

Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS)

Afghanistan-Central Asia Dialogue-IV

"Nexus of Geo-Politics and Terrorism"

14-15 July 2017 – Bamayn

Conference Report



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Nexus of “Geopolitics” and “Terrorism”

“Terrorism,” an old phenomenon, has become the most prominent political-security discourse of the new century. Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 2001, terrorism has engulfed many countries and with significant economic, political and social implication for the international community. The spread of terrorism, however, has not been followed by intellectual understanding and/or political consensus on the cause(s) of terrorism and effective anti/counter-terrorism strategies. Despite the calamity of terrorism and its global reach, divergent political aims and approaches have prevented a global consensus and hence a global alliance against this menace. The “Return of Geopolitics” to the international politics is the latest development and addition to an already crowded scene of “global war against terrorism”.

Two regions of West Asia and Central Asia have now become the battlefields for terrorists and contested scenes for the “great game” of competing regional and global powers. Since the collapse of the Taliban regime in late 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the ongoing struggle against terrorism has been accompanied by the emergence of new political developments and concepts, such as “Arab Spring & Winter”, “Shiite Crescent”, “Neo-Ottomanism”, “Reawakening of the Russian Bear”, “Muslim NATO”, “One Belt One Road Initiative” , the rise of “Daesh/IS”, “Brexit” , “Obama’s Retrenchment” and “Trump’s America First”. Afghanistan and its northern neighbors have been affected by these new developments, though with different degrees of intensity and scope.

The fourth Afghanistan-Central Asia Dialogue (ACAD-IV) provided an opportunity for the expert and policy-making communities to discuss how these geo-political developments have impacted their struggle and vulnerability against terrorism. During the six working panels of the dialogue a number of issues were discussed by speakers from Afghanistan, Central Asian States, wider regions and regional/international organizations. Some of the questions raised were:

- How do Afghanistan and Central Asian States view evolving geopolitical developments?
- What are the characteristics of the new “Great Game”?
- Is terrorism fueling the new “Great Game” or has terrorism camouflaged the new “Great Game”?
- What would be the implication of utilization of terrorism as a tool of “Great Game” for the region’s stability and development?
- Could fighting terrorism unite the competing powers as fighting Fascism united the Soviet and the Western World during the Second World War?
- Can the fear of “Syrianization of Afghanistan” provide an incentive for the competing powers to work for a stable and normal Afghanistan? If so, how?
- Do regional organizations have any role in promoting political consensus on “terrorism” and preventing another cycle of “great game” in the region?
- What are indigenous narratives and initiatives for anti/counter radicalization/terrorism?
- What is the state of regional and international cooperation and mechanism in fighting terrorism?

Afghanistan and the five Central Asian Republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan share common security, economic and cultural space and system. Since 2001, there has been noticeable improvement and increase in interaction, exchange, connectivity and cooperation between Afghanistan and its northern neighbors. Despite the recent gains and geographical proximity, there remains a significant gap between Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics' potential for cooperation in the current state of affairs.

The Dialogue aims to identify the reason(s) for the gap between the potential and actual state of cooperation and to recommend effective ways and policies for strengthening cooperation and connectivity between Afghanistan and the Central Asia.

The relevant representatives from the Afghan Government, the Central Asian Republics' ambassadors to Kabul and a selected representative from each of the concerned regional and international organizations and governments have also been invited to observe the deliberations.

It is envisioned to disseminate the report of the Dialogue to broader audiences in the region and beyond in order to enable policy-makers to devise appropriate measures to enable and strengthen the process of regional cooperation and integration.

The Dialogue aims to become a regular forum between the expert and policy-making communities of Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics to pave the foundation for establishing a cooperative security, economic and cultural community between Afghanistan and the Central Asia.

Welcome note

The conference started with the welcome note of the Director AISS, Dr. Dawood Moradian. He said that the AISS has adopted the depiction of a colorful carpet as a symbol for this dialogue. “This symbol resembles our past when we used to live together in the region. Unfortunately, the bitter happenings over time have torn apart this beautiful carpet and turned us into separated islands; we are like strangers, we don’t trust each other, we are fearful of each other and try to violate each other’s rights.” He emphasized that the main aim of the AISS for holding this conference was to create a regional consensus. “We are sure that we can know each other better through dialogue and this would produce trust. Hopefully after trust building we will witness practical cooperation toward restoring a peaceful and secure region.” Mr. Moradian thanked the people of Bamian, local officials, civil society, the media and other partners of the AISS, including Afghanistan’s Foreign Ministry, National Security Council of Afghanistan and the US Embassy in Kabul, for helping the AISS to hold this conference.

The Director AISS’s address was followed by the speech of the Governor of Bamian, Tahir Zahir. Mr. Zahir appreciated the conference as a way for promoting strategic approach towards important issues such as regional security. “In contemporary world, security is not guaranteed anymore through the national borders. Various political movements use ideology and physical means to prevail across regional and worldwide platforms. Terrorist and violent groups including arm smuggling networks do not care about national borders. Therefore, regional security is considered to be a very important problem in strategic analysis.” Mr. Zahir warned about the current situation in Central Asia as terrorists are targeting the region. He also spoke about the capabilities of Bamian for hosting conferences and being a role model for other cities of Afghanistan. “It’s not only the ancient days that Bamian is proud of, but what makes this city capable for hosting big political conferences and cultural festivals relates to other characteristics of this city including having tolerant people and peaceful environment. That’s why Bamian is named as ‘Creative City’ and the ‘Cultural Capital of SARC’”, he said.

In his speech Dr. Abdullah appreciated the conference held in Bamian. He highlighted the importance of utilizing regional opportunities. “Our region has very good opportunities to prosper and at the same time it faces some serious challenges as well. Look at Bamian; on the one hand you see the rich civilization and cultural heritage and on the other hand, you see the destruction of Buddha statues which is a reminder of ignorance and darkness. While there is an opportunity for improving trade, communication, energy transition and people-to-people connection, this region also faces terrorist networks, backward groups, organized crimes and drug mafia. One might say that these two opposite trends are competing with each other in the region. Of course in recent years tremendous achievements have taken place in this region.”

Dr. Abdullah called for unity to fight against terrorism. “In some areas we need more cooperation. In a particular area we are facing a serious challenge as some countries still support terrorist groups. There is no difference between the different terrorist groups. Al-Qaida, ISIS and Taliban who use terrorism as a tool all are terrorist groups. Of course, if a group denounces terrorism and come into the peace table, it’s

going to be a different story. Unfortunately, some countries differentiate between terrorist groups as bad terrorists and good terrorists. This is a big mistake. In the past these countries and their people have paid the price for their mistakes. This mistake is going to be harmful for them as well.”



Panel One: The World in Transition; Return of Geopolitics; Evolution of Terrorism



Moderator:

Mr. Lotfullah Najafizada, Head of Tolo News, Afghanistan

Speakers:

- Mr. Amrullah Saleh, Chairperson, Afghanistan Green Trends (AGT)
- Dr. Nazif Shahrani, Professor of Indiana University, USA
- Mr. Akmaljon Abdullayev, Researcher, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Uzbekistan

Mr. Najafizada introduced the first panel raising the following questions: “The first question is that do we have a common definition of terrorism in the region? Do we have regional interests? As we always talk about the historical and cultural commonalities, do we have joint perspective for fighting terrorism? Do we use terrorism as a foreign policy tool in the region? If yes, why is that so, and if no, how can we stop it? What is the difference between today’s geopolitics and the so called Great Game period of the 18th century?”

The first speaker of the panel, Mr. Abdullayev, gave his speech based on his research paper titled “Methodological Aspects of Studying Geopolitics, Terrorism and Social Movements.” He began his speech presenting his thesis statements as following “a) Current developments require multi-disciplinary research and use of analytical frameworks of sociology in International Relations. And b) External democracy promotion in low capacity and undemocratic states will result in instability.” According to him, “Scholars of international relations as well as security studies have put significant effort in an attempt to explain issues related to geopolitics and terrorism while social movements have been the primary focus of sociologists. The ‘Arab Spring’, wave of both violent and non-violent demonstrations, protests, riots, coups and civil wars in Middle East and North Africa had clearly demonstrated failures of experts of international relations in explaining interlinks between democracy and consecutive social mobilization with maintaining stability in countries such as Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Iraq where either the government was overthrown or major uprisings and social violence occurred, including insurgencies and terrorism. On the other hand, sociologists tend to focus mainly on internal political, social and economic contexts where social movements emerge and they ignore external factors as well as geopolitics. Based on theory, I argue that when high capacity and democracy intersect, it is likely that social movements produce positive outcomes but in low capacity democracies social movements may lead to instability and elements of terrorism.” Mr. Abdullayev concluded that “Therefore, the main question for Central Asia as well as Afghanistan remains: Does our societies enjoy high capacity governments and democracy? Depending on the answer we can either foster social movements with support of external actors or we prioritize further strengthening capacities and promote democracy based on our circumstances.”

