

# **AFGHANISTAN-INDIA-PAKISTAN TRIALOGUE 2010**

*Bridging the Trust Deficit(s)*

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# Preface

The Delhi Policy Group launched an Afghanistan-India-Pakistan Trialogue in 2009. A first of its kind, the Trialogue brought together 40 policymakers, analysts and Track II representatives from Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, to see what the three countries could do together, or bilaterally, to spur stalled and/or obstacle-strewn peace processes.

While two sessions of the Trialogue were held in 2009, three were held in 2010. A number of concrete suggestions emerged from these five sets of discussions, in which around 200 people from the three countries have now participated, for action at both the government and civil society level. Some of the recommendations apply to the immediate term and others to the median or long term.

Over these two years there has been significant change in the participants' approach to the contentious issues we had to tackle, with increasing agreement on key points. This change partly mirrors the dramatic changes that have taken place in Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past two years, and also, we believe, reflects the serious intent of participants.

What follows below is a brief summary of suggestions made for cooperation on common issues at the meeting. *Please note that it is not based on a consensus amongst participants, rather it is a list of individual suggestions.*

***Radha Kumar, December 2010***



# AFGHANISTAN-INDIA-PAKISTAN TRIALOGUE 2010

## Bridging the Trust Deficit(s)

*Please note that this is not a consensus document;  
rather it is a list of suggestions*

### *Triologue Overview*

2010 was a year of multiple initiatives at peacemaking in and for Afghanistan, with multiple actors seeking to seize the initiative. While the year began with international and regional actors like the UK and Turkey seeking to move the peace process along, it closed with Afghanistan and Pakistan in the drivers' seats.

The Afghan government's strategy for peacemaking crystallized gradually over the year, and appears to be concentrated on two processes – with the Afghan Taliban and other armed groups inside the country, and with Pakistan and to a lesser extent Iran on the cross-border insurgency. Ideally the two tracks should be in parallel and in tandem, but they do not as yet appear to be so.

Within Pakistan there was general support for the Afghan reintegration policy, but little or no consensus on the reconciliation policy that is being pursued by the Pakistani government. Indeed the latter appears to have divided both state and society. Some Pakistani political leaders and many amongst policy analysts and civil society argue that distinctions between Afghan, Pakistani and Punjabi Taliban cannot be made because their rela-

tions are fluid; they state, further, that it is the Taliban ideology that must be defeated. These views are deeply opposed by many in the military and polity, especially the religious parties. An inevitable polarization, which is most marked in civilian Pakistan, has intensified over the year 2010, with political and civil society leaders taking strong positions, even at the risk of their own lives. It is worth noting that the change has occurred in the context of a worsening security situation in Pakistan. There have been more casualties from terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2010 than in Afghanistan. The fact that these are domestic rather than cross-border is cold comfort, but it also acts as a brutal reminder of the policy challenges in Pakistan.

In effect, Afghanistan is faced with trying to work on two discrete peacemaking fronts: inside Afghanistan and between Afghanistan and Pakistan. While most analysts would agree that there is a better chance of success on each front if they can be separated, the two however overlap, as they naturally must, considering the Pashtun population in both countries. Natural as the overlap is, it raises threat perceptions amongst the other communities in Afghanistan, and creates a security dilemma that can only be addressed through bridge-building.

Given these trends, it is clear that peacemaking between Afghanistan and Pakistan is essential for the stabilization of both countries. The challenges for peacemakers to deal with, however, are diminishing constituencies for peace in Pakistan and initial heightening of threat perception in Afghanistan, where many fear that the current trend in Afghanistan peace initiatives might exclude their concerns and/or interests.

At the same time, these past 10 years have created a new civil society and professional middle class in Afghanistan, largely concentrated in the cities, whose values are reflected both in Parliament and in think tanks, human rights, education and vocational institutions. This constituency represents an integrating force which rises above religious and ethnic divides, but it is not clear what influence they have in the current peace process.

The various peacemaking initiatives of 2010 set three key deadlines:

1. **2011:** The start of the transition to Afghan authority and institution-building under the Kabul Process headed by former Minister Ashraf Ghani;
2. **2014:** The full transfer of security duties to the Afghan military and police forces, accompanied by the withdrawal of the bulk of international forces;
3. **2014 on:** The entry into force of a strategic partnership between Afghanistan and the US, UK and NATO. The text for the strategic partnership will be finalized in 2011.

Can these deadlines be met? That depends, to a large extent, on whether the drivers of conflict – at the national, regional and international levels – can be transformed in parallel and in tandem.

