

# IPCS Conference Report

# 33

April 2011



## Afghanistan 2011

### Canada-India Policy Dialogue

*Reported by Medha Chaturvedi, Jawaid Akhtar, J Jeganaathan and Bhavna Singh*

*in partnership with the High Commission of Canada*

**Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies**



B-7/3, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029  
91-11-4100 1900  
[www.ipcs.org](http://www.ipcs.org)



# Afghanistan 2011

## Canada-India Policy Dialogue

*Report of a Conference organized by the IPCS in collaboration with the High Commission of Canada on 1 March 2011*

### INTRODUCTION

#### Prof Amitabh Mattoo

*Honorary Director General, IPCS*

Any development effort in Afghanistan cannot be discussed without considering the prevalent political scenario. Politically it is still unstable, economically more fragile and socially fragmented. The future of Afghanistan is very much tied to the present actions of the US and NATO forces in 2011. Canada, as a strong ally of the US, member of the NATO-led mission and a major contributor of troops and development assistance in Afghanistan, has been losing public support for the military mission and thus will increase its development efforts in Afghanistan.

© 2010, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)

The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies is not responsible for the facts, views or opinion expressed by the author.

The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), established in August 1996, is an independent think tank devoted to research on peace and security from a South Asian perspective.

Its aim is to develop a comprehensive and alternative framework for peace and security in the region catering to the changing demands of national, regional and global security.

Address:  
B 7/3 Lower Ground Floor  
Safdarjung Enclave  
New Delhi 110029  
INDIA

Tel: 91-11-4100 1900, 4165 2556,  
4165 2557

#### High Commissioner Stewart Beck

*High Commissioner of Canada to India*

Canada attaches great importance to its dialogue with India on Afghanistan, recognizing India's instrumental role in Afghanistan as a major donor with strong historical and cultural links to Afghanistan. Canada and India have formal bilateral mechanisms to discuss regional security, including foreign policy consultations and an annual Strategic Dialogue. Canada's role in Afghanistan began in 2002 as part of the combat mission under ISAF. Since then, it has evolved into a 'whole-of-government' approach addressing security, governance, development and humanitarian assistance. Canada's efforts in Afghanistan have focused particularly on the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar. Canada is in Afghanistan along with over 60 other nations and international organizations, at the request of the democratically-elected Afghan government, as part of a UN-mandated, NATO-led mission, involving over 131,000 personnel. Since 2002, Canada has deployed about 2500 troops a year in Afghanistan, for a total of more than 20,000 troops over ten years. In addition, Canada has increasingly deployed contingents of police, diplomats and other officials to Kabul and Kandahar. A new chapter begins for Canada later in 2011 as the nature of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan will shift to focus on reconstruction. Canada's efforts will be centered in Kabul and will emphasize four key areas: 1) investing in the future of Afghan children and youth through de-



velopment programming in education and health; 2) delivering humanitarian assistance; 3) promoting regional diplomacy; and 4) advancing security, the rule of law and human rights, including the provision of up to 950 military trainers, their support personnel, and approximately 45 police trainers for Afghan security forces. This renewed engagement builds on Canada's significant contributions to Afghanistan to date, supports Afghan-developed priorities, and sustains progress in key areas essential to Afghanistan's future. India and Canada are both among the top bilateral donors to Afghanistan. Canada's single largest development partner is Afghanistan, with \$1.9 billion committed to reconstruction and development assistance from 2001 to 2011. Canada's ultimate objective is to support the people of Afghanistan in building a country that is better governed, more stable and secure, and no longer a safe haven for terrorists. Afghanistan remains Canada's top international security priority. As such, Canada is interested in deepening its understanding of the perspectives of key regional actors, such as India, who share the view that peace and stability in Afghanistan is indispensable to ensuring a secure and prosperous neighbourhood.