The second speaker of the panel, Dr. Shahrani, addressed some introductory issues including discussions about the terminology of terrorism and worldwide historical development of today’s security situation. He emphasized that “we don’t have to buy the terminologies that are being presented to us by dominant media especially in the western world. We need to rethink and rephrase and set the agenda differently.” Dr. Shahrani spoke about four important imperial periods that the world has gone through over the last five centuries. “1) the period when Central Asia was dominant was the age of “empires of faith”; where large empires around the world existed, but they revolved around religion and faith. The particularly imperial structures allowed local autonomy and they lasted for a long time with little tension. Most of the

tension was between the empires not within the empire. 2) The western domination of what came to be known as “empires of commerce”. These empires of commerce to a large extent were extractive. They were interested in going to different places to get resources and bring it to Europe and make use of these resources for their betterment. 3) Empires by conquest. The empires of conquest lasted very long time. Obviously, people who were under this form of empire resisted it, they turned against it, and they fought wars of liberation and off course, eventually they got their independence but this independence didn’t last very long. This is because the empire changed its shape. 4) Since World War II, the world has experienced something that we don’t quite understand; its empire by invitation; an empire of trust. The empire by invitation started with First World War and Second World War, where America was invited literally by Europeans to come to their assistance and their aid... of course China now is competing.” He continued that during the 1990s, Afghanistan was brought to a situation when it had to beg for American intervention. Despite enjoying billions of dollars of aid under U.S. intervention, Afghanistan ended up becoming utterly dependent.” Dr. Shahrani talked of a dual war going on in Afghanistan and likewise countries staged by military and humanitarian agencies, while political regimes in these countries are not responsive. “They are carrying wars that destroys, that decimates a society. But at the same time they do humanitarian works that helps heal. People within these countries could not get anywhere, because their regimes are using violence, using any means to stop political discussion, political dialogue, and political ways of resolving their issues. So they got enraged and enragement produces violence and that’s what we are witnessing. When politics of rage was not responded to appropriately it created the environment for terrorism and other forms of horror.” Mr. Shahrani called upon the regional governments and international institutions to focus on political reforms rather than focusing on militaristic approaches. “This is where we have to address politics of rage .There are people who want political change, but there are not given chance, they are not given condition to do that.” He concluded his remarks emphasizing that Afghanistan needs self-sufficiency. “In the last 16 years, how many dams were built in Afghanistan to make this country self-sufficient? Or use its solar and wind possibilities for production of energy. Instead what are we doing? We bring energy from other countries or build pipelines to go through Afghanistan to other places. Afghanistan needs self-sufficiency,” he said.

The last speaker of the panel, Mr. Saleh, started his speech emphasizing the fact that the borders between regional countries are artificial and a legacy of colonial time. He said that these artificial borders should not undermine the historic connectivity of the people in the region. "English and Russian are two very sharp axes which cut us into several and many pieces. We were one people not long ago. The societies are so old and genuine and these borders are very artificial." According to him the modern history of Afghanistan can be analyzed through four distinct periods including 1) the Great Game; characterized by pre-independent status of Central Asian countries 2) The Cold War, 3) the post-Cold War, and 4) the post 9/11; characterized by terrorism. "In the Cold War we as Afghanistan retained our status as a neutral land, a buffer land, allowing a degree of infiltration by extra regional powers, but we largely remained neutral. Afghanistan in some parts of the Cold War was a beneficiary and in the later stages of the Cold War it was the victim. The victim of the very harsh, brutal, lethal conflict of the two empires; the United States and Soviet Union fighting a proxy war in Afghanistan...Then the post-Cold War period began. Afghanistan was completely abandoned. And the policy of containment brought 9/11. With the post 9/11 period we are reconnecting. What keeps us separate today? " Mr. Saleh said that in post 9/11 period, Pakistan combined three elements of Radical Islam, Political Islam and Violent Islam to pursue its foreign policy. He suggested in order to deal with terrorism, regional countries including Afghanistan and Central Asian countries need to connect and create common opportunities for prosperity and progress. "Today Afghanistan found half solution but not a complete solution. Our trade with Pakistan has declined fifty percent. It's because we are connected with Central Asia... Now, when you go to Central Asia there is nostalgia of reconnection. There is an understanding of reconnecting with South Asia through Afghanistan and there is also a great fear; if we connect with these people, we connect with radicalism and we connect with violence and terrorism. In order to get rid of that trend, the challenge of our time is to negotiate with Pakistan."

Question and Answer Session:

Question 1: Considering that Afghanistan is a low capacity state, how are we going to become a democratic state?

Question 2: Mr. Saleh! When you talk about negotiating with Pakistan, what exactly do you mean by that?

Mr. Saleh: The puzzle of negotiating with Pakistan is what Pakistan wants. My guess is that Pakistan wants to use the 1893 Agreement as a template for negotiation - not necessarily impose all of it on Afghanistan, but that is their template. In that template they want to dictate five factors: 1) they want to define geography, 2) they want to define Afghanistan's foreign policy unlimited, 3) they want to define Afghanistan's macroeconomics, 4) they want to define our security and defense posture and finally 5) they want to see a turbaned cleric- preferably a graduate of their Madrasas sitting in ARG. These are five factors that they want to negotiate with us using the 1893 Agreement as a template.

Dr. Shahrani: First thing, the theory that talks about high capacity/ low capacity doesn't help us at all. This capacity game has gone forever. We have spent billions of dollars on capacity and nothing has happened. The key issue is laid down by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson in the book that says "why nations fail". Their argument is it's the choice of type of government, type of state. If its exclusive politics and exclusive economics, it will bring poverty and misery in society and if you chose a government that is inclusive, it will be your start to building a society that will become wealthy, democratic and everything else.

With regard to Islam and terrorism, we must know that there is only one Islam. But there are different approaches. There are those who believe in Islam and this would limit their politics and there are those who manipulate Islam according to their political affiliation. Those who believe in Islam cannot be terrorists because Islam would not allow it. But those who manipulate Islam and conduct violent and radical approaches, they are causing all these miseries in the Muslim communities.

Mr. Abdullayev: My point is that for a state it is very important to have an effective government first other than having an effective democracy or liberal society. You have to prioritize. You have to have a strong state first, before pushing for other versions of civil society and democracy.

Panel Two: New Great Game: Central Asian States: Stakeholders or Passive Observers



Moderator:

Dr. Vladimir Paramonov, Director, Analytical Project Central Eurasia, Uzbekistan

Speakers:

- Dr. Abdullah Rahnoma, Senior Researcher, Center for Strategic Studies under the President, Tajikistan
- Dr. Iskander Akylbayev, Senior Researcher, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies
- Mr. Batyr Mamedov, Scholar, Turkmenistan
- Mr. Zhunus Yergaliyev, Political Counsellor of Kazakhstan Embassy in Kabul

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Paramonov, spoke about the main approaches of Central Asian countries towards the foreign policy. According to him, "In each case, each approach is somehow related to extra-power activities in Central Asia: 1) Approach of Uzbekistan: First, place traditional emphasis on bilateral format of relations. Second, give increasing attention to strengthening the country's own security using internal and external resources. Externally Uzbekistan very often relies on resources of Russia - from point of military assistance, China and the West in general as well as some particular smaller countries like

South Korea and Japan. Third, implement strategy of maneuvering and balancing among the main extra-regional powers- mostly among Russian, China and the West in general. 2) Kazakhstan's approach is mainly oriented toward economic and political interaction, primarily with the main extra-regional powers including Russia, China and the West which are also playing a key role in developing strategic branches of Kazakhstan's economy; particularly oil and gas branches. Secondly, the policy of maneuvering and balancing among the main extra-regional powers – like in the case of Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states. 3) Tajikistan's approach: First, the country's deep geographic and economic isolation from other Central Asian states makes it practically impossible for Tajikistan to participate actively in the regional processes. Second, Tajik orientation toward economic and political cooperation primarily and mainly with friendly China, Russia, and Iran which makes it possible for the country to receive financial and military assistance on regular basis. Third is the threat of internal instability which forces Tajik leadership to concentrate mainly on domestic problems and tasks. 4) Kirghizstan's approach: first, the catastrophic socio-economic situation in the country, political instability and a threat of loss of internal integrity are forcing Kirghizstan to concentrate on cooperation with the main regional powers, Russia, China and the West. Second, increasing domestic political contradictions prevent Kirghiz elite from even coming close to develop more or less unified vision of the country's future development and therefore making the formation of any integrated foreign policy impossible. Third, the active balancing and maneuvering of different Kirghiz political groups – not only among the main extra-regional powers, but also among the less influential foreign players such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and international institutions and organizations. 5) Turkmenistan: Turkmenistan's approach is largely motivated by following: first: Turkmenistan tries to focus exclusively on bilateral format of relations which denies the need and possibility of Turkmenistan's active participation in multilateral format of cooperation. Secondly, Turkmenistan's foreign policy also implies protection from foreign policy influence, including from neighboring countries. And third, Turkmenistan's clear intention toward developing cooperation with the main gas consumers; the main gas consumer at present is China, for many years it was Russia and also it is Iran." According to Dr. Paramovov, these approaches of Central Asian countries lead to a very unstable position regarding holding dialogue with other stakeholders and in relation with major powers.

The first speaker, Dr. Rahnoma, spoke about Afghanistan from Central Asian point of view and Tajikistan's foreign policy toward Afghanistan. "Central Asia and Afghanistan locate in the same historical and cultural domain. Unfortunately, this relationship broke down during Soviet Union time. A negative perception toward Afghanistan replaced that historical relationship. This negative perception especially heightened during the war, when bodies of Soviet soldiers killed in Afghanistan were brought back home to their Tajik, Uzbek and Turkmen families...this negative perception remained even after Central Asian Republics got their independence, because we witnessed a prolonged war in Afghanistan; after the Civil War, you got Taliban and then the international war on terror started but there is a serious reconsideration about Afghanistan as being a victim of terrorism." Dr. Rahnoma emphasized that there is a consensus that terrorism is a common threat to all people of the region. But he suggested that as Central Asia nowadays is divided through national borders with different strategic tendencies, it is better to hold dialogues among respective countries rather than considering Central Asia as a whole. According to him Central Asia monitors Afghanistan for several reasons including: "Firstly, the conflict in Afghanistan is spreading from the south toward the north across the Central Asia's borders. Secondly, there is a new player called ISIS introducing a new face of radicalism which threatens the very existence of our independence. Some smaller radical groups operation among Tajiks, Uzbeks and Uighurs can be unified under the ISIS and turn the region into a battle field. There is a risk that if westerners try to hit Russia's and China's interests in the region, Central Asia will suffer proxy wars." He concluded his presentation explaining some the principles of Tajikistan's foreign policy toward Afghanistan: "The first principle of our foreign policy is holding a realistic approach toward Afghanistan as neighbors; meaning that it's not enough to have similar values but we need to define our common interests. Secondly, Tajikistan always would respect Afghanistan's sovereignty. Thirdly, Tajikistan avoids any ideological and ethnic oriented policies. If all neighboring countries follow the same approach and recognize the government of Afghanistan as their partner, part of the problem is solved. And finally, Tajikistan is looking forward to reviving Afghanistan's economy. In this regard Afghanistan is our security and energy partner and therefore stability of Afghanistan is part of Tajikistan's national interests."