Notably, the deadlines are for a transition from international responsibilities and their handover to the Afghan government, which in turn entail the stabilization and strengthening of institutions of governance within the country. As is increasingly evident, Afghanistan's ability to strengthen governance depends on the support and/or cooperation of its neighbors. But there are as yet no roadmaps, let alone deadlines, for a transition from conflictual to cooperative relations in the neighborhood. Thus far only feeble efforts have been made on the regional track. While the national track remains vulnerable to the threat of ethnic rivalries and poor governance, the international track is downsizing, and the regional track remains dominated by mistrust.

This is partly because there are two key neighbors, Iran and Pakistan, whose relations with Afghanistan are driven by threat perceptions. Paradoxically, the three countries have been able to cooperate relatively successfully in a trilateral aimed at containing the flow of drugs, but they have not been able to cooperate on stability, peace and security.

The Afghan-Pakistan track is further complicated by the Pakistani government's fear and resistance of deepening India-Afghan relations. Though there have been spasmodic attempts to deal with Pakistani threat perceptions over India's role in Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010, including a proposal to

include the issue as an agenda item in India-Pakistan talks, we are entering a new phase in which the bilateral Afghan-Pakistan and India-Pakistan peace processes are once again moving on different timelines, though each impacts on the other. As mentioned earlier, the former is also acquiring salience over other stabilization initiatives, including, perhaps inadvertently, those directed towards a regional consensus.

The Afghan-Pakistan and the India-Pakistan bilaterals are currently centered on “bridging the trust deficit”, to adopt the phrase that Prime Ministers Gilani and Singh used at the SAARC summit in Thimpu in April 2010. Though Afghanistan and India suffer a common trust deficit with Pakistan, in both its conventional/hard and human security dimensions, and all three have a common threat from terrorism, each has had to find its separate path to negotiation, given the domestic, regional and international geopolitics of Pakistan.

The India-Pakistan bilateral has its own momentum or lack thereof, but the new Afghan-Pakistan initiative will be difficult to sustain without a regional underpinning. Wider regional stabilization and security meetings are required, that will involve Iran, neighbor CARs, China and Russia, as well as India and Pakistan. Though there are fears that a multiplicity of regional initiatives can muddy the waters, if they coordinate with each other and the Afghan government, they can encourage consensus building in the region.

### *Peace Review, 2010*

Beginning with the London Conference on January 28, 2010, a structured peace process focused on reintegration and reconciliation was launched by the specially convened Peace *Jirga* in May. The London Conference signified a decisive shift in the Afghan and international approach, from a combination of counter-insurgency and state-building to a focus on peace-making between the Afghan government and insurgent groups, especially the Taliban. It also set some preliminary red lines for talks that concentrate on reintegration of foot soldiers and mid-level commanders, which were reiterated by the Peace *Jirga*.

The Peace *Jirga* built on the London Conference, expanding the scope of peacemaking, and could be seen as a brave attempt at garnering a public mandate for President Karzai's initiatives. While it set red lines such as adherence to the Afghan constitution for talks with the Taliban, it also endorsed his aim of putting Afghan-Pakistan peacemaking on a fast track. Its major achievement was the laying out of a roadmap for negotiations, to be led by a High Peace Council, chaired by Burhanuddin Rabbani, assisted by the Peace and Reintegration Commission, and provincial peace councils to be appointed by the governors in consultation with the government. The High Peace Council was constituted in autumn 2010 (it has 70 members) and the process of appointments to the provincial peace councils has begun.

The Peace *Jirga* was followed by the Kabul Conference in July, which set up the Kabul Process to oversee the transition from 2010 to 2014, by which time the Afghan government is to have assumed most of the tasks which are currently undertaken by the international community. The Kabul Process established an Afghan-led roadmap to accelerate Afghanistan's ability to govern itself (including mechanisms for accountability), reduce dependence on the international community, enhance its security forces and provide better protection for the rights of all its citizens. These goals are to be achieved from 2011 to 2014.

The above developments initiated a structured peace process in Afghanistan, but several concerns remain. Critics allege that though five parallel tracks have been set – reintegration and reconciliation, trade, security, regional cooperation and economic revival – progress on each is likely to be uneven. Many analysts see the High Peace Council as being symbolic because they doubt whether the institutional capacities exist to give it substance. They also point out that there are two Afghanistans in the making: an Afghanistan of insurgency and resistance, and a new and promising Afghanistan of institution-building. President Karzai's main concern, they say, should be how to consolidate and empower the latter.

A major issue for the success of the process is the twin conditions of transparency and accountability which were set by the Peace *Jirga* and reiterated in the Kabul Process. Some of the *Jirga's* recommendations can

be implemented in a transparent and accountable way – for example, the creation of a legal norm for prisoners’ releases could ensure that some of the negative experience of previous releases is not repeated. However, that is not happening as yet.

