



# SEEKING SOLUTIONS FOR AFGHANISTAN

A Report on the Abu Dhabi Process



**EASTWEST INSTITUTE**

*Forging Collective Action for a Safer and Better World*





# ABU DHABI PROCESS

Armed Forces Officers Club

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

June 19-20, 2010

# MEETING REPORT



**EASTWEST INSTITUTE**

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Cover photo: An Afghan man feeds birds at the Shrine of Hazrat Ali in Mazar-i-Sharif, northern Afghanistan, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2009. (AP Photo/Farzana Wahidy)

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# Introduction

The governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan have accepted a generous proposal from the government of Abu Dhabi to host a series of meetings facilitated by the EastWest Institute (EWI) to complement existing channels of communication between the two countries. Participants in the series, known as the Abu Dhabi Process, discuss areas of their relationship they believe will help build confidence, ensure greater stability, and enhance sustainable development in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The meetings are off-the-record, consultative in nature, and governed by the Chatham House Rule.

This report summarizes discussions that were held at the opening meeting of the series, on June 19 and 20, 2010, in the Armed Forces Officers Club of Abu Dhabi. It reflects the views of a select group of Afghan and Pakistani politicians and diplomats, scholars, and former military officials.

While the recommendations and conclusions of this report reflect positions that were agreed upon by all participants, the report on the debates proper neither reflects a consensus view nor pretends to fully capture all variation of opinions expressed in the discussions. It tries to capture, however, the predominant views of the participants.

EWI is solely responsible for the content as well as any omissions or errors in this report.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### I

**There is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. A dialogue leading to political settlement should therefore begin soon. Despite widespread criticism, the National Consultative Peace Jirga (NCPJ) was a positive step in that direction. It was sufficiently representative and inclusive to provide a mandate to enter into such dialogue. While the June 2011 timeline for a withdrawal of coalition forces seems tenuous, it does underscore the urgency of a focused search for a political settlement.**

- Key principles of the framework agreed at the NCPJ must be respected: reconciliation with Taliban not linked to Al Qaeda and respect for achievements since 2001—i.e. the constitution, human rights, equality, access to education for all, and freedom of speech.

- The dialogue must be an open and transparent process accountable to the people of Afghanistan. Better governance is required above all else. Only a stronger and more effective government will be able to defend an “end state” along the lines of the final resolution of the NCPJ, especially in light of the inevitable haggling for concessions that will be part of the quest for a political settlement. Better performance of the Kabul government is thus a vital requirement for political dialogue in the spirit of the NCPJ decisions.
- The international community must join the peace process to better protect the Afghan people. Decisions taken in the process must be respected by the government of Afghanistan and the international community.
- The commission proposed by the NCPJ must be established urgently and should be given real authority in order to implement its mandate.

## II

**A delisting of Taliban leaders from the UN Security Council resolution 1267 list should be pursued actively. It would be desirable to complement such delisting by offering a neutral, safe physical space for dialogue outside the immediate area of conflict.**

- Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates or Turkmenistan might be considered as places to offer a neutral space for dialogue outside the immediate area of conflict. Countries offering such space need not necessarily be participating in the dialogue proper.
- At the same time, support for dialogue will need to come from the international coalition and notably, but not exclusively, the U.S. and Pakistan. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Japan, the United Arab Emirates or other individual Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference may help lead formal mediation efforts.
- The ideological motivation of the Taliban must not be underestimated. Comprehensive efforts should therefore be undertaken to counter their ideological narrative by engaging the educated class of Muslim legal scholars, also known as ulema.
- Additional pressure for dialogue with the insurgency stems from the increasing influence of a second generation of Taliban, sometimes referred to as “Neo-Taliban.” The emergence of these groups and their very radical approach calls for the beginning of a dialogue sooner rather than later to profit from the more pragmatic approaches of the first generation.