The second speaker of the panel, Mr. Akylbayev, gave his presentation on the topic of "Russia and China: Rethinking Security Partnership in Central Asia". He started his remarks highlighting that both Russia and China are trying to increase their bilateral ties through security agreements and multilateral mechanisms

to limit the US presence in the region and prevent possible return of combat-trained foreign fighters. “In fact, the June 2016 attack at Atatürk airport in Istanbul and the January 2017 attack on the famous Turkish club, ‘Reina’, demonstrate a growing trend for Central Asian fighters to become more actively involved in terrorist activities abroad, specifically in Turkey. For the Central Asian states, the main threat is the penetration of militants into the war zone and their potential return to Central Asia. This process is simplified by the visa-free policy between Turkey and the countries of the region.” He reinstated the fact that “for regional elites, Afghanistan is still perceived through a lens of instability and danger.” According to him, while the Afghan government is weak, the rivalry between the Taliban and ISIS can worsen the situation. Reviewing three different scenarios of future developments in regional context, he suggested that an “inclusive responsibility” is the best platform for sustaining regional security. “For Central Asian states, a change in the regional status quo in which China replaces Russia is not an ideal option, nor is the concept of ‘a division of labor’ matches Central Asian aspirations. It will be more important to establish ‘inclusive responsibility’, where both Russia and China play a more comprehensive role in Central Asia. Meanwhile, the growing trend for soft rapprochement within the regional politics has the potential to encourage more robust inter-regional security cooperation. Central Asian elites must become indispensable partners for both powers. Under a more integrated regional security approach, all Central Asian stakeholders could more actively define their own positions in this scheme and engage with Russia and China in a more balanced way.”

The third speaker of the panel, Mr. Mamedov, gave his speech about the “Turkmen-Afghan Relations”. According to him “Turkmenistan actually participates in the process of peaceful regulation of situation in Afghanistan; supporting social, economic and cultural revival of the country. An example of this is export of electricity and the crude gas at preferential price, the free of charge construction of social facilities including medical and educational establishment, assistance in training young people in education institutions of Turkmenistan and sending humanitarian aid to Afghanistan on regular basis. In recent years Turkmenistan has made proposals to consolidate and develop new political and diplomatic tools for speedy stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan, in particular with the preparation under the United Nations program for the restoration of the country’s economy as well as expressing readiness to provide its political space to support Afghanistan. Turkmenistan also tried to promote integration of Afghanistan into the international economic processes through large scale and regional projects in energy and

transport sectors. The implementation of each will contribute to the restoration of economy and social infrastructure of Afghanistan. The most significant of these projects includes the construction of the transnational gas pipeline between Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI) and rail road between Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. According to independent international analysts the practical implementation of this largest energy project is designed to insure long-term supply of Turkmen natural gas to the countries of south Asia. It is also noted that in April 2017 Pakistan signed an infrastructure deal worth of 26 billion US\$ with China which also includes financing the construction of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline. Among the important projects where the national interests are balanced with the requirements for development of neighboring countries and the entire Asian region in the first stage of transit corridor Turkmenistan- Afghanistan – Tajikistan...” he concluded that “the economic partnership is a priority in Turkmen- Afghan relations.”

The last speaker of the panel Mr. Zhuns Yergaliyev, on behalf of H.E Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Kabul read the following message: “The current military-political and socio-economic situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRA), as evidenced by the recent tragic events, shows that, unfortunately, there is a wide range of security problems: international terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking, illegal migration, illegal arms trafficking and human trafficking. We believe that only joint efforts at the international and regional level can achieve positive results in the fight against drug trafficking, which is one of the important sources of financing terrorism...In the framework of the Istanbul process of the "Hearts of Asia" countries, we are part of the group of the Confidence Building Measures on counter-narcotics. The speedy stabilization in Afghanistan is extremely important, and in many ways, it depends on the process of peaceful settlement. In this context, the new initiative "Kabul Process" looks timely and necessary...The main reason for the recession in the Afghan economy, according to experts, is the insecurity...The National Unity Government promotes transnational infrastructure projects (TAPI and KASA-1000), attracting foreign investment and holding international tenders in the fields of energy, mining, transport and communications...In the context of enhancing the socio-economic development of Afghanistan, it seems important to involve the international and regional business in the implementation of specific projects in Afghanistan. This will create economic self-sufficiency and independence, realize the transit potential of the country, which is the "heart of the region"...For its part, the Republic of Kazakhstan is open for cooperation in the field of transit and logistics of commercial cargo, energy,

construction of roads and railways, mining of minerals. We train 1000 Afghan students for free within the framework of the State Educational Program of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Afghanistan and each year we render humanitarian aid to the needy strata of the Afghan population for hundreds of thousands of US dollars. The Central Asian Republics could connect to the construction of roads and railways along the routes: Turgundi (border with Turkmenistan) - Herat; Mazar-i-Sharif - Shibergan - Meimene - Karay-Nau - Herat. The second route will connect the north-western provinces of Afghanistan: Balkh, Jauzjan, Faryab, Badgis and Herat. This will ensure the export of agricultural products to international markets. Together, these projects would give an impetus to the economic development of the northern, north-western and western parts of Afghanistan, create prerequisites for a political settlement of existing problems and strengthen security. Despite the continuing threats of terrorists, it is necessary to help Afghanistan to change the negative paradigm of the perception of this country as a threat and obstacle to regional cooperation, to a positive one, as an attractive partner for joint projects, creating jobs and fostering communication and trade. It is important to connect Afghanistan to economic integration through the implementation of infrastructure, trade, investment and transit transport projects. All this will contribute to the development of the country and the onset of the long-awaited peace and stability.”

Question and Answer Session:

Comment 1: I think fearing ISIS in the region is a legitimate fear. But we cannot deal with ISIS through conspiracy theory. Both the Afghan government and regional countries are exaggerating about the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan, while there is no accurate information about the number of ISIS fighters in the region. This conspiracy approach is creating space for foreign intervention in northern Afghanistan. For example, we know about Russians supplying arms to some military commanders in Afghanistan. In my view, ISIS is not the biggest challenge of the region. The main challenge is and has been the collapse of Soviet Union as we face an ideological crisis. After the collapse of Soviet Union there is no alternative ideology to fill the gap. It seems that reaching to a regional consensus is the only solution.

Comment 2: We should not fear each other because we know that we are not training terrorists and sending them to each other's territory. We must think of the main source of terrorism. For us it's not important what nationality a terrorist hold, but it's important to know where he goes for his training.

Question: To what extent Russia and China are responsible for the insecurity of the region as a whole and Afghanistan in particular? Both these countries use Afghanistan as excuse for insecurity in the region and they would like to deflect their policies that are contributing to insecurity; including Russia's policies towards their own Muslim population and China's policies towards the Uyghur in their country. Unless and until they solve those problems peacefully and democratically, I think they are the major contributors.

Dr. Rahnoma: I agree that there is a conspiracy theory with regard to ISIS presence in Afghanistan. But we do not assess our foreign policy through conspiracy theories. We have been monitoring the region and we saw that Northern provinces of Afghanistan including Konduz, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces became insecure lately. I warned that if insurgent and terrorist groups are being used as proxies in this region then we face a great danger. Furthermore, I agree that terrorism is not coming from certain nationalities. A terrorist is like a machine or tool in the hands of players. It's not important that these terrorist hold Tajik, Uzbek or Afghan passports.

Dr. Iskander Akylbayev: with regard to the role of China and Russia, I think when we speak about great powers certainly they have their own agenda for the region. I think it's necessary to say that even though they have different policies and competition, at the same time they have certain kind of mechanisms of cooperation and they are able to agree more rather than disagree in this respect. I think it's more relevant to speak about small games not great games. It's about those countries – medium powers like Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan who are trying to change the status quo and trying to play as big players. Generally they are more emotional and more ambitious and they don't have this set of rules that great powers have. With regard the question about negative perception, I certainly agree that we shouldn't frame a country as a source of something. I think there is great opportunity for the Central Asia and Afghanistan to work together. Speaking of the facts, this year Central Asia's population is going to pass 70 billion people and almost half of them are youth. Almost 35 percent is using internet and social media. I think nowadays it's much easier to interact between the nations and populations.

Dr. Paramovov, the moderator of the panel, ended the session by giving two recommendations: "1) adequate policy is always based on research. There should be more research on Afghanistan-Central Asia

relations. Unfortunately, very little is done in this regard. 2) When holding conferences and dialogues, we need to include both people from the region as well as people from outside to be more inclusive.

Panel Three: External Powers: Rules of the Game



Moderator:

Ms. Adela Raz, Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs of Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan

Speakers:

- H.E. Ambassador Seyed Rasoul Mosave, Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran
- Ms. Bushra Gohar, Vice President of Pakistan's Awami National Party
- Dr. Ruan Zongze, Vice President of China Institute of International Studies
- Dr. Vladimir Boyko, Director, Asiatic-Analytical Center, Russia
- Mr. Stephen Tankel, Senior Fellow, Center for a New American Security

In her introductory remarks, Ms. Raz named terrorism and insecurity as raising challenges of the time. But she emphasized that beside the shared challenges, there are shared opportunities that must be looked upon. She pointed out the fact that nowadays all countries are connected to each other and they need to

work out common threats as well as common opportunities. “The globalization phenomenon is something that we are facing. I think we have to utilize it.”