When it comes to negotiations, transparency and accountability are more difficult, given the need for confidentiality. The High Peace Council could play some role in bridging the gap, by closed door briefings for concerned bodies such as parliament and opposition leaders as well as public advocacy. Even though this is a limited trust-building exercise, it will develop public confidence in the process.

A point to be stressed is that while it is preferable to negotiate from a position of strength, this position does not derive simply from military success. Better governance, including a check on corruption, will also provide a greater position of strength to government negotiators.

### *Reintegration and Reconciliation*

The Afghan conflict is underpinned by three key drivers: the domestic, the regional and the international. The tendency in Kabul is to perceive the conflict as a regional problem. The region must be a part of the solution; however this alone cannot solve the problem – just as the international drivers, or the national ones, cannot alone resolve the conflict. The three drivers need to operate in synergy with one another.

Within Afghanistan a consensus needs to be built on what the Taliban represent: at present there are contradictory views on this, with some believing it to be a threatening force and others perceiving it as a legitimate nationalist movement. The ideological mooring of the Taliban is often lost in the perception that the Taliban are a disenfranchised and misguided group of people.

There are five main pillars that sustain the Taliban movement:

1. *Ideological infrastructure*: several mosques and *madaris* serve as the ideological hubs for the Taliban in Afghanistan, while in Pakistan refugee camps serve as recruitment and training bases;
2. *A structured leadership and organisation* that provides propaganda to a wider support group;
3. *Financing* through private funding and donations received from the Gulf nations, criminal networks in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the drug trade and intelligence networks;
4. *Cross-border institutional support*: institutional support (financial and non-financial) in varying degrees is received from Pakistan and occasionally from Iran. Support to a somewhat lesser extent, is also received from other countries in the Gulf region;
5. *A conducive social and political milieu in Afghanistan* which facilitates the easy recruitment of foot soldiers. The Afghan government, still in its infancy and struggling to establish itself in conditions of insurgency, lacks efficiency and is often regarded as corrupt. These factors, combined with the heavy-handedness of the international community, also contribute to the overall problem.

The present strategy of the Afghan government, supported by the international community, is to seek to transform the Taliban into a political movement through a pull, push and hammer strategy:

- *Pull*: The Afghan government offers incentives to the Taliban to participate in the political process. Many feel, however, that Afghanistan is being indiscriminate in its offer of incentives, without adequately cross-checking the antecedents of entrants.
- *Push*: Pakistan and Iran encourage the Taliban to engage in a peace process and deny them sanctuaries within their own countries.
- *Hammer*: The surge weakens the insurgency and makes it difficult for mid-level Taliban to survive.

The problem is that if the push factor is as weak as it is currently is the pull and hammer factors cannot work optimally . As a result only 3,000 members from the Taliban have joined the reintegration process, and some of them are former detainees. Whereas the pledge of USD 500 million at the London Conference makes reintegration more feasible, it also makes the issue of cross-checking the antecedents of entrants more significant.

Reconciliation is even more complicated by the presence of a multiplicity of actors. In particular two issues dominate uncertainty: who to negotiate with, the Taliban alone or also such groups as the Haqqanis? If it is to be the Taliban alone, who in it – the old guard of the Quetta Shura or the new guard of young commanders on the ground who are ideologically more hard-line?

Within Afghanistan, there is considerable opposition to negotiating with such groups as the Haqqanis, on the other hand, there is considerable support for negotiations with the Taliban, both old and new guard. The Pakistani government, however, is apparently suggesting negotiations with the Haqqanis first, and actions such as its arrest of Mullah Baradar in 2010 feed suspicions that it is holding the Taliban back.

A prima facie acceptance of the suggestion that a Taliban office be opened for negotiations in a third country may help plug this gap. Turkey has offered its services, but the Afghan government may find another country, perhaps in the Gulf, more suitable. Wherever it is located, it will clarify whether the Taliban can become a negotiating partner or not.

### ***Bridging the Trust Deficit: Afghanistan-Pakistan***

2010 was a year of major changes in the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship, both negative and positive. Violence escalated in Pakistan, which for the first time suffered larger casualties from terrorist attacks than Afghanistan did. Many Pakistani analysts argue that as one of the chief sufferers of the conflict, after Afghanistan, Pakistan has a key interest in pushing for a transformation in relations. They point out that:

- The presence of fundamentalist forces in Afghanistan feeds the violence within Pakistan;
- The approximately 1.28 million Afghan refugees based in Pakistan further weaken Pakistan's economy, with a high proportion of refugees seeking employment;
- 33% of Afghanistan's opium goes to Pakistan; and
- The unregulated transit trade negatively impacts Pakistan's domestic industries.