### III

**The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan is the key to any successful political settlement, reconciliation and wider regional efforts for regional stability. It is therefore vital to address the fundamental trust deficit that continues to exist between both countries.**

- The trust deficit needs to be addressed in a more proactive manner at three levels: the senior government level, the wider bureaucracy, and people-to-people contacts.
- In doing so, both countries must first and foremost respect each others' sovereignty, equality, and territorial integrity. Such respect requires focused and conscious efforts on all three levels mentioned above.
- A more honest and transparent exchange about each others' legitimate strategic and development interests would be beneficial, notably in light of the role of India.
- People-to-people contacts should focus on addressing the serious issue of public misperceptions about either country. They should target in particular media, universities, and parliamentarians.

### IV

**All participants strongly called for additional dialogue in the framework of the “Abu Dhabi Process” to help build trust between Afghanistan and Pakistan and create strategies towards a political settlement and reconciliation with the Taliban.**

- Participants decided to convene for follow-up discussions to identify concrete measures that will allow Afghanistan and Pakistan to work more closely together on issues of common concern.

## Discussion

The discussion of a possible political settlement with the insurgents in Afghanistan has gained momentum since early 2009 following the review and reorientation of the Afghanistan strategy by the Obama administration. Meanwhile, the international community has become increasingly uneasy about its continued military and civilian engagement in the country.

Unlike on “reintegration” of Taliban rank and file into Afghan mainstream society, for which economic and developmental incentives have been

developed following the London Conference decisions of January 2010, there is little, if any consensus among national and international actors on a political settlement, in other words “reconciliation” with the Taliban leadership.

This is partly due to the national, regional, and international complexities as well as the poor record of previous attempts towards reconciliation. While Taliban leaders have so far rejected calls for reconciliation or attached unacceptable conditions to it, past attempts by Afghan mainstream politicians and international actors have been marked by fragmentation, lack of coordination and ambiguity.

*To be successful, renewed attempts for reconciliation must avoid pursuing opportunistic goals and temporary gains. They need, above all, a strategic vision of an end state acceptable to the government and the insurgency, a united effort and clear parameters to achieve the envisioned end state. At the national level, better governance is required above anything else.* Only a stronger and more effective government can have the legitimacy and the influence necessary to defend such an end state in negotiations with the Taliban.

*Reestablishment of public confidence in the legal system and state institutions is vital.* A credible legal and political system is essential for a more stable and safe environment that curbs the desire of insurgents to continue their efforts. At the local level, *especially at the district level*, Afghans will need to be convinced that reconciliation and reintegration will not only lead to relief from insurgent blackmail and attacks, but also from a corrupt administration.

## The National Consultative Peace Jirga

The legitimacy of the NCPJ of June 2010 in mandating a process leading to political settlement with the insurgency is dependent on:

- Broad ownership of the process by the Afghan people;
- Addressing the issues of conditionalities of the process acceptable to the majority of Afghans, the envisaged end state of such a settlement, and the parameters for it.

The NCPJ, with its broad participation, has gone much of the way to ensuring the consent and ownership of the Afghan people. With 1,600 participants and representation from most segments of Afghan society, the NCPJ did far better than any of its predecessors. Unlike previous jirgas, it was entirely organized by the Afghans themselves. Debates and procedures

were organized using a bottom-up approach, open and democratic, and covering a broad spectrum of topics in twenty commissions.

International public opinion – including that in Pakistan – has largely criticized the NCPJ as a consultation “orchestrated” by the Karzai government that has failed to secure broad ownership by the Afghan people. The absence of the insurgents and leading mainstream opposition figures has been particularly noted in that regard.

*Such a critical perception of the NCPJ and its outcomes is not justified.* With regard to the absence of Taliban, one must bear in mind that their participation is hardly possible without a mandate for a political settlement from them. In addition, it is worth noting that at least Hezb-e-Islami was represented, even if it did not openly participate in the NCPJ. While major mainstream political figures (Abdullah Abdullah, Abdul Rashid Dostum, among others) were absent and had in part openly distanced themselves from the NCPJ, members of their movements actively participated.