The first speaker of the panel Dr. Boyko gave his presentation titled "Borderland factor and Russia's politics in Afghanistan in second half of 2010s". According to him, in the years after the break down of Soveit Union and later on after the 2001 US-led international military coalition campaign, Russia, being a second tier neighbor of Afghanistan, continued to be a partner of Afghanistan in different capacity. He blamed weteren exclusive approach toward Afghanistan as hindering better ties among the difirent players in the region. “The northern distribution network of early 2010s is just one illuminating example of Russia’s pragmatic approach to the Afghan problem – unfortunately, Western exclusive line made it a short-lived experience. By the middle of 2010s and afterwards Russia pursued a more comprehensive, although controversial, politics in/towards Afghanistan: bi-lateral relations are featured as a privileged partnership with prospects of transforming it into strategic alliance in line with those concluded by US, India, etc. It's more relevant to military-technical/training cadres’ cooperation, whereas geopolitically Afghanistan is under heavy American/Western patronage and control.” Mr. Boyko said that nowadays international community - especially the western block, faces serious problems (migration/refugee crisis, divisions within Western alliances and elites, limits of national/international expertise to solve Afghanistan [-like] crisis) and this provides Russia more space for manoeuvre. According to him, borderland between Afghanistan and Russia through Central Asian countries is the main ground for more and better cooperation. “In fact, Russia's role in Afghanistan should be considered and accepted in the frames and context of newest geopolitical situation (extension of SCO, dynamics of Russian-Turkish relationship, impediments and opportunities of Russia-US understanding, etc). But under all circumstances, Russia's role should be conceptualised and implemented in far more comprehensive manner not only on top (Moscow-Kabul, etc) level, but also with relevance to geography, culture and common people, especially taking into account specific and important role of borderlands (northern Afghanistan-Tajik and Turkic Central Asia, Kazakhstan-Russian Altai-XUAR of PRC) as most threatened areas – routes of Afghan narcotics, illegal migration, smuggling, etc. But at the same time these borderlands might play as gates for the development thanks to their transit location, infrastructural priorities and frontier/civilizational interconnections. This arc of borderlands from Khyber-Pashtunkhwa to Russian Altai should be performed as one of the main routes of Russian-Afghan cooperation as a

complementary modernization project of OBOR initiative and other Eurasian integration schemes.” Concluding his presentation he said that “international community including its Western members and Afghanistan, should not be irritated by the given tactics or strategy of Russia.

The second speaker of the panel, Ms. Gohar, started her presentation emphasizing the fact that Afghanistan and the region face a complex situation. Reviewing conflicting history of contemporary Afghanistan, she stressed that “Afghanistan has suffered more at the hands of the external players who all claimed to be friends and support an Afghanistan led and owned peace process.” Ms. Gohar pointed out that other countries including Pakistan see Afghanistan through their rivalries with each other and this approach prevents meaningful relations with state and government of Afghanistan. According to her, “Situation has been worsened by the ongoing proxy war cycles or the so called great games; using proxies as foreign and defend policy leverage has created huge trust gaps between the key external players. The levels of interest, power and influence of external players have varied from time to time.” Endorsing Amrullah Saleh’s concerns about Pakistan, she suggested that we need mapping of concerns with regard to all players to find out what are their perspectives. According to her, the focus on Taliban and other terrorist groups must be lessened and they should not be given the attention as key stake holders of peace. Pakistan must stop its policy to control Afghanistan through Taliban and other proxies and recognize Afghanistan as a sovereign state. “The one thing Pakistan could do is to take a clear break from its four decades old Afghan policy which is self-destructive. Unless Pakistan takes a clear break from its policy, it is very difficult to evolve a meaningful relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Improving relations will only be possible if Pakistan stops controlling Afghanistan through the Taliban or the proxies/assets.” She concluded that “We have to shift from a security centric relationship to a people centric relationship. So, we can actually benefit from each other’s experiences. In fact what we are suffering in Pakistan is not dissimilar to what Afghanistan is going through. Afghanistan will have to take the lead in the peace process.”

The third speaker of the panel H.E Ambassador Mosavi started his speech emphasizing that “what we call ‘region’ is more of a concept than a geographic direction. We need to define our region to know what we are talking about.” According to him, in today’s world geopolitical rivalries are being replaced by geo-economic rivalries and all countries have to outline their strategies accordingly. He suggested that

regional countries have cultural and historical commonalities, so they need their own plan for revival and progress. He said that Afghanistan has three important problems that need to be addressed as a whole. “I believe that Afghanistan has three important problems including ‘stability’, ‘security’ and ‘development’”. He suggested that previous governments in Afghanistan did not look at these problems as a whole and therefore they failed. According to him, the Bonn Process was the only platform which was designed to cover all three problems of Afghanistan simultaneously, but the role of regional countries eventually vanished. H.E Ambassador Mosavi concluded that “the stability of Afghanistan is completely an internal issue. Afghanistan will not be secured with a prolonged presence of foreign troops in this country. The security of Afghanistan must be framed through regional dialogues. In two months’ time we will hold a seminar in Iran titled ‘Afghanistan, a territory for regional cooperation’. I hope all of you would participate in that seminar.”

The fourth panelist Mr. Tankel, gave his speech around four important issues pertaining to Afghanistan and wider region including different visions and objectives for regional coordination and cooperation in Afghanistan, US perspective on the geopolitical competition, the ways for making it difficult for terrorists to come back and the way forward to push for more security and stability. “The United States like all other countries wants to see a stable Afghanistan that is in peace with its neighbors. The issue is many of the countries in the region have defined the context of stability in Afghanistan differently and the modalities for reaching it differently. Mr. Tankel emphasized that the United States considers Afghanistan as an important partner. “Afghanistan has become very important partner to the United States and there is an interest in continuing to maintain and to develop that relationship to see Afghanistan as a key partner in the region. Of course, there are ongoing discussions about the costs of continuing to develop such relationship. But, I think there is widespread recognition that Afghanistan has become an important partner as signified for example by the conference of major non-NATO ally status.” He rejected concerns about the US military presence in Afghanistan. “The US and the NATO military are present here as a means to an end; in terms of providing some of the security and space necessary to get to the type of settlement that would enable Afghanistan to flourish and create time and space for economic development, governance and etc. But, there is also recognition of the fact that an ongoing presence can create challenges in terms of Afghan self-sufficiency.” Regarding the geopolitical competition in the region, he named Pakistan as a critical actor but stated that ending Pakistani support for militant groups

like Taliban and Haqanis is not an easy task. He said that the US is ready for cooperation with other regional players in format of counterterrorism. "The United State wants to maintain its involvement in that process and work with China and so there is balance there. Russia and Iran is more complicated. We recognize some of the outreach of the Taliban is driven by the Russian and Iranian concerns about Daesh. But there are questions about the degree to which all of the outreach is taking place within counterterrorism agenda." Concluding his presentation he gave the following recommendations: "1) although we are talking about external actors here, much of what is critical is going to take place inside Afghanistan in terms of governance, economic development, rule of law etc. 2) In terms of external actors, more information sharing, with regard to groups like Daesh is important. Countries like the United States and China are best disposed to play the role to provide verification mechanisms for cooperation between other actors like Afghanistan and Pakistan. But it's going to be limited. 3) Finally, economic integration and the types of dialogues and exchanges that take place here are absolutely critical to understand one another, s perceptions better."

The last panelist Dr. Zongze presented his speech highlighting three observations about Central Asia and Afghanistan in a global context. According to him, firstly, we need to consider changing global trends. "Twenty seven years ago, people would talke about the end of history. People in the west were celebrating after the collapse of the Soviet Union and with the end of the Cold War. Now the end of history comes to an end. Instead, more and more people are talking about Post-Truth, Post-West, and Post-Order. Try to imagine what the world will be look like in twenty seven years in the future. China will surly become number one economy in the world at that time and Asia will be the most important magnetic gravity of the world economy. Secondly, in the past Central Asia has been integrated and after the end of the Cold War we have seen disintegration of Central Asia. Now, it is time for Central Asia to reintegrate itself given the two very important facts: the first one is globalization which is unstoppable and the second phenomenon is connectivity. This connectivity plus globalization and regionalization will really transform Central Asia. Geography will become less important because of globalization. Thirdly, what is China's role here? I think we confront two very serious challenges: one is stability and the other is development. These two intertwine with each other; without stability there will be no development to speak of and development is necessary to counter any destabilizing factor." According to him, "China has made the proposal of Build and Road initiative and this initiative is creating more opportunity for

development and economic grows. China is going to connect East Asia to Europe. That will mobilize more opportunity for Central Asia and all South Asia as well.” He concluded his presentation by expressing China’s readiness to cooperate with Afghanistan and regional countries to combat terrorism.

Question and Answer Session:

Question 1: Ms. Gohar! What do the two governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan need to do for trust building?

Question 2: Ms. Gohar! What is your perspective on Afghan side of the story when it comes to reaching a consensus? What are Pakistan’s demands from Afghanistan for reaching a consensus?

Question 3: Ms. Gohar! We have been trying to improve our economic cooperation with Pakistan but unfortunately we failed and now our trade rate with Pakistan has reduced dramatically. This has also impacted our trade with Central Asia. I think there are two different governments in Pakistan; one is cooperative and the other is destructive. In Afghanistan we are in favor of good regional cooperation. With regard to our trade with Pakistan, there has been no impediment from Afghan side, but our trucks remained stuck outside of Karachi and our traders cannot enjoy the same fortune in Pakistan. How would you explain this double standard?

Question 4: Are we all in the same page in terms of rules of the game? Is there an agreement or a possibility of a consensus across countries from immediate neighbors of Afghanistan to broader region on what terrorism is and how it can be fought and who should be the main lead on that? In the past it was the United States, is there a possibility to change that and hand it over to regional powers?

Comment: Mr. Ambassador! I don’t think that this region is powerful enough to determine its own agenda; therefore the question is that how do we push for better coexistence and more cooperation based on the existing framework which is being set by big powers?

Ms. Gohar: First of all it is important to include women in peace processes, not only as participants but also as leaders. To improve our relationship, ultimately it is the elected representatives who have to take greater role and lead. We cannot just blame each other. We need to play our role whenever we can. We can play a critical role in forming the bridge between Islamabad and Kabul. This role has to be played by the political leaders in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan has moved on and to say that Afghanistan is

only controlled by outside forces is wrong. Internally in Pakistan we have questioned some of these policies and this is a step forward. In my opinion this whole questioning process is important. We have done it in the Parliament and we are doing it outside as well. But it needs a lot of effort from the political leaders in both countries. Peace and development are too important to be left to be handled by the generals. We cannot leave it to the military or civil bureaucracy. We have to take charge. The people's representative will have to take charge.

