

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES (IDSA)

Biweekly Review *Of*

Dari/Persian and Pashto Media from Afghanistan

November 01-14, 2001

Translations by Mirwais Balkhi

**1-Development Enclave
Rao Tula Ram Marg
Delhi Cantt, New Delhi-110010**

November 01-14, 2011

Focus: Istanbul Conference

Istanbul played host to a one-day conference on Afghanistan on 2 November 2011. The conference was attended by representatives from 26 countries as well as from international organisations like NATO, the EU and the United Nations. The declaration at the end of the conference recognised that the “promotion of a sound regional cooperation in the ‘Heart of Asia’ will create the conditions for peace and called for building a “new mindset of cooperation in the region”.

According to media reports, the conference could not achieve much and some of the countries in the immediate neighbourhood— Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran— came together to oppose the American plans to maintain permanent military presence in Afghanistan beyond 2014. India supported the idea of reconciliation “on the basis of the Constitution of Afghanistan” and held that it “should be an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-driven process”. India also endorsed the objectives of Istanbul conference to form a new regional mechanism which would “bring regional countries together on an inclusive platform to address the common challenges facing the region, and [work] towards cooperative confidence-building measures and solutions”.

However, the proposal for forming a “new regional mechanism”, which would have included India, was opposed by Pakistan, which, on the contrary, emphasised the role of existing regional organisations like the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to address security and economic issues of the region. The Afghan President stressed the need for dismantling terrorist networks/sanctuaries outside Afghan borders, and held that “unless regional cooperation is assured to address the core and root of this issue, peace in Afghanistan will remain elusive”.

Some of the reactions from the Farsi/Pashto media have been carried in this edition of the biweekly review.

Istanbul Conference is different

Hadi Sadeghi, a freelance commentator in the Farsi media on Afghanistan wrote in *Daily Afghanistan*: Several international conferences have been held on the Afghanistan crisis. We could not achieve much in all the previous conferences, however, Istanbul International Conference was quite different. ***It has generated some sense of optimism because of the positive role played by Turkey***, which hosted this meeting. Turkey has gained the trust of both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and this is important..... ***Such meetings can pave the way for convergence of the views of different regional countries on economic and political cooperation*** and ensure security and stability in Afghanistan.

For details see: http://www.dailyafghanistan.com/remark_detail.php?post_id=122797

Istanbul Conference was mere continuation of the old game of “time pass”

*The conference was nothing but “time pass”. If the government and people of Afghanistan think that such games can bring positive change in the country, then they are mistaken. The outcome of the conference was nothing more than a promise to the government that efforts will be undertaken to bring stability and security to Afghanistan. However, **in the last eight years, we have seen enough games being played out in Afghanistan and this is just another game which will not yield anything positive for Afghanistan.***

For details see : <http://jawedan.com>

Istanbul: A Wrong Option!

Mohammad Ibrahim Tahiryani, former Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan and political analyst said in an interview that, “holding conferences outside Afghanistan does not solve the problems of this country.....**if there is any place outside Afghanistan where this issue can be discussed, it is either Islamabad or Tehran.** Holding this conference in Istanbul was a wrong option.”

For details see: http://razaqmamoon.blogspot.com/2011/11/blog-post_9470.html

Karim Khalili’s Interview with BBC Persian

Date: 26 October 2011, Time: 05:30 p.m

Q. What are your expectations from the Istanbul Conference. Do you think there would be positive achievements?

We hope that the countries of the region would make their views explicit in the Istanbul Conference. We will also communicate our views to them. **In a coordinated manner we will have to move towards the Bonn II Conference.**

Q. Afghanistan’s strategic partnership with India has made Pakistan unhappy and at the same time the government is going to sign a similar strategic partnership agreement with the US, which will displease Iran. What do you think government of Afghanistan should be doing to to strike a balance between the regional and international powers?

I think **the disagreements of some countries are well-known. That has been there for a long time. The strategic partnerships of Afghanistan with any country, whether it is situated closer to it or far away from it, should be seen in light of the areas of cooperation covered in these agreements.** Our neighbours take their positions depending on how they look at the nature of our engagements. **But we always give this guarantee to our neighbours (Pakistan and Iran) that our strategic partnership agreement with India or any similar agreement with the US in future, would not be directed against any of our neighbours.** No country can use Afghanistan’s soil against any other country.