## **Amb Lalit Mansingh**

*Former Foreign Secretary*

Afghanistan is very crucial for India's national security as it is critically connected to what happens next in Afghanistan. The ongoing peace-keeping operation where 140,000 troops from 50 countries involved for the past 11 years is not small. Under the Obama Doctrine, the US will reduce its troops from Afghanistan starting 2011 till 2014 on the logic that the situation on the ground is stable and progressive. Unfortunately, an International Crisis Group report suggests that none of the success which is claimed to have been achieved has actually occurred. It also indicated that counter-insurgency operations are failing in Afghanistan as governance is a major problem and suicide attacks are still prevalent in many parts of the country. For these reasons, India is more attentive towards learning about current developments in Afghanistan. But the depressing fact, as it stands, is that India knows very little about the ground reality of the country.

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESSES**

### **Amb Jayant Prasad**

*MEA Special Secretary (Public Diplomacy), & Former Ambassador to Afghanistan*

Afghanistan poses the greatest security challenge to the world today. The nature of intervention now will determine the future of this crisis. And the most critical requirement right now is to build Afghan National Police. In this, Canada has shown the greatest resolve in the toughest district of the country, Kandahar. However, the recent security developments suggest that there is a need to rethink military intervention in Afghanistan which failed to acknowledge the significance of nation building efforts and overlooked Pakistan's role. All member states, mainly the US and NATO countries (49 countries in all) must address this emergency need and craft their policies accordingly. The development model followed by the international community so far in Afghanistan has been yielding no results. For instance between 2001 and 2009, the Afghan government spent US\$ 5.7 billion from its own budget for reconstruction processes. In addition the international community gave US\$ 41 billion in aid of which US\$ 12 billion was defrauded by the Afghan government. So pumping money has not helped to enhance governance, rather it has encouraged corruption among Afghan officials. In a parallel development, the number of troops deployed has also been raised since 2006. As for the US, since Obama took over as President, the troops have been surged from 36000 to 100,000, which is big leap. The US mission has also changed over time from wiping out al Qaeda to what Bob Woodward, in his book, 'Obama's War' suggested as a reversal of Taliban momentum, rather than its defeat. This is a strategy which needs to be followed through. Nevertheless the US has not found so far a constructive



way to deal with Iran which is an important strategic neighbour of Afghanistan. Once the US pulls out from Afghanistan, the regional countries will be left to pick up the pieces predicated by the will of Afghans.

The ongoing infrastructure development projects will help to enhance governance capacity in Afghanistan. India has been involved with many such projects in the country, which has received appreciation from the public. So it is in India's interests to promote development projects not only to stabilize Afghanistan but also to deter the revival of Talibanism. Therefore, Afghanistan undoubtedly remains India's key strategic security interest. India is highly cautious about its role because of Pakistanis sensitivities and has confined itself to aiding developmental projects without interfering in their internal affairs. India's primary aim in this respect has been to assist training and administration facilities in Afghanistan, providing scholarships to Afghan students to study in India and provide employment to Afghani nationals in development projects at a reasonable pay.

For lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan, a sustainable security apparatus must be established in the troubled border regions. In order to achieve this objective, we must encourage free movement of goods and people across the province, continue development aid, train the Afghan National Army and Police, and gradually build the Afghan civil society. This requires different strategies to be pursued for different provinces of Afghanistan based on the most critical needs of these individual parts, and finally separate Pashtuns from the Taliban. Three critical questions need to be addressed for the future course of action: What is the desired end-state in Afghanistan, What are the diplomatic instruments that should be employed towards forward movement and how does one propose to sustain constructive engagement in Afghanistan?

## **Canada's Engagement in Kandahar**

### **Mr. Tim Martin**

*Representative of Canada in Kandahar, Afghanistan*

As the Representative of Canada in Kandahar, Amb Martin leads a mission of sixty-two Canadian civilians, working closely with Afghan, Canadian and international security forces in Southern Afghanistan. The Canadian mission in Kandahar is a 'whole-of-government' effort comprised of diplomats, military, aid workers, corrections officers, and civilian police. Canadian civil servants and soldiers live and work at the district level of government alongside their local Afghan District Governors. The international community came to Afghanistan to deny safe haven to terrorist organizations and is working with the Government of Afghanistan to help it build enough strength and legitimacy to effectively govern its territory and prevent the return of al Qaeda and other terrorist and criminal organizations. Where Afghanistan was the subject of international rivalry in decades past, today it is a catalyst of international cooperation. In Kandahar Province, governance and development are primary considerations in the counter-insurgency strategy. Wherever the international community partners with Afghan National Security Forces to improve security, it also partners with Afghan government officials to extend representative governance and basic services. This approach generates confidence in local communities that their government is there to stay. Canada took the lead security responsibility for the province of Kandahar in 2006 as part of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