H.E Ambassador Mosavi: With regard to the comment that we don't have the power to define our region I should say that personally I don't believe in real politics. I accept that we must recognize the reality, but the challenge is to see the world differently according to our own perspective. I think Afghanistan needs to maintain its stability according to its own vision. And this will benefit others too. If Afghanistan's neighbors conclude that they are not being threatened by threats coming from Afghanistan, the situation will be much more stable. Furthermore, we need to have one common definition of terrorism in order to stop it. There is no such thing as good terrorism and bad terrorism. Terrorism in all forms must be defeated.

Mr. Tanel: With regards to the question that are we all in the same page, I think the answer is clearly no. I think all of us are committed to getting closer to understanding the rules that everybody is playing by. But I'm skeptical about our ability to manage the situation. On the question of common definition of terrorism, I do not think anybody has agreed about the definition of terrorism. As there is no agreed definition I am in firm agreement that there should not be this idea of good terrorism and bad terrorism. I think we can look at different relationships that countries have with the various militant and terrorist groups that are operating in this area. There are collaborative relationships between Pakistan and the Taliban and the Haqani network. There are belligerent relationships. Afghanistan and the United States have belligerent relationships with the Taliban and Haqani network. They are fighting against them. But there are more confused relationships; to a degree Russia and Iran have such relationship with Taliban. There is competition and there is potential for cooperation and that's a very complicated relationships. Can we all do a better job of understanding those relationships and the compulsions behind them? Yes. Can we ever entirely bridge those divides? No, because this is not just about people who are using violence. This is political violence, the people who are engaging with the Taliban and ISIS, are doing so for

political reasons. We all can talk about wanting a peaceful Afghanistan. But, we have different conceptions about what that looks like, we have different modalities for reaching it, we have different interests here and they sometime clash. I want to give you a more optimistic answer, but that is an honest answer that doesn't negate the importance of continuing to have dialogue and engagement, to look for mechanisms, to do information sharing, to reduce mistrust, to narrow that trust gap. All of that is absolutely critical. My point is, it's about shrinking space and optimizing, getting the best we can out of cooperation among all of us, rather than aiming for the perfect where we all is going to be entirely in the same page.

Panel Four: Afghanistan: From Great Game to Great Consensus



Moderator:

Mr. Abdul Ghafor Lewal, Acting Minister for Tribal Affairs and Professor at the university, Afghanistan

Speakers:

- Ms. Fawzia Kofi, Member of Parliament, Afghanistan
- Dr. Christine Fair, Professor, Georgetown University, USA
- Dr. Habiba Sarabi, Deputy Chair, High Peace Council, Afghanistan

Mr. Lewal introduced the topic of the session pointing out different aspects of proxy wars in the region. “Somehow the ongoing war in the region is the continuation of the Cold War that can be analyzed through the three circles, namely, the international circle, regional circle and the internal circle. Endorsing H.E ambassador Mosavi’s point of view, he said that “Afghansitan is bridging the three domains of Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia. Therefore, without securing peace in Afghanistan, the crisis in the region will continue to exist. According to him: “Generally all parties involding in proxy war in Afghanistan accept that Afghansitan is the victim of a proxy war, but if you ask them individually none of them accept their role in this proxy war. This is also a fact that the victim itself is to blame for fighting on behalf of others. So, we need to be realistic; in a world where there are no moral values to guide politics, we have to define our own interest and act like a player. As a nation we have to recognize what the big powes are looking for in this region and then we can adjust our strategy accordingly. Instead of fighting them, we need to reach a consensus and interact with them based on our own interest. This is the big consensus which goes beyond the region. We need to coordinate with the big playes.”

The first speaker of the panel Ms. Kofi gave her point of view on the secutiy situation in Afghanistan. According to Ms. Kofi, after 9/11, there was an international consensus to support Afghanistan in fight against terrorism. But this changed after the so called “Arab Spring” and emergence of ISIS. Once again Afghanistan truned into a battle field for proxy wars. “Until 2005 – 2006, Taliban was in the black list, eventually some countries started considering Taliban as a legitimate group and began talking to the Taliban. Of course this partly happened because Afghanistan’s government could not introduce itself as a good representative of national sovereignty.” She concluded her speech by giving two recommendations: “Firstly, we cannot rely on militaristic approach to solve Afghanistan’s crises. Of course the peace process and talking to militant groups can be part of the solution, but we need to improve our economy using regional economic opportunities. We must stop acting like a victim. Secondly, I seggust that in order to push for democratic transition, we need new political leaders and an inclusive policy in Afghanistan... if everybody can participate in politics, we can maintiain stability and security.”

The second speaker of the panel, Dr. Fair, gave her speech on the topic of “Internal Governance Issues in Afghanistan”. At the beginning of her presentation she pointed out the fact that “non-state violence does not exist where people are completely happy with their government. These groups thrive where the state

fails.” Reviewing the history of insurgency in Kashmir and analyzing the role of Pakistani government in creating that insurgency, she explained how malfeasance in governance can feed insurgency. “The average life span of an insurgency is 35 years old and most do not conclude decisively. Most insurgencies just burn out because everyone is too tired of continuing to feed this insurgency. But the one thing that feeds them is malfeasance in governance.” She spoke about the US involvement in corrupting Afghanistan’s affairs through inappropriate and corrupt policies, but emphasized that Afghanistan needs to take responsibility for its betterment. “American contractors have actually engaged in theft of their Afghan partner’s capital, finance and whatever they can get away with. So, I’m in no way suggesting that Afghanistan alone is to blame for its governance problems. But if Afghanistan wants to locate itself as an agent, Afghanistan alone has to figure this out.” Dr. Fair suggested that Afghanistan must seek reliable partners and work on economic sustainability. “You also need to figure out a way to get your resources out of the ground into the market. There has to be a way of Afghanistan being able to pay for itself. But the problem is complex; the kinds of investments to get those resources out of the ground require security. “You are going to need partners like Iran you are going to need partners like India and China. And I’m also going to admit that you need to put those partners in a place to put pressure on the Americans.” With regard to Afghanistan’s relationship with Pakistan, she suggested that if fixing border issue between the two countries helps easing the tensions, it’s good to reach a consensus. But, she warned that Pakistan is not going away anywhere, so Afghanistan needs an international coalition to push back Pakistan and force Islamabad to stop supporting terrorism. She ended her speech by summarizing her recommendations as following: “You need to fix your internal order with respect to governance, you need to think about a process to fix your geography and you really need to cultivate partners beyond the United States, because I don’t think that we are a country that you can rely upon, at least in the near term.”

The third and the last speaker of the panel, Dr. Sarabi spoke about the factors behind political instability in Afghanistan. She started her speech talking about her experiences as governor of Bamian back in 2005. Mentioning various difficulties of her time in office, she appreciated that Bamian is now hosting an important conference. Dr. Sarabi said that poverty and unequal distribution of wealth continued to be the main cause of dissatisfaction among people after the fall of Taliban and creation of the new order. She pointed out that despite international support for Afghanistan, the Afghans failed to establish the rule of

law. “The international community and America came to Afghanistan to promote democracy, security and governance. One of the impediments has been the lack of rule of law. In Afghanistan we never established the rule of law. Some eyewitnesses have told me that in one of provinces, they cultivate narcotics in front of governor’s office. Another problem is the irresponsible armed people. Those people who have arms and political power, control everything.” Dr. Sarabi pointed out that unresponsive local governance undermined the whole government in Afghanistan. She accused the international community of spreading corruption alongside the Afghan government. “The international community has been involved in corruption alongside the Afghan government. For example, while I was the governor of Bamian, international organizations would seal contracts with third parties without seeking my approval. As Bamian was underdeveloped we would let them conduct such projects; but we couldn’t monitor them properly.” She concluded her presentation with some recommendations: “I suggest that for maintaining Afghanistan’s stability we need social justice. Without social justice we cannot achieve peace. For achieving peace the role of women is very important. The government needs to hold the trust of the people. With regard to radicalization, I suggest we must monitor religious schools closely.”

Question and Answer Session:

Question 1: Dr. Fair! What strategy and tactics do you think could bring about better governance in Afghanistan?

Question 2: Without reaching a great consensus, we cannot reach a consensus among regional countries. So, how can we persuade big countries to share big initiatives with smaller countries?

Question 3: Unfortunately, in Afghansitan, we don’t have the capacity to produce political parties or political leaders. Without such capacity how can we push for democratic governance?

Ms. Fawzia Kofi: We have to make our institutions accountable to make them inclusive and transparent. We have to decentralize power. Decentralization is not only about power sharing; it’s also about accountability sharing. It’s about sharing responsibility with people. So, I think we have to change ourselves and be accountable.

Dr. Fair: Turning to this issue of corruption; I’m not going to be the person telling you that corruption is fixable. Clearly corruption exists; so, we are not talking about zero corruption. No country has zero corruption. I look at India; India certainly has corruption but it has livable amount of corruption. One of

the reasons for the genesis of India's livable corruption is that it's coupled with devolution or reservation of power by the states. Different states of India have very different environments. What you are actually doing is that you creating competition across states. Afghanistan has an overly centralizing tendency and of course this involves constitutional change. And with regard to the donors' policy toward rebuilding Afghanistan, for sure they themselves contributed to corruption. The United States wanted to spend more money than there was capacity to absorb. The same thing we saw with provincial reconstruction teams. The system itself was perverse. How can we teach local governance when you have actually an American telling the provincial governor what to do? That's not how you build local governance. With regard to narcotics, there is only one solution and that is bringing Afghanistan into the legal monopoly of narcotics production. Unfortunately, there are three states that have been consistently hindering this, because when Afghanistan enters this market, the price for those narcotics will drop in the open market; these three states are India, Australia and Turkey. India has said for many years we want to do more for Afghanistan. I think the first thing that India should probably do is to help you enter this cartel of legal narcotics production. This is important as you cannot fight narcotics when you are also fighting insurgency; there is nothing you can do to fight narcotics, which is not going to feed insurgency. Then, over a period of time you can try to win Afghanistan off the poppy."

Dr. Sarabi: Unfortunaly, in Afghanistan we don't have national political parties; generally we have got ethnic-centric parties. The role of women is very weak and symbolic especially in political parties. Leaders should represent their people. People must choose themselves. Nowadays, people criticize their leaders for not fullfiling their promises, but on Election Day, they would elect the same figures again and again. People of Afghanistan should gain more knowledge in order to have inclusive national political parties which would care for all ethnic groups and cover all sects of society especially the women.