*Through this jirga, Afghans appear to have started assuming ownership of their peace process, as is reflected by positive reactions from the broader Afghan public. They have established a mandate for the peace process, and have taken the first step in that process.*

Participants in the NCPJ agreed on the major stepping stones towards a comprehensive settlement for sustainable reconciliation. Among them:

- The need for a *comprehensive* program for the peace process;
- The safeguarding of the achievements since 2001, notably the establishment of a constitution guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens, including women;
- The creation of conditions that allow insurgents to join the dialogue, especially the delisting of 137 senior figures from the United Nations Security Council's sanctions list and a guarantee of protection and safety for members of the insurgency joining the peace process.

## **Building on the Successes of the NCPJ**

While these elements, along with the clear appeal to the international community for a long term commitment beyond 2011, are positive, an Afghanistan peace process must satisfy several conditions in order to be successful.

First, *fundamental conditions necessary for dialogue with the insurgency remain vague and may need clarification.* The NCPJ called for conditions that allow “understanding and negotiations to start,” and for “goodwill by taking constructive and flexible approaches.” It agreed that democratic

achievements since 2001 should not be turned back and that, as a starting point, the Taliban must renounce violence and dissociate themselves from Al Qaeda. But it is unclear whether these demands constitute a conditioned or unconditioned approach to dialogue.

In fact, the three major insurgency factions (the Quetta Shura, the Haqqani network, Hezb-e-Islami) may consider some of the NCPJ's decisions as preconditions for a dialogue and thus objectionable. But if—as many argue—elements of the insurgent leadership suffer from battle fatigue and are ready to negotiate, they may seize on the overall vagueness of the NCPJ's decisions and agree to enter a dialogue. If, on the contrary, they remain determined to fight the current political system and the international community, a dialogue based on the NCPJ decisions will run into obstacles.

Second, while the Kabul government must lead in all political negotiations with insurgents, international support is critical. Hamid Karzai's government is too weak to make binding commitments, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. The international community must play an important supporting role well beyond 2011. Afghanistan especially needs international support to bolster the Afghan National Security Forces so they can better maintain order and ensure adherence to any peace agreements.

Third, better governance in Kabul is essential. A more credible and effective government is necessary to better implement conditionalities in negotiations for a final political settlement. Given the challenges, it is critical to keep the dialogue open and transparent and not endanger the broad ownership that Afghans gained through the NCPJ.

The NCPJ has created a mechanism for dialogue in the form of a rather elaborate “Commission” or “Peace Council.” However, this organizational (if not bureaucratic) instrument will not solve the lack of clarity regarding conditionalities in the NCPJ decision on its own. It appears to be, in the end, an administrative rather than political instrument for dialogue. If run properly, though, it can control and administer the reintegration of the Taliban rank-and-file and the dialogue with the political leadership.

## Taliban Assets and Positions

The Taliban have consistently gained strength over past years and have been able to establish shadow governors in most of Afghanistan's provinces. Their fundamental assets are not just intact; they have increased:

- They enjoy substantial financial income through the drug trade, bribes and “taxation.” For example, in the transport sector, the supply needs of the International Security Assistance Force is a major source

of income, possibly equaling the income from drug money. Weaponry, including state-of-the-art equipment, is readily available, i.e. through Russian and Central Asian mafia structures;

- While organizational structures are loose, overall coordination works well among the major groups of insurgents (the Quetta Shura, the Haqqani network, and Hezb-e-Islami), as well as with local structures;
- Insurgents have developed shrewd and efficient media strategies that are vital for their success;
- Their tactical approaches, such as the use of improvised explosive devices, night letters, and ambushes against coalition forces, effectively achieve maximal gains with minimal input;
- The Pakistani Taliban, who target Pakistan rather than Afghanistan, have to be viewed from a different perspective. But cooperation and support exist between insurgents in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Haqqani network, operating from its base in North Waziristan, remains a central pillar for the insurgency.