At its outset, Canada's mission in Kandahar was primarily military. The Canadian civilian mission in Kandahar came largely as the result of a report from a five-member parliamentary committee led by the Honourable John Manley. The report recommended an increased focus on the diplomatic mission, a series of tangible 'signature projects' in the province, and improved reporting to the Canadian people on our key objectives. Canada decided to focus 50% of its aid budget at the provincial level, established three tangible signature projects – the Dahla Dam and its irrigation canals, the construction and improvement of fifty schools, and the polio eradication campaign. Canada's achievements in Kandahar are substantial. Its signature education project is achieving its benchmark of building and improving 50 schools. Canada is making a \$50 million investment in the agricultural economy of Kandahar through the Arghandab Irrigation Rehabilitation Project.

The impact of the project is profound; 80% of Kandahar's economy is linked to agriculture. Canada had hoped to eradicate polio in Afghanistan by 2009. While it delivered millions of vaccinations and cases of polio are few, that target was not achieved. The Afghan National Security Forces are also becoming more effective. Canada's Civilian Policing mission has provided high-quality training to the leadership of the Afghan National Police. The foundation of stability in Afghanistan is the emergence of a credible government capable of delivering security and basic services. Only if Afghanistan can determine its own future, select its own government, and solve its own problems, will the country develop the internal capacity required to resist becoming an object of international rivalries and insurgent and criminal activities. As the heartland of both the insurgency and Pashtun constituency, Kandahar is at the centre of these efforts. And things in Kandahar are improving. As security has been established, governance and development have quickly followed.

## India's Afghan Policy

### Shanthie Mariet D'Souza

*Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS Singapore*

While the focus here would be to showcase what India has done and why it has been able to sustain and retain the goodwill in Afghanistan, it is also important to know how things are evolving in a limited period between 2011 and 2014. India went to Afghanistan for three primary reasons: one was security, given that the security situation there has always remained problematic for India. The second interest was economic and was in terms of building the Afghan economy which would connect South Asia with central Asia. And the third was the regional and global role which India aspires to fill. The Indian strategic thinking vis-à-vis Afghanistan can be depicted in three schools of thoughts: Realism, Neo-Liberalism and Nehruvism. The Realists look at India's aid as an instrument to carve out space in Afghanistan to deter the return of Taliban while the Neo-Liberals look at Afghanistan as a land-bridge between the Central Asian region and Afghanistan for the free flow of natural resources and goods. The Neo-Liberals argue for greater economic engagement in Afghanistan. And the third, the Nehruvians, who sees Afghanistan as a brother in need of help. Thereby, any kind of Indian engagement in Afghanistan could be seen in this tradition of keeping aside internal politics while providing assistance for the development of this 'brother in need'.

India has adopted the soft power approach vis-à-vis Afghanistan which includes capacity-building, humanitarian assistance, improving education, communications, infrastructure development and other community development projects aimed to build Afghan society. In this regard, security sector reform is an important area because without security any kind of development will not be sustainable. India can also contribute to the development of the Afghan National Security Forces, the training of the Army especially of the officer corps in the Air Force and the development of civil-military relations. The second component is that of the political sector reforms where the international community has made little progress so far. One of the main political issues is the reconciliation and reintegration of Afghans. On this issue, India has been very supportive of any kind of integration process. It is moving towards recognizing the need for reconciliation but there are some red lines, which were set out at the London Conference. On the social and cultural aspects of Afghanistan's development, it is important to highlight how *Deoband* could provide moderate Islamic messages vis-à-vis the radical messages that emerge from Afghanistan. Education has also remained very critical; public information catering will be very significant and there is a need to have track-II initiatives between the academia, the non-government organizations and the media in the region. Reviving the old silk route may be beneficial, but more importantly, regional cooperation, counter-terrorism and economic engagement would benefit the people of the region.