Q. After the assassination of Burhanuddin Rabbani, there is no clear policy of reconciliation. The government of Afghanistan is issuing different statements; one day they talk about reconciliation with Pakistan and the other day with Taliban. Is there any clear policy regarding reconciliation with Taliban?

We have issued several statements that we are open to the idea of talking to all those who join reconciliation process, but after the martyrdom of Professor Buranuddin Rabbani, there is a difference in our approach. ***We are asking ourselves, "Peace with whom? Are we making peace with Taliban or Pakistan?"***

Q. Is it clear to you now, with whom you are going to make peace?

Naturally, ***after the martyrdom of Rabbani we have reached the conclusion that we have to talk to our friends in Pakistan. We expect our friends in Pakistan to tell us if Taliban are independent of their control.*** If not then we have to cooperate with each other to solve this crisis. We are suffering from terrorism and radicalism as much as Pakistan. It is clear.

Q. Exactly. This is what Pakistan is also claiming, that they are victims of terrorism. But what exactly do you expect from Pakistan?

We expect Pakistan's support in our reconciliation process. ***We all know what the problems are. Look at the Quetta Shura. It is known to all and it is based there in Quetta and Quetta is in Pakistan.*** Therefore, we want friendship with Pakistan but ***we also cannot tolerate the fact that these terrorists are coming from that country and killing our citizens. These terrorists do not belong to Afghanistan. We don't see this much of strength in the Taliban inside Afghanistan.*** There are terrorist sanctuaries outside Afghanistan in Pakistan. ***I don't comment on whether these groups have their links with the government of Pakistan or outside that, but we all know that the problems lay outside the borders of Afghanistan.*** We expect Pakistan to help us in identifying these groups.

Q. Don't you think that Pakistan, so far, has clarified its position vis-à-vis the Taliban?

During Hillary Clinton's visit to Pakistan, ***they have accepted that the problems lay inside Pakistan. But so far there have not done anything.*** There is a need to provide us with exact information on the Taliban groups inside Pakistan. Until now the people of Afghanistan are not convinced about the statements being issued by Pakistan about Taliban. ***I hope that Pakistan takes a strong position on the issue and cooperate with us in our endeavour to eliminate this dangerous phenomenon of terrorism which threatens to consume this region and the world.*** We have to stop shouting slogans and take concrete action.

Web: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2011/10/111025_142_vid_afgh_khalili_iv.shtml

Developments in Afghanistan

A New Political Party is announced in Afghanistan

A new political party was formed in Afghanistan on 3 November 2011. This party is called ***Right and Justice Party (Hizb-e-Haq O Adalat)***. The founders of the party are mostly former members of parliament and erstwhile cabinet ministers. ***Hanif Atmar, the former Afghan home minister is the most renowned face*** amongst the founder members of the party. Atmar said in an interview, “We formed this party so that we can fight in a democratic way.”

For details see: <http://www.afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=28931>

Hindus Demand Land Restitution in Khost

The Hindu/Sikh minority population of Khost province in southern Afghanistan in a gathering demanded restitution of their lands from the government of Afghanistan. They said that they were legitimate owners of hectares of lands which were seized by local strongmen during the civil war in Afghanistan. Sikhs have returned to Khost after years of migration and are now settling down in Khost once again.

For details see : <http://www.afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=28950>

In the Second phase of Security Transformation 17 Provinces will be handed over to ANSF

International troops are ready to transfer the security of 17 provinces of Afghanistan to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in the second phase of the transformation policy. However, so far, there has been no announcement from either the government of Afghanistan or the international troops as to security of which provinces will be transferred to ANSF.

For details see:
http://www.8am.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22260:-----17------&catid=1:title&Itemid=553

Kandahar is not ready for Security Transfer

On 3 November 2011, ***Khalid Pashtun, vice speaker of Parliament and MP from Kandahar in southern Afghanistan raised his concerns about the talk of transfer of security to ANSF in Kandahar.*** There are many other MPs who also joined Khalid in expressing their concerns in this regard. Mr Khalid told parliament, “In Kandahar, the situation is not ready for security transformation. Quetta Shura is very much active in Kandahar and the security situation in the province will deteriorate once international security forces withdraw from the province.”