As the strengths of the insurgents remain intact, so do the weaknesses of the Afghan national government. It is highly unlikely that the Karzai government will be in a position to take care of its own security and protect the population by 2011, currently the target date to begin withdrawing international forces. Sufficient progress in the quantity and quality of the Afghan Security Forces is not to be expected. Furthermore, as repeatedly mentioned, substantively better and credible performance of the civilian government, vital to improving the Kabul government's legitimacy, seems impossible to achieve in that timeframe.

*Yet, while there is no military solution for the coalition or the Karzai government, there is none for the insurgency either. The overall situation may be described as the coalition not winning and the Taliban not losing.*

This stalemate raises the question of the insurgents' readiness for a dialogue for a political settlement and the conditions they would attach to it. Many argue that Taliban leaders are, in principle, ready to enter into dialogue. *For the Taliban, vital practical requirements are their personal safety after a settlement and the possibility to safely conduct that dialogue.* Delisting of 137 Taliban leaders from the UN Security Council's sanctions list is, therefore, of immediate concern and should be lobbied for more actively and systematically by the Kabul government and UN member states. It would appear that most of the permanent five members of the Security Council are, in principle, willing to consider such delisting.

It is highly desirable to complement a delisting by offering a safe and neutral physical space for dialogue in countries outside the immediate area

of conflict. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, or Turkmenistan might be viable options. Countries offering such a space need not necessarily participate in the dialogue themselves.

The conditions put forward by the Taliban in recent months, notably by representatives of the Quetta Shura, focus on the withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan. However, the continued presence of coalition forces, at least for the foreseeable future, appears vital to the survival of the Kabul government, and some fear that such a condition may become a prohibitive obstacle.

This need not be the case. The Quetta Shura's demands are manageable as long as they are not preconditions to start the dialogue, but instead a step towards a final settlement. The dialogue itself should aim at developing time frames and modalities for such troop withdrawal that make it acceptable to Kabul and the international community, both in military and political terms. *In that context, alternatives may be considered, such as the replacement of current coalition forces by a UN force consisting of Muslim countries, even though the UN has lost much of its credibility in past years.*

International support requires the involvement of the international coalition, most notably of the United States, but also of Pakistan. Any mediator in formal mediation efforts should obviously enjoy influence over all disputants, have their confidence, and be acceptable to them. In the case of Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Japan, the United Arab Emirates or other individual members of the OIC could, in principle, be considered. The insurgency's links to Pakistan however, must be recognized in any mediation effort and confidence-building between Afghanistan and Pakistan must be an integral part of it.

As major preconditions for reconciliation, neighboring countries and coalition countries alike have called on insurgents to sever ties with al Qaeda, renounce violence, and end the use of Afghan territory for the preparation of terrorist acts outside of Afghanistan. *Whether these conditions realistically can be fulfilled depends on the ideological commitment of the Taliban leadership. It is essential to differentiate insurgents' international, radical pan-Islamic motives from those with a national agenda.* A clear distinction is impossible mostly because of the diversity of the different Taliban groups, not only with regard to the three main groups but also with regard to local structures and the rapidly developing Neo-Taliban.

The Neo-Taliban, with their increased use of internet data-sharing and profiling, their networking with other militant movements beyond the region, their support from many Muslims around the world, and fueled by the on-going regional conflict, are more likely a growing internationalist militancy movement. They are unlike the "old" Taliban who, although

diverse, could still be labeled nationalist reformists led by a limited number of local figures. One could argue that the increasing strength of the Neo-Taliban, who threaten the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan alike, pose a common challenge for Afghans and Pakistanis to jointly tackle, creating a potential area to build trust.