## An Academic Perspective on Canada's Policy in Afghanistan

### Michael Skinner

*York Centre for International and Security Studies, York University*

Canada's role during this latest inning of the great game- the global 'War on Terror' and overseas contingency operations simply expose the clash of principles and interests. Unfortunately, the Canadian political leaders bear the responsibility for this clash. To justify Canada's role in the war in Afghanistan, Canadian politicians and opinion-makers publicly framed the war in three ways: 1) as a struggle of principles to spread democracy and universal human rights; 2) as a necessary show of support for Canada's closest ally and largest trading partner, the United States; and 3) as part of a necessary strategy to ensure national and global security. However, economic and geopolitical interests outweigh any genuine concerns for liberating the Afghans. While Canada's foreign policy interests are generally convergent with its closest ally, the US, aggressively pursuing many of these interests may exacerbate conflict in Afghanistan and the Greater Central Asian region.

In terms of geopolitical interests, Afghans say that the primary interest of the US is multifold: to assert its global primacy, to establish NATO as an American-led forum for global governance that has capacity and legitimacy, to bypass the United Nations and to abrogate existing international laws and create new international bodies of law. The other geopolitical interest is to establish a military base in Afghanistan which is strategically located between the emerging empires of Russia, China and India, the politically volatile Central Asian Republics, a potentially failing yet very militarily powerful Pakistan and a 'Rogue State', Iran. This is a real change for Canadian foreign policy which has always stressed multilateralism. The economic interests are based on a neo-liberal agenda to generate corporate profits. The economic interests are based on a neo-liberal agenda to generate corporate profits. Reconnecting Eurasia along the under utilized transportation, communications and en-

ergy transmission corridors is for the generation of profits and this will involve the crisscrossing of the greater central Asian region in which Afghanistan is the central node. Transferring the public resources of allied states to corporations in the military, security, and development sectors is another point to be noted. Canada has a huge military and security sector with the sixth largest exporters of military and security products abroad, most of it going to the US. This clash between the principles that exist in the imagination of liberal thought and the concrete material interests of investors and the powerful states that facilitate their investment, are incommensurable. In the material world, we can see this in the case of Afghanistan where this clash of liberal social principles with liberal economic and geopolitical interests has come to a head – interests have thus trumped principles. The problem of bridging the gap between these principles and interests is evident. The Red Cross recently reported that the conditions in Afghanistan are now worse than in any time in the past 30 years and it is time to embark upon the difficult task of settling grievances by facilitating negotiations not only between states and armed insurgents but also by including all stakeholders in the negotiation processes. In this respect, the Guatemalan *consulta* model, which provides a useful example of a more comprehensive and equitable peace negotiation process, could be adapted to the contexts of Afghanistan, Pakistan and other locations of armed insurgency. To conclude, the most effective counter-insurgency strategy is to address and negotiate the legitimate grievances of insurgents.

## **TCA Rangachari**

*Former Ambassador of India to Algeria*

On the issue of reconciliation, there is a perception among the Afghans that elements based in Pakistan can be reconciled with the mainland. Any meetings regarding reconciliation should not take place in a third country because it undermines the legitimacy of the Afghan government. They should instead be held in Kabul. The paradox is that the war can be won only when elements that are fighting against the government are completely reconciled. During the Iraq war the then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, called war illegal, but no one has called the Afghan war illegal so far; neither the last Secretary General nor the present one. So how do you derive legitimacy for an international act? As far as the development of Afghanistan is concerned, there are two different aspects worth discussing. One is development by itself, which is desirable. The other aspect is development as an instrument for peace. Do we have to have development to get rid of the problem of terrorism or in order to bring about peace and the restructuring of a 'modern society'? Ultimately, the question is what the people of Afghanistan desire for themselves. Would a Talibanized Afghanistan be a threat to the region? Yes, certainly it is going to be a threat so far as the west is concerned because today the Taliban has become far more conscious of the world than it was when in power the first time around.