For details see:
http://www.8am.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22391:1390-08-10-15-12-50&catid=1:title&Itemid=553

Mulla Omar asks Taliban to investigate killing of Civilians

On 5 November 2011, Taliban leader Mullah Omar asked all the members of the group to take care not to hurt Afghan civilians. *In a message issued to the media in different languages— Persian, Pashtu, Urdu, Arabic and English— Mulla Omar congratulated all Muslims on the occasion of the Eid-Ul-Azha and then asked his followers to investigate why Afghan civilians have been the victims of Taliban attacks* so far. This message is significant as it comes after the recently published UN report which says that the Taliban were responsible for 80 per cent of civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

For details see: <http://www.bokhdinews.net/> and <http://www.afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=28968>

Former Woman Commander Opposes Peace Process with Taliban

Commander Kafer is the only influential regional commander who opposes the policy of peace and reconciliation with the Taliban being conducted by the government of Afghanistan. *Kafer believes that Taliban are ISI agents and therefore, peace with them is meaningless.* Kafer resides in a far off village in the Baghlan province in northeastern Afghanistan and is commanding a militia of around fifty people. She is the only woman commander who fought with Soviet army as well as Taliban.

For details see: <http://www.afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=29054>

Bonn II Conference is nothing but an excuse to leave Afghanistan

Sayyid Ekramuddin Tahiri, an Afghan political analyst writes in an article in jawedan.com: “*Since international community has failed in Afghanistan following the first Bonn Conference, Bonn II is an excuse for them for legitimizing their withdrawal.*””The world knows better that their approach in Afghanistan has failed. They are going to repeat the mistakes of Soviet troops withdrawal decades back.”

For details see: <http://jawedan.com/>.

24 hours medical service during Eid

The Health Ministry of Afghanistan announced 24 hours medical services during three days of Eid in Afghanistan. In a programme introduced by the ministry on 5 November 2011 all the medical institution were given orders to remain open for 24 hours in case of any medical emergency and civilian needs.

For details see: <http://www.afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=29070>

Afghans worried while winter sets in

As the winter sets in, people in Afghanistan are expressing their anxieties about many upcoming challenges, i.e., shortage of gas, wood and fuel is a regular

problem encountered by the people in Afghanistan during this season. Because of the heavy snow in Hindukush mountains the only highway which connects the north with the south also remains closed during the entire season. Some of the local NGOs have conducted a report on the problems of the people and presented it to the government of Afghanistan to prepare itself for meeting these problems effectively.

For details see: http://www.dailyafghanistan.com/opinion_detail.php?post_id=122911

Two months' imprisonment for Opium cultivators in Afghanistan

For the first time, the government of Afghanistan has come out with a law for the farmers as part of its overall agricultural policy in the country. *According to the law any farmer who cultivates opium in one acre of land would be sentenced to six months' imprisonment.* Zarar Ahmad Muqbil, the Afghan home minister, said an interview on 30 October 2011 in Kabul, "The government of Afghanistan will take serious action against those who cultivate opium."

For details see: <http://www.news.rahenejatdaily.com/>

Assassination of Police Chief in Garmsir

Saifullah Rashidi, the head of police in Garmsir district of Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan was assassinated in a landmine blast on 6 November 2011. Saifulla was on a security-check mission on the occasion of Eid when his car ran over a landmine planted by the Taliban. It has been reported that the deputy police chief was also killed in this accident.

For detail see: <http://www.afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=29074>

Campaign for the Next Election has started

Although the next round of elections in Afghanistan is about 18 months away, campaigning for the elections has begun in right earnest. The newly formed party of "Right and Justice" announced its political agenda in its first public meeting held in Kabul on 3 November 2011. *Engineer Abbas Noyan, the spokesman of the party said: "The party is looking for a democratic regime for the future of the political system in Afghanistan".* Some reports also indicate that Amrullah Saleh, former national security chief and a leading political figure in Afghanistan refused to join this party because of his differences with Hanif Atmar's approach, one of the famous faces in the Right and Justice Party.