Based on the history of the 1990s, particularly the period immediately preceding September 11, 2001, the three major Taliban groups seem to be driven by a national agenda built on opportunistic rather than ideological motives. *There are also indications that the Taliban are aware that a return to the rogue-state policies of the 1990s is unacceptable, nationally or internationally.* It is worth noting that Mullah Omar has, on several occasions, excluded participation of Taliban representatives in a Kabul government and seems to aim more at a general oversight role. Whether he wants a role inside or outside current constitutional structures is certainly a relevant question.

Conditions and substance would obviously need exploration in light of the NCPJ's commitment to maintain the achievements of the past decade, notably in the area of human rights. *The ideological motivation of the Taliban must not be underestimated. It can be argued, however, that a degree of pragmatism seems more prominent in established groups than in the Neo-Taliban. The Neo-Taliban appear to be much more ruthless and radical, rejecting fundamental principles of humanity, and even Islam, in a way unknown in the nineties.* As this generation is growing, dialogue for a political settlement with established leaders appears even more essential.

## Overcoming the Trust Deficit in the Afghan–Pakistani Relationship

Regional interests are of particular importance as long as Afghanistan, due to instability and poor governance, remains under the influence of international actors rather than a sovereign actor itself. *While important interests of Iran, Central Asian states, Russia, China, and India must not be overlooked, the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan remains key to any political settlement and stability in Afghanistan and the region.*

The quality of the Afghan-Pakistani relationship is a decisive factor for political reconciliation in Afghanistan and stability and development in the region. Recent years have seen positive developments, such as improved government relations since the election of a new government in Pakistan and a multitude of contacts and cooperation in many areas. *But the path towards normalization is still a long and difficult one that will take at least*

*a generation to traverse. A profound lack of trust persists among the elites in the military and civilian establishments of both countries, as well as among their wider publics.*

In both countries, the elimination of terrorism requires immediate action; both countries must come to terms with their respective strategic interests in a way that will lead to cooperation rather than mistrust and confrontation. Although the bilateral relationship has improved considerably over the last few years, a fundamental lack of trust has persisted and has prevented substantive cooperation and collaboration, especially in the field of intelligence operations and prosecution of arrested Taliban leaders.

Pakistan has long advocated a political settlement with the insurgency and opposed the alienation of groups that were left out of the Bonn process in 2001. But Pakistani authorities, who are expected to assist with reconciliation in Afghanistan, need to address their own trust deficit with groups they hope to engage in dialogue.

*Thus, addressing this trust deficit is a primary requirement. To get there, a discreet but frank debate is necessary about each other's concerns, the definition of common goals, and steps towards achieving these goals. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan may wish to consider the appointment of a respected personality from each country to a senior position solely dedicated to the bilateral relationship.*

Both countries need to come to terms with each other if they don't want to be "left further behind" in the process of globalization as the world moves on and the international focus shifts away from the region. The 2011 timeline to begin the withdrawal of coalition troops from Afghanistan places additional pressure on both countries to move ahead more determinedly towards normalization. Bilateral issues need to be addressed on three levels: the senior government level, the wider bureaucracy, and people-to-people contacts.

The third level is especially vital. There is no monolithic view of either Afghanistan or Pakistan in the other country, but critical misperceptions dominate public opinion in both countries. The level of knowledge in Pakistan about recent developments in Afghanistan is very low, and public debate is dominated by historical perspectives focusing on the 1980s and 1990s. On the other side, a majority of Afghans see Pakistan in a mostly critical light.

It is essential to address these misperceptions if the two countries are to normalize their relationship and re-launch the dormant Pakistan-Afghanistan Peace Jirga Process of 2007. Increased cooperation between the two countries' armies, intelligence agencies, parliaments, and trade and development sectors could go a long way towards this end. There should

be a particular emphasis on opinion leaders in both countries, especially representatives from the media, parliament, and academia.