## **The Way Ahead**

### **Prof P R Chari**

*Visiting Professor, IPCS*

India and Canada share common concerns in Afghanistan. Both countries desire a stable and democratic Afghanistan, especially after the withdrawal of international forces in 2014. And certainly, neither India nor Canada wishes to see the return of fundamentalism or the Taliban to power. Canadian interests are evident from the recent policy of withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan before it bears more casualties and its willingness to assist Afghan security forces to manage their security challenges. From this context it is interesting to understand how these shared interests and concerns facilitate cooperation between India and Canada on the future development efforts in Afghanistan.

### **Amb. K C Singh**

*Former Indian Ambassador to Iran*

The challenge before Afghanistan today is the re-integration of intra-Afghan ethnicity which was divided into Pashtun and non-Pashtun groups during the Cold War; this division still continues to rock the



socio-political bottom of the country. India's relations with the Pashtuns were excellent since the two saw the colonial British masters as a common foe. However, the relationship deteriorated when the Indian government swung its support to the Soviet Union. Since then the Pashtuns have seen India mainly as an associate of the Tajiks or non-Pashtun groups. The Indian approach towards post-Taliban Afghanistan was dictated by two factors: a reluctance to meddle in the internal affairs of other states and the Pakistani sensitivity over Indian involvement, which compelled the US to exclude an Indian role from the security sector. Therefore, India's role was confined to humanitarian and development aspects. In the following period, Indian strategy was corrupted by two external factors. One was the shift of US focus from Afghanistan to Iraq in 2003. Thus the Indian nation-building effort was too little to convince the people that their nation was on the way to recovery, which would have kept the Taliban at bay. Second was the Iranian nuclear issue which caused new tensions between Iran and the West. Some fundamental differences exist between India and Canada in terms of their approach towards Afghanistan.

On regional cooperation, the two may not agree on its exact definition and how it can be achieved. For instance, if it is just India and Pakistan, then it would seem like an attempt to manage the two to ensure an outcome that the US may work out to safe-guard its interest. Or if it is a wider conclave of all powerful neighbours, including Iran, China and Russia, then many overlapping discussions would be more in order, to convince all neighbours that they may not get the outcome that they wished for, but one that they could all live with. The last point is about quarantining Taliban from Afghanistan. The cleansing of radical militants or Taliban forces in Afghanistan must include Pakistan's tribal belt. Canada may not be interested in such solutions, which for India have existential dimensions. Therefore, a stable Afghanistan may be a precedent to the stabilization of Pakistan and for that, the success of developmental work in Afghanistan, particularly in the Pashtun areas, would be essential.

### **Tonita Murray**

*Gender and Police Advisor to Ministry of Interior, Kabul*

Despite multiple efforts by the international community to stabilize the country, there has been no substantial improvement. The Obama administration has proposed a transition strategy which would eventually pave the way for exit from Afghanistan by 2014. So what is the way forward for Afghanistan? It lies in the success and failure of the recent transition strategy, which would depend upon the endgame in Afghanistan. However, what does transition in this scenario actually mean? How does it shape the politico-economic future of Afghanistan? The bare bones of transition are that security or responsibility for security will pass from the international community to the Afghan national security forces - the army and police. However, the nature of transition for each province has not been sketched out yet. The transition will depend on the security situation, economic developments and governance on the ground.

There is some sort of ambiguity among practitioners about what kind of situation would emerge given the current economic stagnation and zero governance. For example, the sustainability of the security forces and the international forces including the UN, involved in training and other non-combatant missions, comes under question. Given the mounting deficit in the US economy, how long is the American public willing to tolerate this? How will India manage this transition? At the end of four years, Afghanistan will not be on its own, rather it will depend on what happens in the meantime outside Afghanistan. From a Canadian perspective, Canada is a part of this transition process and contributes to the transition strategy as well as in training missions. How can both India and Canada work with people in the region to help Afghanistan in changing the situation? The emphasis should again be on capacity-building. The real long-term solution lies in building societies, investing in people and developing social institutions, which would help them sustain the stability.