For details see: <http://armanemili.af/spip.php?article674>

"National Front Coalition of Afghanistan" announced

A strong *National Coalition Front was announced in Afghanistan on 11 November 2011.* This coalition consists of some of the mainstream political parties and renowned leaders like **General Abdul Rashid Dostum**, the leader of Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, **Mohammad Muhaqiq**, the leader of the Unity Party of

Afghanistan, **Ahmad Zia Massoud**, former vice president and brother of Ahmad Shah Massoud and **Amrullah Saleh**, former head of Afghanistan National Security.

There is also news that **Haji Zahir Qadir**, brother of late Haji Qadir one of the regional Pashtun leader from Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan is also due to join this anti-government coalition.

The Coalition announced its objectives as; decentralization of power, elected governorship, strong parliamentary government in Afghanistan.

According to the Afghan media, *this is going to be the most important and most effective political grouping because it consists of some of the most influential political figures from different nationalities.*

For details see: <http://www.dailyafghanistan.com/>

Consultative Meeting of Jihadi Commanders held in Herat Province

A consultative meeting of Jihadi commanders was held in Herat, western Afghanistan, on 10 November 2011, in which *two thousand regional and local commanders came together to analyse the emerging political and security situation in Afghanistan.* They also discussed their possible role in the changing political environment. This gathering was called “*Consultative Council of South Western Mujahidin Commanders*” and it was initiated by Amir Ismail Khan, head of the ministry of Water and Energy Resources and the leader of South Western Afghanistan.

Ismail Khan said in the conference, “No external force can provide security for the people of Afghanistan without the cooperation of the Mujahidin...the formation of the Mujahidin provincial council will help the government of Afghanistan in facing the present as well as future challenges.”

Majority of the Mujahidins participating in the conference were optimistic that in the coming days, they will unite and play their due role once again.

For details see: <http://afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=29214>

Armed Fighting between the Taliban and Hizb-e-Islami in Central Afghanistan

Fighting broke out between the Taliban and the Hizb-e-Islami operatives on 10 November 2011 in Nirkh district of the Wardak Province in central Afghanistan. Shahidullah Shahid, the spokesperson of the Wardak governor told media that the fighting worked in favour of the government and therefore government forces stayed away from it. Full details of the casualties are not available so far. But according to local reports about a dozen people were killed from both sides.

For details see: <http://afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=29211>

[Translations by Mirwais Balkhi, Intern in South Asia Cluster at IDSA]

Annexure:

Declaration of Istanbul Conference on Afghanistan Held on November 02, 2011

Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan

1. We have convened in Istanbul on 2 November 2011, under the leadership of H. E. Mr. Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and H. E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey, and at the joint invitation of H. E. Mr. Zalmay Rassoul, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and H. E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey, to reaffirm our strong commitment to a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan in a secure and stable region.

2. We affirm the commitments enshrined in the 2002 Kabul Declaration of Good Neighbourly Relations and agree that promoting regional security and cooperation requires measures to build confidence and trust among countries. Hence, we will be guided by the following set of common principles and commitments, which shall include, but not be limited to:

- Recognition of the central role of the United Nations in international affairs;
- Equal and indivisible security;
- Respect for the territorial integrity of States;
- Non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states;
- Support for the stability and peace in Afghanistan, as well as respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity;
- Continued support for the Government and people of Afghanistan, as they develop their country, re-construct their economy, and further improve their human capital;
- Resolutely combating and eliminating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and violent extremism, and preventing safe havens for terrorists and terrorism in the region;
- Dismantling terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens, disrupting all financial and tactical support for terrorism;
- Acknowledging that terrorism poses a threat to international peace and security as well as a common challenge to our societies, to the region, and that it can only be addressed through the concerted efforts of all countries;
- Facilitating the voluntary, dignified, and orderly return of Afghan refugees;

- Support for an inclusive Afghan national process of reconciliation, in accordance with the Constitution of Afghanistan and in ways which is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-driven;
- Constructive and supportive relationship between countries of the region;
- Refraining from the threat or use of force and not to allow one's territory to be used against another;
- Elimination of illicit drug production, trade and trafficking;
- Preventing the cultivation and production of narcotics;
- Preventing the activities of extremist organizations and organized crime networks through enhanced cooperation;
- Supporting and promoting law enforcement cooperation;
- Peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law;
- Fulfillment of obligations under international law;

3. Afghanistan and its international and regional partners will seek to develop and coordinate contributions to advance the above-stated principles.

