

Lecture on The Indian Perspective on the Afghan Peace Process

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Lecture on
"The Indian Perspective on the Afghan Peace Process"

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The Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) hosted H.E. Ambassador Vinay Kumar, Ambassador of Republic India to Afghanistan, for a speech on **“the Indian perspective on the Afghan peace process”**, in which government officials, experts, university academics, foreign diplomats members of Civil Society, and media participated.

At the beginning of his remark, Ambassador Kumar, thanked the Afghan institute for Strategic Studies-AISS for providing such an opportunity to speak about the current peace process of Afghanistan.

Amb. Vinay Kumar started his speech with anecdotes from the millennium-old historical ties between Afghanistan and India. He continued, over the last decades since India’s independence, India has been one of the largest partners of Afghanistan in political context, education, trade, capacity building, defense and security structures, and all of them happening based on India’s experiences of nation-building. Mr. Kumar said, “Since 2001, we have cooperated with Afghanistan based on its sovereignty and independency because without these principles, it is never going to be easy”.

Amn. Kumar then continued to describe India’s vision for Afghanistan. He said that whatever India has and envisions for itself in terms of sovereignty and economic prosperity, it envisions it for Afghanistan. He said that India strengthens capacity and government institutions in Afghanistan. He also said that India supports the constitutional process in Afghanistan.



He also pointed that over the last two decades India has tried to create a stake in the India's development for all its neighbors because we think, that the entire south Asian region has historically been interconnected. He said that we cannot have sustainable peace, development and prosperity without integration in the region. He said, "Over the last eighteen years India relationship with Afghanistan is multifaceted and centered on the people-to-government in the context of promoting people to people ties, travel, trade and etc". "At the same time, he said, we are working to strengthen the government capacity.

Amb. Kumar spoke about the "concrete" projects India has completed in its partnership in Afghanistan. He said that India has committed 3 billion dollars for Afghanistan development, from which 2 billion dollars has already been spent. Besides major highways, parliament building, and Salma dam, India has contributed 350 projects throughout Afghanistan, all through government to empower people.



According to Mr. Ambassador, currently 2000 students from Afghanistan are studying in India. He repeated, India cooperation to Afghanistan has focused on people to people and government to government relationship and all these done by respecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the last two decades, India has also trained more than 6000 Afghan National Security officers in Indian institutions.

Amb. Kumar said that India supports an inclusive peace process in which Afghans have control, leadership and ownership of how to reconcile. He said that sustainable peace in Afghanistan provides further opportunity for strengthening cooperation between India and Afghanistan.

He said that India advocates and works for cessation of terrorism and termination of terror infrastructure in Afghanistan. Regarding the ongoing peace efforts by U.S. Government, Amb. Kumar said that India has serious dialogue with the U.S. regarding peace in Afghanistan and that India supports the peace efforts led by Amb. Khalilzad.

Amb. Kumar said that sustainable peace in Afghanistan in the first place requires support from all sides, to dismantle of infrastructures that support violence, terrorism here and

Amb. Kumar said, that India is having exchanges on peace with Afghanistan, the United State, China, Iran, Central Asia, European Union, Germany and other countries. This year, each special representatives visited India several times and exchanged views about the peace process. He emphasized, India support the process led by Afghanistan.

He concluded his remarks by taking about India's development experience and said, constitutional legitimacy is very important in today's time. He ended his remark by saying that we continue our cooperation with the strong nation of Afghanistan.

Q&A



Audience Question: Does India have an ideological interest in Afghanistan and what form the government could serve such an ideological interest and preferences in the future? Would it be acceptable and tolerable for India to see an Emirate as an outcome of the current peace process of Afghanistan?

Ambassador Kumar: The form of the government in Afghanistan depends on the decision of its people. This is what we call Independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. India can share its own experience of democratic government. The relationships between India and Afghanistan is not a function of third country. Our relation is formed based on mutual interests. So sustainable peace in this country will create more opportunities for grater India-Afghanistan cooperation.

Audience Question: what has changed that India has moved from the stories of Kabuli Wala to Panipat and Padmavat?

Ambassador Kumar: Bollywood is an entertainment industry and they can produce all kinds of movies. Let's leave it be an entertainment industry.

Audience Question: what you actually think of the ongoing peace process and what do think is an obstacle?

Ambassador Kumar: The good thing that we noticed that there is great support for peace in Afghanistan and there is significant level of consensus in the international community to help this process. The obstacle is the continuation of violence. There is some level of confusion with the process being led, owned & controlled by Afghans.

Audience Question: what is your definition of peace?

Ambassador Kumar: Peace for #India is empowerment of all. It's economic cooperation in the region. Peace is termination of violence. Our fundamental policy is to create stakes for others in the development of India.

Audience Question: If peace comes to Afghanistan, don't you think terrorists will shift to Kashmir region?

Ambassador Kumar: the same source of terrorism affects both Afghanistan & India. If we do not have terrorism in the region, we do not have terrorism in the region. The purpose of peace efforts should be complete cessation of terrorism in the region so they cannot be used anywhere in the region.