*On a more political level, both countries need to come to terms in an honest and open way with what makes them uncomfortable with each other. The relationship of both countries with India is of obvious relevance.* Both governments must work towards a common understanding that Pakistan has legitimate strategic concerns in Afghanistan—even though the issue of “strategic depth” has lost relevance for much of the Pakistani public—while Afghanistan has legitimate interests in developing its relationship with India. It is advisable to establish a more focused exchange on how the concerns and interests of both sides can be reconciled in a transparent manner. Consulting on such issues of common concern, possibly in a trilateral conversation with India, could be of great importance and constitute a bold move towards greater trust-building and normalization.

*Conscious meaningful steps towards full respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and equality in the bilateral relationship are the crucial requirements for normalization.* Military and intelligence coordination is especially important here. Afghanistan and Pakistan must work together to strengthen and stabilize the Durand line and fight militancy on both sides. Both countries should take responsibility for eliminating safe havens for militants on their respective sides of the border. They should increase the exchange of information on militants and cooperate in dealing with militants who have been arrested. These efforts should be pragmatic and results-oriented, and lead to more effective cross-border control, while also allowing for the development of trade and contacts between communities on both sides of the Durand Line.

More trust and common action by Pakistan and Afghanistan must, in the end, lead to wider regional consultations and a regional approach. All neighboring countries of Afghanistan need to be convinced that a fully sovereign strong and stable Afghanistan is in the best of their interests.

# Annex: The Resolution Adopted at the Conclusion of the National Consultative Peace Jirga -June 2-4, 2010, Loya Jirga Tent, Kabul

The National Consultative Peace Jirga (NCPJ) participated by 1,600 delegates representing the suffering nation of Afghanistan from all walks of life including from both Houses of the Parliament, Provincial Councils, religious scholars, tribal leaders, civil society organizations, Afghan refugees residing in Iran and Pakistan (Invitees had been divided into 13 categories) was held for consultation on seeking ways out for the insecurity and for a lasting peace in the country. Professor Burhanuddin Rabani was selected to lead and chair the Jirga.

Over the past three days, the delegates divided within various smaller working sessions debated proposals and details of each items of agenda and then took the issues to the general session and hereby agreed on the following:

- Recognizing our religious and national obligations and the need for peace as a vital and righteous demand of every Afghan citizen, we, the participants of the NCPJ fully support President Hamid Karzai's commitment and initiative to consult the nation to reach through peaceful means to a lasting peace and end to the conflict and bloodshed.
- We recognize and thank the Muslim people of Afghanistan for the resilience, tolerance, patience and sacrifices they have made for a sustainable peace and public prosperity.
- The People of Afghanistan highly value the support by the international community and the United States in particular and for their help to rebuild our state institutions and infrastructure and call for their continued effective and institutional support and assistance.
- We express our gratitude for the sincere efforts by the Muslim countries especially by Saudi King (the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques) and Republic of Turkey to help ensure peace in our war stricken country and want that the efforts continue, speed up and expand.
- We the participants of the NCPJ have taken the following decisions and call on the government of Afghanistan and the parties in conflict to take all sincere, immediate and practical measures for its implementation:

## Understanding, Negotiation and Agreement for Sustainable Peace

1. We, the participants of the NCPJ demand from all the parties engaged in conflict to act and comply by the teachings of Islam and respect the aspiration of the people of Afghanistan for lasting peace and ending war and fratricide through understanding and negotiations. The peace and reconciliation initiative shall be for and among Afghans only and does not include in anyway foreign extremist elements and international terrorist networks.
2. The government should develop a comprehensive program to follow up the peace process based on decisions by the NCPJ and change it into a national and standing strategy.
3. No peace efforts should bring to question the achievements made so far and its legal values and should not lead to a new crisis in the country.
4. For a sustainable peace to be ensured, strong and sincere commitments by all the parties concerned is a must. We, the participants seriously request that the aspiration of the people and of the Jirga members and their decisions be respected and put to practice, any action otherwise would be a major harm to the traditional value of the Jirga.
5. We call on all the parties involved to avoid setting such conditions that can make it impossible for the understanding and negotiations to start, but rather express their goodwill by taking constructive and flexible approaches for the dialogue to begin.
6. Avoiding any issues that can inflame ethnical, regional, linguistic, party, religious and political sensitivities and can strain the national unity must be placed as top working priorities for all parties concerned.
7. Providing for investment that can lead to economic, human resources and infrastructure development aimed at creating employment, poverty reduction and building capacity for Islamic and general education should be placed as top government programs.