4. We recognize Afghanistan's role as the land bridge in the 'Heart of Asia', connecting South Asia, Central Asia, Eurasia and the Middle East, and reaffirm our support in the strongest possible terms to the secure, stable and peaceful future of Afghanistan. We welcome Afghanistan's willingness and determination to use its regional and historical position to do its part to promote security and peaceful economic cooperation in the region.

5. We respect Afghanistan as a sovereign, independent, democratic state, which constitutes an integral component of the peace, well-being and prosperity of the region and beyond. We support the Government of Afghanistan's priorities on the issues of security, governance, economy, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and regional cooperation.

6. We re-emphasize our determination to help Afghanistan fight terrorism and illicit drugs. In return, Afghanistan re-iterates its commitment to respect the territorial integrity of its neighbours, and to assure them that its relations with any state, on which it will be transparent, will not be directed against any third party. Afghanistan also reconfirms its will and determination to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, strengthen its economy, especially by ensuring good governance, promotion of investments, and addressing corruption, fight radicalism and narco-trafficking, respect human rights, in particular the rights of women, and to work together with its friends and partners for enhanced regional co-operation.

7. We reiterate our resolve to combat terrorism, extremism and separatism in all its forms and manifestations, the financing, harbouring, training and equipping of such activities, and acknowledge that terrorism, extremism and separatism pose a common challenge that can only be addressed through concerted efforts by countries of the region and the broader international community.

8. We will strengthen cooperation with Afghanistan, as well as regional and international cooperation, to counter the threat posed by the illicit production, trafficking, and consumption of drugs, in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility. Cooperation in combating the illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption should be exercised in a comprehensive manner and comprise poppy and cannabis crops eradication, elimination of drug laboratories, interception of drug caravans, detention of drug traffickers, freezing proceeds from illicit drugs, diversion of drug precursors, as well as introduction of alternative agriculture projects and strengthening measures directed at reduction of the level of drugs consumption in regional and international markets.

9. In assisting Afghanistan, we endorse its efforts at promoting an inclusive reconciliation process and welcome and support the efforts of the High Peace Council, and the implementation of the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program. We strongly condemn the heinous terrorist attack which took the life of the former President and Head of the High Peace Council, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani. We will continue to support Afghan-led efforts to reconcile and re-integrate those Afghan militant elements who renounce violence, cut links with terrorist groups, and accept the Afghan Constitution. We remain convinced that a peaceful Afghanistan, with functioning institutions and strengthened security forces, is key to a successful regional cooperation. We remind that the international community and the region are not separated and emphasize that we all have a stake in the security and stability of the region.

10. We mark our full support to the ongoing process of transition of responsibility for providing security in Afghanistan from ISAF/NATO to ANSF in the framework of the 'Kabul Process'. We remain convinced that progress to be made between now and 2014, when transition will be completed, will make a decisive impact on the future course of efforts underway in Afghanistan. However, transition should assist Afghanistan and development of its relevant structures with a sustained support in the form of long term commitments to be made by regional and international partners. We welcome ongoing efforts by the Government of Afghanistan and its regional partners to foster trust and cooperation with each other as well as relevant cooperation initiatives developed by the countries concerned and regional organizations. The promotion of a sound regional cooperation in the 'Heart of Asia' will be an important contribution to these efforts. In this context, enhanced trade connectivity along historical trade routes will also constitute an added value and will require conducive regional environment.

11. We recognise that Afghanistan is today at a critical juncture. It still faces significant security, economic, and development challenges, which are of an interconnected nature. These challenges cannot be addressed without building upon the already constructive support of Afghanistan's regional and international partners. The efforts to meet these challenges are most effective when they are Afghan-owned

and driven, and supported by all partners and pursued in a transparent and constructive manner.