Panel Five: Outsmarting Terrorists; Indigenous Narratives



Moderator:

Dr. Orzala Ashraf, Director, Afghanistan Research and Evolution Unit (AREU)

Speakers:

- Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, Senior Scholar, Brookings Institution, USA
- Ms. Annika Scheming, Researcher, Boston University, USA
- Mr. Kabir Slehi, Afghan Scholar

In her introductory remarks, Dr. Ashraf talked about various anti-terrorism methods that have been conducted in fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. She mentioned the fact that while some of these methods proved to be useful, some other methods have proven to be based on false justification. According to her, from such a perspective we need to find out about the root causes of terrorism. “While we are trying to track down the resources of terrorism we shall look at ideological aspects of terrorism as well.”

The first speaker of the panel Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown started her presentation emphasizing that for outsmarting terrorists we need to know the key essential issues that a militant group needs to resolve to

sustain its activity. She stressed that “In fact we are nowhere close to easily finding how to outsmart the terrorists”. According to her militant groups need to resolve several issues including “a) they need to resolve how they are going to provide the physical resources to the insurgency. b) They need to resolve sufficient cohesion. And c) they need to resolve how to recruit and under the best of circumstances how to maintain a sufficient base and hopefully expanding base among the population.” Dr. Brown said that Pakistan’s support for the Taliban was substantial and very complicated. “Pakistan’s contested relationship with the Taliban comes from its strategic understandings both with respect to Afghanistan as well as with respect to India, and also from its internal limitations. I think it is the assumption of this perfect control that misguides policy toward thinking that it is very easy to turn off that relationship.” She emphasized that Taliban’s financial backup is highly diversified that includes poppy production, getting financial resources from the Middle East, and taxing other resources available in Afghanistan. “The Taliban does not simply tax poppy. It taxes just about every other resources that exist in Afghanistan, from minerals to even government funds that go to development project.” According to her given the fact that poppy production gives the Taliban the potential to finance itself and provide livelihood for the common people, the policy of eradication of narcotics is not very helpful. She stressed that the government of Afghanistan needs to improve governance. “The key problem is that criminality, lack of rule of law and highly predatory and highly abusive nature of governance that gives the Taliban the capacity to entrench itself to persist despite its brutality and mistreatment of minorities and the whole population. The key task for the Afghan government and the Afghan people to break out of the conflict dynamics is to focus on how to improve governance.” Dr. Brown concluded her presentation saying that there are two possible ways out of war including negotiations with Taliban that takes time and waiting for self-destruction of the Taliban. “The holding pattern will only work if the Afghan security forces do not continue to wither and if the political system starts developing some capacity to provide better governance.”

A follow-up question put forward by the moderator: To what extent the internal fragmentation of militant groups is going to effect the current situation in Afghanistan?

Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown: There is an easy assumption that fragmentation means the end of conflict. When fragmentation happens in the absence of good governance and potent and unified security forces,

often conflict becomes more fragmented. This is one of the possibilities that we could be heading for in Afghanistan.

The second speaker of the panel Mr. Kabir Salehi gave his presentation on the topic of “How to Use Islamic Values to Fight Fundamentalism and Terrorism.” At the beginning of his speech Mr. Salehi emphasized that in Afghanistan Sunni fundamentalism is the main problem that must be dealt with. He said that in history there are two major periods that Sunni fundamentalism emerged as a threat; once in the early days of Islam in the name of “Khawarij” (a group of fundamentalists who started to reject other Muslims as infidels) and next during the 20th century after the collapse of Ottoman Empire with the emergence of political Islam. According to him, the same Salafi theology has been trending among Sunni fundamentalists in these two periods and in order to fight them we need to establish a moderate theology capable of logical reasoning. He named Abu Hanifa as a role model who could challenge Salafi movement by using his own theology against Khawarij. “In recent years in Afghansitan we had a military approach toward radical movements but we didn’t pay attention to theological aspects of it. When a suicide attack happens, some religious scholars would condemn it saying that this kind of action is not approved by Islam. But condemning is not enough. We need a greater theological system to encourage non-violence and fight religious radicalism in modern form.”

Then, the moderator asked a follow-up question: What are some of practical recommendations for countering religious radicalism in Afghanistan?

Answering the follow-up question Mr. Salehi said that “we need to creat a national discourse against radicalism and in order to do so, we need to design a national strategy for fighting radicalism. Such national strategy should contain three approaches including 1) Preventing approach; this must be focused on areas where radical groups recruit people. Religious schools must be monitored and their curriculum must be standardized by the government. 2) Retribution approach; radicalism must be crimilized. 3) Rehabilitation approach and Reintegration approach; in order to bring back radicalized people to normal life the government must have rehabilitation plans for former detainees.

The last speaker of the panel, Ms. Annika Scheming talked about “the role of Sufism in Afghanistan” based on a research project she had conducted earlier in Afghanistan. She pointed out the fact that Sufism in Afghanistan has a rich history affecting the people in multiple ways. “Sufi saints occupied

positions as mediators between Mongol and Herat nobles in 13th century. The first ruler of a broadly united Afghanistan, Dost Mohammad Khan is buried in a shrine complex in heart. The Sufis were advisors to the Kings and politicians. The Sufi groups became Mujahedeen in the 1980s showing a different side of Sufism altogether as well. All of those show how present actually Sufism is in society and politics in Afghanistan in its multiple ways.” Ms. Scheming explained how important poetry has been in Sufi schools of thought as poetry turned into a methodology for learning and teaching. “These primary texts - written in Persian poetry can easily be understood and contain normative principles of Islamic believes. They are part of oral tradition which can then be used to examine certain normative frameworks; ethical, Islamic claims and their different forms. This is not only happening through Madrasa and mosque teaching, but also through the everyday life.” According to her, this tradition of reading poetry books was eventually replaced by focusing on Quran and Hadis and poetry citation became limited to “Khanqahs” (Sufi sacred places). She concluded that nowadays Sufi school of thought is under various criticism forcing Sufi affiliates to defend themselves through NGO type organizations.”What is interesting is that these groups are community led effort. To some degree, it may be comparable to the Western concept of having an “ecumenical approach”. But at the same time it’s much broader, because they are actually trying to impact what they see as public sphere and to make it more tolerant towards their own view. On the other hand we also have them organized as formal kind of NGO type organization that is recognized by the government. So, there is kind of a hybrid happening in how they engage in society in some ways.”

A follow-up question put forward by the moderator: In terms of Sufism and Terrorism, we know that some of the Taliban members are Sufis, how do you explain the contradiction?

Ms. Annika Scheming: “Sufism in the way of thinking has not always been as peaceful. Of course if you have a leader and followers, it’s easy to basically mobilize people to fight. It’s basically a tool which can be used in one way or another. Just like any other tool; just like Islam, can be used in one way of another. Having said this, it’s actually interesting to look into differences between different insurgency groups as well. Because the patterns actually vary when we look into what happens in Syria or Iraq, where we have direct demolition of shrines and killing Sufis. I’m actually in the middle of my research. But, one of the interesting things is that even during the Taliban time big Sufi shrines were not destroyed. They put guards in front of them, trying to deter people from going there and building their own mosque next to them, teaching their own ideas. We know Taliban basically as a Pashtun movement and a lot of Pashtuns

have strong connections to different Sufi “Pirs” (elderly saints). So, there is a culture connection to some degree. Right now the situation became much more complex as we see different groups who have different cultural attachment to Sufism.”

Question and Answer Session:

Question 1: Mr. Salehi! With regard to establishing a grand theological framework, don’t you think that Taliban tried to establish the same culture?

Question 2: How can the Islamic countries reach a consensus with regard to a common definition of radicalism?

Question 3: I think Hanafism and Sufism are products of foreign intelligent agencies. Right now we got several Islamic sects, how can we reach a national consensus and consolidate them into one school of thought?

Comment 1: The problem is that terrorism is used as foreign policy tool; that’s why we don’t have a common definition of terrorism.

Comment 2: Terrorist groups such as Taliban, ISIS and Alqaeda, emerged because of lack of tolerance in our societies. Furthermore, there are two types of Sufims in Afghanistan; one is made by intelligent agencies and the other is an indigenous product which consolidated historical believes existing in our region.

Mr. Kabir Salehi answering the questions: When I say that we need to create a national discourse I mean that all of us in everyday life have to fight radicalism. The media, writers, scholars and people from different walks of life, should participate in this national discourse. Some would blame Pakistan for producing terrorists, but we need to think of ourselves. We can do two things; one is preventing our students to go to Pakistani Madrassas and we have to improve our narrative about Islam to produce a moderate version of Islamic theology. If we can build a non-violent theology, we would pave the way for reconciliation between all Islamic sects. Right now all Islamic sects reject each other. In this regard, there is no difference between the Shia and the Sunni.