## Framework for Talks with the Disaffected

8. We call upon the government of Afghanistan and the international troops stationed in the country:
  - as a gesture of goodwill, to take immediate and solid action in freeing from various prisons those detained based on inaccurate information or unsubstantiated allegations;
  - The government in agreement with the international community should take serious action in getting the names of those in opposition removed from the consolidated blacklist;
  - The government and the international forces should guarantee protection and safety for those who join the peace process and should provide for a safe return of those in armed opposition;
  - International and Afghan forces are strongly requested to seriously avoid any unnecessary arrests and arbitrary searches of houses as well as aerial bombardment of residential areas that cause civilian casualties;
  - The government should take all required measures to be able to lead military operations and coordination among international forces operating in Afghanistan;
  - The disaffected in armed opposition should renounce violence and all other activities that result in killing our people and destroying the infrastructure and should dissociate themselves from Alqaeda and other terrorist groups;
  - The international community is suggested to expedite the process of equipping, training and strengthening Afghan national security forces, so they can get the capability in taking responsibility to provide security for their own country and people;
  - We want and urge for a long-term international commitment, so Afghanistan does not become again a playground for regional conflicts, and that external interferences can be averted and thus space for stronger regional cooperation can be provided;
  - We call on the international community to support the peace process led by the government of Afghanistan;
  - The government with public support should take every necessary step to deliver good governance, make sure appointments are made on the basis of merits, and fight

administrative and moral corruption as well as illegal property possession at national and provincial level. This is the key in boosting public confidence to the government and for a successful peace process;

- People of Afghanistan demand a just peace which can guarantee the rights of all its citizens including women and children. For the purpose of social justice, the Jirga urges that laws be applied equally on all citizens of the country;
9. We the participants of the Jirga call on scholars and clerics in mosques and the mass media including audio visual and print to fulfill their duties in promoting peace and preaching against violence;
  10. We, the participants of the Jirga call upon our Muslim nation to join hands with the Government to bring an end to the current insecurity and instability and help make the process a success. The Government with cooperation from the people should take all required measures to ensure security and prevent destructive terrorist acts.

## **Developing Mechanism for Negotiation with the Disaffected**

11. A high Peace Council or Commission should be created to follow up on the recommendations made by the Jirga and the Peace Process. The Commission would create by the passage of time its local offices at district and provincial levels and would be represented by different people including our patriotic brothers and sisters, religious scholars, tribal elders, a representative from each House of the parliament, and a person to represent the militants who have given up violence. The Commission shall form a special committee to handle the issues related to the release and return to normal life of the prisoners.
12. We, the participants of the Jirga commit ourselves to act as messengers of peace and take the message of the Jirga to our communities and our people in our areas and to cooperate with the local authorities, tribal elders, youth and the women for the objective of ensuring peace.
13. To win the international community's support to the Jirga decisions, the Government of Afghanistan should include the Resolution in the agenda for the Kabul Conference.
14. The Government is responsible to continuously and transparently communicate to public any progress achieved in the peace process through a mechanism to be established.

15. The recommendations by the 28 Committees of the Jirga are attached to this resolution to be used in developing the Action Plan and Peace Strategy.
16. In conclusion, the Peace Jirga on behalf of the Muslim nation of Afghanistan strongly denounce the latest brutal raid by Israeli forces on a flotilla of humanitarian aid in the international waters aimed at breaking the blockade in Gaza for the oppressed Palestinians and express its heartfelt condolences and deep sympathies to the families of the victims and to the wounded. We call on the United Nations and the international community to end the oppressing blockade of Gaza.

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