12. While not all challenges specifically affect each country in similar degree, no single state or international organization can deal with these challenges by itself. A concerted effort towards stability and prosperity is needed. Consequently, regional and international cooperation are indispensable to address challenges.

13. We declare our readiness to engage in sincere, result-oriented cooperation at all levels, which will not just help Afghanistan, but will also be beneficial to security and prosperity in the region as a whole. We welcome the central and impartial role of the United Nations, in line with the Security Council mandate, and we recognize the important role of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation in strengthening regional security and promoting regional cooperation. We welcome the participation of Afghanistan in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and in the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as its application to obtain the status of observer state with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

14. Similarly, we also positively take note of those bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral initiatives between Afghanistan and the regional countries that could contribute to the improvement of regional cooperation. We welcome and support all these mechanisms, organisations and processes that add value to regional dimension. We also welcome various efforts aimed at intensifying cooperation and dialogue between Afghanistan and regional countries, recognising the intertwined nature of various challenges faced by all countries in the region. Our regional cooperation vision is not intended to substitute them, but to build synergy between these efforts.

15. These fundamental frameworks and principles of cooperation among countries are unequivocally pertinent in dealing with challenges. We note the value of a more coherent and structured approach to individual initiatives. We pledge to give strong emphasis and further impetus to the ongoing regional cooperation endeavours.

16. With this understanding, based on the principles, including guarantees of territorial integrity, sovereignty and refraining from the threat or use of force to resolve disputes; guarantees for non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States; and peaceful settlement of disputes according to international law, stated in this document, we will endeavour to build confidence through broad ranging and effective Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), where appropriate and based on self-differentiation basis, which may include, but not be limited to, the areas listed hereafter.

A) In the political and security field:

- Enhanced cooperation for fighting terrorism, including through exchange of information;
- Participation in Civil Emergency Planning to assess risks and reduce vulnerability of the civil population to terrorism;
- Enhancement of cooperation among Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours for effective border controls;
- Creation or enhancement of conditions conducive to the voluntary and safe return of refugees, in a dignified and orderly manner;
- Exchange of information regarding forces responsible for counter-terrorism operations and facilitate contacts among them as appropriate;
- Co-operation and interaction among regional countries in the area of counter narcotics and the trafficking of illegal goods and lethal substance, and their precursors, including enhancing bilateral efforts to prevent illicit movement of personnel and material across international borders.
- Development of joint guidelines for cooperation in the field of disaster management;

B) In the economic field:

- Build, where appropriate, on the model of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, ways to expand trade across the region;
- Trade facilitation strategy - The development of a coherent strategy to develop a regionally coherent trade and border management;
- Preferential Trade Agreement within the region without prejudice to existing trading agreements;
- Establishment of databases and a system of data exchange in trade and economic spheres;
- Improvement of the exchange of information on commercial opportunities and specific trading conditions;
- Improvement in the provisions for the settlement of commercial disputes, including various forms of arbitration;
- A strategy to encourage participation of the private sector in regional development programs, including through private sector-public sector joint ventures;
- Exchange of information on development of international tourism and tourist infrastructure and assistance in establishing and strengthening contacts;