Panel Six: The Way Forward



Moderator:

Ms. Jyoti Malhotra, Consulting Editor, Indian Express News Paper

Speakers:

- Dr. Nasir Ahmad Andisha, Deputy Minister, Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan
- Dr. Kosimsha Iskandarov, Director, Centre of Regional and Afghanistan Studies, Tajikistan
- H.E. Ambassador Ronald Neumann, Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, USA

In her introductory remarks, Ms. Malhotra emphasized that “This session encapsulates all the remarks shared by participants over the course of this conference on the nature of relation between Afghanistan and Central Asian states. From all statements as well as field realities, the Afghan-Central Asia relation seems as much complex as those of Afghanistan-South Asia. Thus, it is an important and strategic task for Afghanistan to rediscover its central position in the heart of Asia and play its role consistent with those of its geopolitical position. The outcome of past 15 years attempts of Afghanistan to meet this end steer a new hope and optimism about future if this country. Afghanistan, though slowly, but gradually has taken control of its situation in the heart of Asia, particularly the control of relation with its neighboring countries. However, it does not mean that the road ahead is plain to go further. The country still agonizes from enormous challenges such is violent terrorism which is not limited merely to Afghanistan. So, how to

deal with this problem greatly impacts the efforts of Afghanistan to gain its centrality in the region. Plus, as regional and international players like USA, China, Pakistan, Iran and so forth, in addition to the regional and international interest, have their own priorities, it is responsibility of each country including Afghanistan to effectively leverage with the situation. “

The first speaker of the panel, Dr. Andisha, gave his presentation focusing on a historical evolution of Afghanistan government. “My personal views incline towards the optimistic outlooks on future of Afghanistan. The country has suffered from a long term and catastrophic conflicts for many decades. Yet, the ongoing process and condition consist of a positive message for the future and portray this note that with hard work and effective strategies at the national, regional and international level, the country can raise itself from the issues it grieves at the present time.” He stressed that for moving forward Afghanistan needs to learn from the past and undertake future oriented policies. “There is no need to follow the doctrine of historical determinism. Instead, hopeful sights about the future of the country bear enough courage and confidence to not only overcome the current problems but also take steps forward for advancement and stability of Afghanistan and the wider region. The major bases of such expectant approach towards future of Afghanistan lays on radical changes happened during civil wars and post 2001 realm of the country. Before the change, Afghanistan was hurt by authoritarian and dictatorship political settings which were rooted in great deal to unique social context of the country. Creation of relative balance among tribalism, royalism and Islamism were key attributes of social context of the time. But due to revolutionary changes in the political realm as well as social context of the country, such balance was distracted. The distraction revives the hope that being used with the radical changes, people might not resist new trends of changes for the future of Afghanistan. In particular, with the current democratic political structure of Afghanistan the task of finding new solution for improvement of the country has become easier to fulfill.” With respect to the regional involvement, he emphasized the need for catching up with the new opportunities to consider Afghanistan as a bridge for regional connectivities. “With respect to the regional involvement, there are also two types of interpretations. The first type is to see Afghanistan as a focal point of contests. Yet, there is another way to see it as a hub for regional countries, mainly Central Asia. Leading the regional players to ascent their approach on either side, depends on the nature and quality of game, played by Afghanistan. If Afghanistan plays a good game, then regional countries will look at it as a hub or corridor to connect Central Asia to South Asia. Nevertheless, if the

quality of such game is poor, then it is easy to guess that the look towards Afghanistan will be as a place where most of challenges lay on.”

The second speaker of the panel, H.E Ambassador Neumann, talked about the need for improvement of Afghan National Army and good governance. He said that while the US remains committed to support Afghanistan, it's the Afghans who must determine their future. “There is less doubt that the US policies towards Afghanistan suffer from confusion and complexities. Hence, I will talk little about such confusion. Nonetheless, it is very clear that what the US wants from Afghanistan is a situation where it does not face a threat. To be so, Afghanistan needs to have strong state, army and economy. Since 2001, views of the US administration have changed in notable manner. In the recent policies of the USA, Afghanistan has low priority. Afghanistan did not come as an issue in the country's latest election and gradually disappeared from the national news of USA. There is a doubt that 1000 people voted for candidates (Clinton or Trump) for their programs on Afghanistan. Many people in the US do doubt about success of US project in Afghanistan. They think that Afghanistan will be a mess like it was before. Currently, the US policy concentrates mainly into a military solution than a political one. Finding a political solution is hard to achieve. Despite the fact that there is a great deal of doubt in America about the US policies on Afghanistan, such sentiment is not enough strong to put pressure on the US policy towards Afghanistan. The current administration in the US is free to make decision about Afghanistan. Such freedom keeps this hope alive that the US will help Afghanistan overcome its major challenges and stand on its own feet. The US will keep more troops in Afghanistan and will stop pressurizing Afghanistan to implement projects under strict timelines. The current US administration wants to have a clear policy towards the region (Russia, Iran, and Pakistan) including Afghanistan. As concluding thoughts, there are two points. One is about time limitation and deadline which was a big obstacle of US Project on Afghanistan. This is very good news for Afghanistan that US administration will not limit its projects based on rigid deadlines. Putting pressure to have effective performance including military is the second positive thought. There is a desire in the US administration to make the Afghan government perform better. Nonetheless, it is important to note that with regards to political solution, the US has neither enough wisdom nor skills to manage local politics the way many people think the US can do. America is a big country and is distracted by many issues around the world. The country has many power centers. In addition, the US is not in the

habit of giving excessive authority to its Ambassadors to do whatever they want. This is because giving too much authority will raise the chance of creating extra headache including war for the country. Thus, it is Afghanistan's duty to decide about the future of its politics. But the US will remain in Afghanistan and keep its assistance going on to help the country achieve its goals."

The last speaker of the panel Mr. Iskandarov, highlighted the current geopolitical situation around Afghanistan saying that there is a need for strategic consensus among the regional and international players. "Historically, geopolitical location of Afghanistan caused the country to bear many wars since very long ago. Many super powers preferred Afghanistan as their encounter ground. In mid-20th century there was a balance of interest between super powers. However, such balance did not keep itself for a longer time and the problem created when one side bid to distract this balance. With increase in number of global players, revitalizing such balance got more intricate. At the present time, not only countries, but also global mafia groups, media giants, radical terrorist organizations and trading companies are involved into the game in Afghanistan. This problem further complicated the challenge of Afghanistan. Therefore, without agreement among these players, the war and conflict in Afghanistan will continue for indefinite time. Terrorism is another issue. In 2001 there was a relative international agreement to defeat terrorism. But overtime, the campaign weakened. Now, new wave of terrorism emerged and succeeded to deteriorate the regional condition including Afghanistan. Taking as example, 20 years ago, we could travel on road to Afghanistan, but now due to increasing insecurity in northern parts of Afghanistan, we even cannot travel to our own border areas. ..There is a great rumor that some governments misuse terrorist groups for their own political agendas and goals. The complicated part of such game is that some of these groups don't know that they are misused by others. Pakistan is a key game player in Afghanistan issue. The main solution of Afghanistan challenge is to initiate a serious talk between Afghanistan and Pakistan with desire to see what is the main cause of two countries' problem with each other and how can they be solved. There are thousands of Madrasas in Pakistan who create problem. Rivalry between Pakistan and India is another source of challenge and Afghanistan is sacrificed in this rivalry. Pointing to views of the Central Asian states towards Afghanistan he said that they do not have unified views towards Afghanistan. Yet, in Tajikistan, there is a notable public and official belief that peace in Afghanistan is in the interest of Tajikistan. Tajikistan believes in win-win policy towards Afghanistan. Considering this belief

Tajikistan started expanding its economic and trade relation with Afghanistan. The country has already taken serious steps for this aim. Tajikistan has three strategies for its economic development. First, to pave the way for land route that will cross Afghanistan. Second, to export energy which again depends on a peaceful Afghanistan. Tajikistan has a great source of energy which the state wants to export to South Asia through Afghanistan. There are some ambitious plans about development of agriculture which in return will benefit Afghanistan as well. But the main problem is security. Insecurity has touched Tajikistan borders. Henceforth, the Government of Tajikistan is trying very hard to help Afghanistan solve this problem. I hope that the Afghan people use their national pride (the pride which defeated great empires) to bring peace in their country.”

Question and Answer Session:

The participants raised questions about the future of US involvement in Afghanistan; problems of extremist groups in the Central Asian states and their infiltration to Afghanistan and finally how Afghanistan overcomes its current challenges. With regards to the US role, the US Ambassador assured that the US will continue helping Afghanistan and will not withdraw from the country in due course. He also shared his hope about future generation of Afghanistan that will greatly contribute to stability and advancement of the country. Pointing to the threat of terrorist groups in the Central Asian states, Mr. Iskandarov said that presence and influence of terrorist groups in his country is exaggerated and they are not equipped with enough power to become a serious threat for Afghanistan and the region.

At the end, The Director of Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies thanked local officials of Bamian for their hospitatli and arrangement for successful conduction of the conference in the province. He also thanked The U.S. embassy Kabul for their financial support and insisted in further cooperation and support between the two entities. He also encourages participants to attend the institute’s future programs as well.

Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda

Thursday July 13

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| 16:00 | Guests' arrival from Kabul |
| 19:00 | Informal dinner/private time |

Friday July 14

Opening Session

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| 08:30-09:30 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recitation of Holy Koran • National Anthem • Hymns of Ansari • Sufi Music • Welcoming remarks by DG of AISS • Welcoming remarks by H.E. Tahir Zohair, Governor of Bamyan • Keynote Speech by H.E. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, CEO of I.R of Afghanistan |
| Panel I: The World in Transition; Return of Geopolitics; Evolution of Terrorism | | |
| 09:30-11:00 | Moderator | Mr. Lotfullah Najafizada, Head of Tolo News, Afghanistan |
| | Speakers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Amrullah Saleh, Chairperson, Afghanistan Green Trends (AGT) 2. Dr. Nazif Shahrani, Professor of Indiana University, USA 3. Mr. Akmaljon Abdullayev, Researcher, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Uzbekistan |
| Open Discussion/Q-A Session | | |
| 11:00-11:30 | Tea Break | |
| Panel II: New Great Game: Central Asian States: Stakeholders or Passive Observers | | |
| 11:30-13:00 | Moderator | Dr. Vladimir Paramonov, Director, Analytical Project Central Eurasia, Uzbekistan |
| | Speakers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Abdullah Rahnoma, Senior Researcher, Center for Strategic Studies under the President, Tajikistan 2. Dr. Iskander Akylbayev, Senior Researcher, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies 3. Mr. Batyr Mamedov, Scholar, Turkmenistan 4. Mr. Zhunus Yergaliyev, Political Counsellor of Kazakhstan Embassy in Kabul |
| Open Discussion/Q-A Session | | |
| 13:00-14:00 | Lunch | |
| Panel III: External Powers: Rules of the Game | | |
| 14:00-15:30 | Moderator | Ms. Adela Raz, Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs of Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan |
| | Speakers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H.E. Ambassador Seyed Rasoul Mosave, Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran 2. Ms. Bushra Gohar, Vice President of Pakistan's Awami National Party 3. Dr. Ruan Zongze, Vice President of China Institute of International Studies 4. Dr. Vladimir Boyko, Director, Asiatic-Analytical Center, Russia 5. Mr. Stephen Tankel, Senior Fellow, Center for a New American Security |
| Open Discussion/Q-A Session | | |

