquire sustainable welfare and justice for our people on one hand, and perishing security threat on the other. Afghanistan shares lots of ethnic, historical, cultural and geographical similarities with Central Asian countries. Most of the Central Asian nations are landlocked. However, our region enjoys a young population, natural

resources with strategic significance, and along with unique capability for economic development. Extensive sources of energy and minerals that have strategic significance in contemporary industries are located in our region. The serious demand to these resources by countries in the region and other industrial nations has become a reality.

Achieving sustainable security is not possible only through use of violent acts and military campaign. There is no other applicable option except to develop a regional integration and cooperation strategy in order to achieve welfare and justice for our countries. Our economic, social and specially security challenges, therefore, requires a wider regional policy to deal with aforementioned problems. As our reactive individual efforts on a daily basis cannot alone resolve our challenges in security, economy, and social affairs, therefore, it requires us that we should step by step make our policies regional. The dynamism of conflict and insecurity in the region, regardless of their nature as radicalism, separatism, or other types, can only be addressed by institutionalizing regional integration policy. This is the only way we can prevent continuation of Cold War era's policy or post-colonial political engineering in the region and enhance it to execute our own regional politics. This approach will result that we not be a passive actor rather be active players in global peace and security.

Either direct or indirect, most of the Central Asian countries are under the threat of terrorism. Terrorism, either from its emergence or its ideological bases, has close similarities in the countries of our region. Achieving continued success against terrorism and factors of insecurity is not merely the job of one country in the region, or such achievement only through military means is not possible.

Sadly, despite numerous sacrifices by Afghanistan and the International Community struggle against our region is still under serious threat of terrorism and extremism. As we all know, a sustainable security is not possible without achieving socio-economic security. Without any doubt, socio-economic security is only achievable through a regional integration. The major question here is: Do the executors of regional politics and the political institutions of Central Asian countries have the capability, and are they prepared to implement a regional integration vision, while considering their narrow ideological tendency toward nationalism? During the recent years, I have witnessed several meetings and conferences held among various representatives of governments, academic institutions and civil societies in the region. I have to

sadly inform you that the regional integration, in its reality, in our part of the world, have not been achieved, although a number of regional organizations have been established for this purpose. In my view, a meaningful regional politics will help our joint effort to be integrated and coordinated in various areas including security, economy, transit, investment, energy supply, countering organized crimes and narcotics, and eventually to execute our collective decisions and proper policies in these areas. Such coordination requires so that not only the regional bodies but also the academic institutions and civil societies to cooperate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The current energy transit network from Central Asia to South Asia such as “CASA 1000” building railroads from Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, extension of existed railroads from Uzbekistan to Pakistan and Iran, are all opportunities which promotes further our ties and connects our landlocked region to ports in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

As we know, most of the regional countries are located along the ancient Silk Road. Connecting the People’s Republic of China for transit by reviving the old Silk Road to reach the heart of Europe, under the title of “New Silk Road”, in fact will be a historic and major effort for trade exchange in our world. Undoubtedly such initiatives complement and support the important process of “Heart of Asia”, which Afghanistan is leading.

Further economic cooperation and regional dependency through extension of trade and transit, strengthening cultural exchange, without any doubt, will pave the ground for further development in cooperation in our region, and thus creates more sense of responsibility in our region.

Wish you fruitful work and discussions, and more collaboration among our countries.

Once again thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