- Exchange of information regarding suspicious financial transactions, illegal financial operations and assistance in establishing and strengthening contacts between appropriate authorities;
- Facilitation of the development of co-operation in the various field of environment;
- Improvement of business contacts and facilities;
- Encourage the establishment of a framework for enhanced cooperation among Chambers of Commerce;
- Training of personnel in various fields of economic activity;
- The development of a coherent strategy to develop and maintain a regionally connecting infrastructure, with support from international partners;
- Encouraging Afghanistan's role as a land-bridge, connecting the region through cooperation and completion of bridges on trans-boundary rivers, roads and railway networks; in this connection, focusing on construction of new automobile bridges over the Panj River in Kokul and Ayvaj fields of Tajikistan and supporting the implementation of the project on a railway route from East, Central, South and West Asia and to the sea routes through Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan with existing Uzbekistan-Afghanistan railway being connected to a prospective Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Afghanistan railway, and supporting the implementation of the project on a railway route from Iran to Afghanistan, the Khaf-Herat Railway;
- Co-operation on easier flow of energy resources within, from and across the region, especially with regard to electricity, minerals, oil and gas, including their exploitation and transit, through regional projects, such as TAPI, and CASA-1000 project which has to be implemented with a broader financial contribution, as well as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank;
- Wider support for Tajikistan`s efforts to conduct the 5th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V) which is planned to be held on March 26-27, 2012 in Dushanbe. Amongst other agenda items, the Conference will consider the proposal from Afghanistan and Tajikistan on enhancing trade connectivity along historical trade routes. On the margins of the RECCA V, we support the organization of a business forum and a forum of scientists and researchers.
- Exploring the possibility of cooperation in the development of hydroelectric power and in the sphere of water management without prejudice to existing agreements;
- Consider, wherever appropriate and mutually agreed, development of large-scale irrigation works without prejudice to existing agreements;
- A more effective regional cooperation in the agricultural and rural fields;
- The development of infrastructure around the main ports and linking them via road and railroad for shipment of goods and energy to and from Central Asia, South Asia, Eurasia and the Black Sea.

C) In the education field:

- Setting up a structured regional education exchange programme with places reserved in universities for students from neighbouring States within the region;
- Broadening cooperation and exchanges in the fields of education and science on a short or long-term basis;
- Expansion of links between State institutions and non-governmental bodies whose activities are concerned with questions of education and science and including scientific exchanges, exchange of students, joint events;
- Ensure that radical and hatred references are removed from education curriculum;
- Reform the curricula that promote extremism.
- Promotion of the role of mass media as a driver for democratic development and mutual understanding, and to spread messages of peace, harmony and tolerance;
- Establishing a multi-disciplinary professional and technical training Center in Tajikistan which is aimed at preparing civilian specialists for the needs of the Afghanistan economy, with support of international community.

D) In the cultural field:

- Joint projects aimed at disseminating information on various cultures and traditions in the region;
- Co-operation in preserving valuable cultural, historical, archaeological and religious assets;
- A common fight by all nations in the region against all forms and manifestation of violence;
- A joint effort to promote the true nature of Islam as a religion of peace, tolerance and human accomplishment;
- Promotion of inter-faith and intra-cultural dialogue.

E) In the legal field:

- Considering, where appropriate and on the basis of reciprocity, relaxation of visa regimes;
- Considering relaxation of rules and restrictions at border crossings for legitimate travelers on the basis of reciprocal arrangements;
- Promotion of law enforcement cooperation;

17. Through the Istanbul Process, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening regional security and cooperation, including for the purpose of building a secure and stable Afghanistan. To that end, we have decided to redouble and better coordinate our efforts through bilateral channels and existing multilateral frameworks and future meetings at Ministerial and technical level. The Istanbul Process will be developed and marked by consensus decision making of participating states.

18. In this regard, we will continue to exchange views on ways and means to implement our decisions.

19. As the first follow-up on the Istanbul Conference, we have decided to meet again at Ministerial level in Kabul in June 2012.

20. The Kabul Ministerial meeting will be preceded by a preparatory meeting at technical level chaired by Afghanistan. To that effect, Afghanistan will circulate a concept paper by the end of January 2012, outlining the agenda of the meeting.

21. Having stated the above, we recognise that the challenge we intend to meet remains considerable. But, through these confidence building measures, we are aiming at a new mindset of cooperation in the region.

22. The ambitious objective of enhanced regional cooperation, with and around Afghanistan, will need to overcome many hurdles. However, the benefits for Afghanistan and its region will reward this ambition and be worth the endeavours.

23. The participants to the Istanbul Conference wish to express their gratitude to the Republic of Turkey for the generous hospitality and commitment to promoting regional cooperation.

Adopted on 2 November 2011 by the 'Heart of Asia' Countries which consist of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan, and the United Arab Emirates.

Welcomed and supported by the Commonwealth of Australia, Canada, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Italy, Japan, Norway, Republic of Poland, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States as well as the United Nations, Economic Cooperation Organization, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Organization for Islamic Cooperation, the European Union, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

Sources: <http://mfa.gov.af/en/news/4598>
http://outlookafghanistan.net/news?post_id=2430