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| 15:30-16:00 | Tea Break | |
| Panel IV: Afghanistan: From Great Game to Great Consensus | | |
| 16:00-17:30 | Moderator | Mr. Abdul Ghafor Lewal, Acting Minister for Tribal Affairs and Professor at the university, Afghanistan |
| | Speakers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Fawzia Kofi, Member of Parliament, Afghanistan Dr. Christine Fair, Professor, Georgetown University, USA Dr. Habiba Sarabi, Deputy Chair, High Peace Council, Afghanistan |
| Open Discussion/Q-A Session | | |
| 19:00-21:00 | Official Reception by the Governor of Bamyan & Cultural Program | |

Saturday July 15

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| 08:30-09:00 | Traditional Sufi Music | |
| Panel V: Outsmarting Terrorists; Indigenous Narratives | | |
| 9:00 – 10:30 | Moderator | Dr. Orzala Ashraf, Director, Afghanistan Research and Evolution Unit (AREU) |
| | Speakers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, Senior Scholar, Brookings Institution, USA Ms. Annika Scheming, Researcher, Boston University, USA Mr. Kabir Slehi, Afghan Scholar |
| Open Discussion/Q-A Session | | |
| 10:30 -11:00 | Tea Break | |
| Panel VI: The Way forwards | | |
| 11:00 -13:00 | Moderator | Ms. Jyoti Malhotra, Consulting Editor, Indian Express News Paper |
| | Speakers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Nasir Ahmad Andisha, Deputy Minister, Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan Dr. Kosimsha Iskandarov, Director, Centre of Regional and Afghanistan Studies, Tajikistan H.E. Ambassador Ronald Neumann, Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, USA |
| Open Discussion/Q-A Session | | |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch | |
| Departure to Kabul | | |

Annex 2: List of Participants

| Name | Designation | Organization |
|--|--|---|
| Islamic Republic of Afghanistan | | |
| Abdullah, Abdullah | CEO | Afghan National Unity Government |
| Andisha, Nasir Ahmad | Deputy Minister of Administrative Affairs | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Asey, Tamim | Deputy Minister for Policy and Strategy | Ministry of Defense |
| Amiri, Hadeia | Official | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Azimi, Mohammad Naeem | | Political Expert |
| Bek, Matin | Deputy | National Directorate of Security (NDS) |
| Fawzi, Habibullah | Member | Afghanistan High Peace Council |
| Forugh, Tabish | Activist | Civil Society |
| Hafezi, Azarakhsh | Media Advisor | Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries |
| Haidari, M. Ashraf | Director-General of Policy and Strategy | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Kabiri, Nazir | Advisor | Ministry of Finance |
| Kawa, Parwiz | Editor-in- Chief | Hasht-e- Subh Daily Newspaper |
| Khalid, Abdulhadi | Senior Advisor | Ministry of Interior Affairs |
| Khenjani, Abdullah | Head | 1TV Media |
| Koofi, Fawzia | Member | Parliament |
| Liwal, Abdulghafoor | Acting Minister | Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs |
| Najafizada, Lutfullah | Head | TOLO News |
| Nemat, Orzal Asharf | Director | Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) |
| Niazi, Rafiullah | Director | Center for Regional Studies |
| Noyan, Abbas | | Political Expert |
| Paryani, Nazari | Editor-in- Chief | Mandagar Daily Newspaper |
| Rafee, Aziz | Executive Director | Afghanistan Civil Society Forum |
| Raz, Adela | Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Rezaee, Shah Gul | Member | Parliament |
| Saihon, Saifuddin | Professor | Kabul University |
| Saleh, Amrullah | Former Director/Chair Person | National Directorate of Security (NDS)/Afghan Green Trend |
| Salehi, Abdul Kabir | Researcher | Afghanistan High Peace Council |
| Sarabi, Habiba | Deputy Chair | |
| Sarfaraz, Matin | Deputy Passport Directorate General | Ministry of Interior Affairs |
| Sediqi, Sediq | Director | Afghanistan's Government Media and Information Center |
| Sharifi, Arian | Director of Strategic Threat Assessment | Afghanistan Office of the National Security Council |
| Sherjan, Hasina | Founder and CEO | AID for Afghanistan Education |
| Sidiqi, M. Rafi Rafiq | Deputy CEO | Khorshid TV |
| Spanta, Rangin Dadfar | Former Foreign Minister and NSA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, NSA |
| Sobhrang, Soraya | Commissioner | Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) |
| Spinghar, Jandad | Director | Election and Transparency Watch Organization of Afghanistan |
| Wafaezadah, M. Qasem | Deputy Director General on Policy and Planning | Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority |
| Yarmand, Mirza Mohammad | | Military Expert |
| Zarbaifiyan, Fahima | Officer | World Bank |
| Bamyan Guests | | |
| Zaher, Mohammad Tahir | Governor | Bamyan Province |
| Ahmadi, Hussaindad | Civil Society Activist | Civil Society |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Ahmadi, Mohammad Yasin | Chairman | Bamyan Ullamah Council |
| Aliyar, Mohammad Sadiq | Director | Bamyan Provincial Peace Committee |
| Aman, Mohammad Aman | Mayor | Bamyan Municipality |
| Asghar, Mohammad Zahir | Chief Finance Officer | Bamyan provincial Office |
| Ataee, Soghra | Civil Society Activist | Civil Society |
| Ekhlaqi, Abdulrahim | Head | Bamika University |
| Ettehaj, Amin | Lecturer | Bamyan University |
| Ezadyar, Abdul Mobin | Police Chief | Bamyan Province |
| Joya, Amin | Deputy | Bamyan University |
| Kamawi, Wafiullah | Head | Bamyan Provincial Directorate of Health |
| Khawari, Masooma | Chancellor | Bamyan University |
| Motamadi, Zahra | Head | Bamyan Independent Human Rights Commission |
| Mozahari, Mohammad Yosouf | Head | Bamyan Provincial Council |
| Ranjbar, Hassan | Head | Bamyan Political Parties |
| Rostazadah, Hayatullah | Director | Bamyan National Security |
| Salik, Karima | Director | Bamyan Women Affairs |
| Shafaq, Musa | Lecturer | Bamyan University |
| Soroosh, Salman Ali | Director | Bamyan Province Court of Appeal |
| Tahiri, Ghawsuddin | Director | Bamyan Provincial Court |
| Yasin, Mohammad Hashim | Commander | Bamyan Province Coordinating Zone |
| Zaki, Ismaeel | Civil Society Activist | Civil Society |
| United States of America | | |
| Brown, Vanda Felbab | Senior Fellow | Brookings Institution |
| Fair, C. Christine | Associate Professor | George Town University |
| Neumann, Ronald E. | President | American Academy of Diplomacy |
| Schmeding, Annika | PhD Candidate | Department of Anthropology, Boston University |
| Shahrani, Nazif M. | Professor of Anthropology | Indiana University |
| Tankel, Stephen | Adjunct Senior Fellow | Center for a New American Security |
| People's Republic of China | | |
| Zongze, Ruan | Executive Vice President | China Institute of International Studies |
| Peng, YAN | Deputy Chief of Political Division | Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Kabul |
| Xiaotong , Wang | Third Secretary | Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Kabul |
| Arab Republic of Egypt | | |
| Fouda, Ibrahim | Deputy Head of Mission | Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt |
| El Sherif, Walid | Counselor | Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt |
| Republic of India | | |
| Malhotra, Jyoti | Consulting Editor | India Express |
| Jaiswal, Pramod | Senior Fellow | Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) |
| Ravi, Vasudev | Second Secretary | Embassy of India, Kabul |
| Islamic Republic of Iran | | |
| Mosavi, Sayed Rasoul (Amb) | Advisor | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| Islamic Republic of Pakistan | | |
| Gohar, Bushra | Central Vice President | Awami National Party |
| Russian Federation | | |
| Boyko, Vladimir | Director | Asiatic expert-analytical center, Altai State University |
| Kulakov, Oleg | Lecturer | Military University of the Russian Defense Ministry |
| Republic of Tajikistan | | |
| Iskandarov, Kosimsha | Director | Centre of Regional and Afghanistan Studies |
| Hakim, Abdullohi Rahnamo | Head of Department of Analyzing and Forecasting of Foreign Policy | Centre for Strategic Researches under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan |
| Davlatov, Rakhmadkarim | | Journalist |

| Republic of Turkmenistan | | |
|--|--|--|
| Mamedov, Batyr | Chairman of the International Relations Committee | Public Sport Organization |
| Republic of Kazakhstan | | |
| Yergaliyev, Zhunus | Consul | Kazakhstan Embassy |
| Akylbayev, Iskander | Senior Research Fellow | |
| Republic of Uzbekistan | | |
| Paramonov, Vladimir | Director | Analytical Project Central Eurasia |
| Abdullayev, Akmaljon | Researcher | World University of Economy and Diplomacy |
| Republic of Turkey | | |
| ÇINAR, Ali Ergun | Coordinator | Turkish Coordination and Cooperation Agency (TiKA) |
| North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) | | |
| Armstrong, James | Political Advisor to NATO Senior Civilian Representative | Resolute Support HQ |
| Medeiros, Sheila | Military Assistant to the NATO DSCR | Resolute Support HQ |
| United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia | | |
| Pupols, Armands | Political Affairs Officer | UNRCCA |
| United Nations Assistant Nation for Afghanistan (UNAMA) | | |
| Razzoq, Olamgir | Political Affairs Officer | UNAMA |

Annex 3: Links of the National and International Media covered the conference

International Media:

- [DW](#)
- [Payame-Aftab](#)
- [BBC](#)
- [YJC](#)
- [Fergana News](#)

National:

- [TOLO News](#)
- [Etilaat Roz](#)
- [8am](#)
- [Mandegar Daily](#)
- [Ariana News](#)
- [One Tv News](#)
- [Salam Watandar](#)
- [Dari VOA](#)
- [Kabul Times](#)

Annex 4: ACAD-IV logo and photos

ACAD-IV Logo



Official Reception & Cultural Program



Conference Photo



End

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