### **D. Suba Chandran**

*Director IPCS*

Two specific observations stand out from the arguments on the way ahead for Afghanistan. First, do India and Canada have common friends or enemies in Af-Pak? Both India and Canada recognize radicalism and Talibanism as a common enemy. However, India does not endorse the segregation of 'good Taliban' and 'bad Taliban', which Canada is agreeable to. India and Canada want a stable democratic Afghanistan. India has invested considerably in developing the Afghan economy in terms of infrastructure building. Similarly Canada too has economic as well as political interests. There is a general perception in India that NATO is trying to influence India to work with Pakistan on Afghanistan. It is the international community that messed up things in Afghanistan and they now wish to pass the problems to the regional actors.

The way ahead for Afghanistan is indirectly laid in Obama's Afghan review which underscores two significant points. The Americans are in Afghanistan only for eliminating the al Qaeda and its network, not to fight Afghan's multiple internal security challenges. Another way can be found in the Blackwill Plan, which suggests the partition of Afghanistan based on ethnicity. Afghans should be allowed to build their destiny; and the international community, which is responsible for the present chaos, should extend their support and aid. A broader regional dialogue comprising of various stakeholders will be worth investing in.

## **Mohammad Samin Hamraz**

*Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*

Afghanistan has suffered a huge amount of human and material loss in the preceding three decades of war that has ravaged the country. In 2001, when the interim government was established as a result of the decision reached at the Bonn Conference, the country's infrastructure and economy were in a highly crippled state. In such a situation, it was a big challenge to run the country, but with help from the international community, Afghanistan was able to endeavour towards providing a better life and its secure environment for the people. Subsequently, with regional, financial and intellectual assistance from countries like India, Afghanistan has been able to undergo tremendous transformation and establish a democratic culture within its precincts.

In the past nine years Afghanistan has seen the revival of its economy, establishment of democratic institutions, educational system, human rights especially with respect to women, freedom of speech, a national army, national police and an open market economy envisaging prosperity for its people. Some other reforms that Afghanistan has managed to achieve are: establishment of a sanctioned parliament to approve the new constitution, a legitimate elected government with two parliamentary and two presidential elections so far, a free media, inclusion of women in the political process and development of friendly/cooperative relations with its neighbours. But terrorism has emerged as a strong challenge that has slowed down the pace of development of this country. Terrorism has a global reach and threatens the stability and security of the world at large. It is important to mention at this juncture that the roots of this menace do not exist in Afghanistan. There also lies a significant challenge in accomplishing equitable and sustainable development for the reintegration of Afghanistan, besides military action to root out terrorists from this region. Moreover, these development activities will be fruitful only if they meet the immediate as well as future needs of the Afghan people.

## **Amb. William Crosbie**

*Ambassador of Canada to Afghanistan in Kabul*

Though some countries might differ on the use of military force to address the Afghan situation (for instance India is absent in terms of military participation), none of them would disagree on the question of governance and development. Canada approaches the question of governance and development in Afghanistan from two dimensions: first, what do Afghans want from Canada and second, what can Canada do for Afghans?

While Canada understands that it is a guest in Afghanistan and the Asian region, it is going to be present in the region for a long period of time. Canada has strong links to the region despite geographical distances. It has a growing Afghan-Canadian population of over 100,000, an impressive population of 1.2 million Indo-Canadians as well as a substantial Pakistani-Canadian population. Hence it wants to contribute to regional stability and support the Afghans to rebuild their future and make sure that all voices from across the society are heard.

Canada consults Afghan civil society representatives almost on a daily basis as Afghans should lead and decide their own future. For example, Canada consulted women stakeholders in Afghanistan when Afghanistan's Sharia Law was under discussion and amendments were proposed. Afghan women (including members of parliament) indicated that they 'were subject to these practices pursuant to their religion' and that they welcomed the proposed laws, although imperfect, as these can assist women in terms of accountability and can be amended later if need be. Ultimately one has to make sure that the voices of the oppressed are heard through proper mechanisms.

The ties that had bound Afghanistan previously in terms of ethnic identities and religious beliefs have been strained by continued violence. But there is a lot of optimism about Afghanistan's future and Canadians feel that they have built and continue to build a proud legacy in the country especially in the fields of adult literacy, and capacity-building in the areas of governance. In conclusion, there is no end date to Canada's involvement as 2014 is a stepping stone for future efforts.