However, the apparent propensity of the Pakistani government and (un)civil society to draw a distinction between “bad” and “good” or Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, has been an obstacle to transformation in Afghan-Pakistan relations. Moreover, according to Pakistani information it seems that the Taliban is not willing to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whose Hezb e Islami is already part of the government, is willing to negotiate but he is not powerful enough to bring the Taliban on board, and Saudi efforts to play honest broker have not yielded tangible results thus far. This situation could change if the surge is successful as is being claimed.

The second major obstacle is the misuse of refugee camps as training centers, and the unregulated crossings across the border. In Torkham and Chaman, the number of people moving across the border totals approximately 45,000. Afghanistan and Pakistan are working on the installation of a biometric system at these crossing points, and if it is implemented as expected in 2011, the issue of unregulated crossings might be dealt with. However, the problem of misuse of Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan is growing, as some of the refugee camps have been moved to Taliban strongholds and others may follow. The Pir Ali refugee camp, for example, is now used as a training center for the Taliban. The Pakistani government has requested the Afghan government to arrange for repatriation so that the refugee camps can be closed down; this process needs to be put on a fast track, albeit its implementation will require complicated planning and resources.

It was observed that many of the Afghan and Pakistani participants, especially those from the Pashtun-dominated provinces on both sides of the border, were acutely conscious of the tension between Kabul and Islamabad over the unresolved Durand Line border. The politics of Pashtun identity, it was generally agreed, provides Islamabad with a compelling reason for interfering in Afghanistan. Without a resolution of this dispute, it would be hard to see relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan stabilize.

Pakistani analysts point to government fears that if the Afghan Pashtuns are unhappy with their government, they will call on the Pashtuns in Pakistan to help. The remedy, they say, is to offer the Taliban a power-sharing arrangement which would serve as an incentive to bring them to talks. If an equitable power sharing arrangement is not arrived at with the insurgents, Pakistani analysts fear that a civil war will once again engulf Afghanistan and this will have disastrous repercussions on the refugees in the north and south of Pakistan.

However, a power-sharing arrangement could call into question the structure of Afghan government and parliament, and may even call for constitutional change – drastic measures that many Afghans oppose as bringing back imposed governments rather than elected ones. These fears are intensified by the fact that it is Pakistan that is leading the push for power-sharing talks with insurgent groups. Memories of the extent of Pakistani controls on the Taliban regime are still fresh, and that is an era few Afghans would wish to see return.

Afghan analysts point out that there is a close affinity between Afghans and Pakistanis born of centuries of co-existence and a shared religion; this is reflected in the fact that at the people to people level there is considerable trust, as can be seen in the generous welcome given to refugees. At the political/strategic level, however, there is a general belief amongst Afghans that Pakistan is yet to accept their country as a fully independent and sovereign entity. If Pakistan can give up its view of the Taliban as a strategic asset, they say, there is huge potential for Afghanistan-Pakistan rapprochement.

Few of them accept the Pakistani assertion that the process of doctrinal change is already underway: General Kayani's statement that the strategic depth doctrine has been reinterpreted to refer to Pakistan's desire for a peaceful and friendly Afghanistan is seen skeptically as sophistry. Pakistan's attempts to determine/limit India's role in Afghanistan are also counter-productive, as they reinforce the belief held by many Afghans that the strategic depth doctrine has not altered.

As against these arguments, the three sessions of the Trialogue held in 2010 saw a growing opposition from Pakistani policy analysts and civil society (admittedly beleaguered) to the official Pakistani policy, indicating these are issues which are being hotly debated in Pakistan. At the analyst level, there appears to be a growing convergence between Afghan and Pakistani views that the Taliban need to transform in order to become negotiating partners. Whether, and how, this opinion can have an influence on Pakistani policy-makers remains a moot point.

Bridging the Afghanistan-Pakistan trust deficit is as difficult a task – perhaps even more difficult – as bridging the India-Pakistan trust deficit. It is different from the latter, however, in that there are a number of international actors involved in the bridge-building. But the influence of the international community is limited by the deep asymmetries of military and economic strength between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and it is further restricted by the requirement to withdraw international troops by 2014.

One possible area of convergence between Afghan and Pakistani policy analysts is the warning that too quick a withdrawal of international troops will jeopardize the current efforts to get a stable peace process going with Pakistan's help. A possible alternative is for the present coalition troops to be replaced by a UN mandated force drawn from Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh. Such a force could come in the wake of a cease-fire agreement between the insurgents and the Afghan government, which would need to be one of the key issues for talks.

Secondly, the international community has worked steadily to cement better economic relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, resulting in

several Afghan-Pakistan infrastructure development projects being recently agreed. After years of negotiation and pressure, it was an important step for the Afghanistan-Pakistan transit trade agreement to be signed on July 19, 2010. With the signing of the agreement, Afghan trucks will be allowed to deliver goods through the Wagah road crossing into India (with transshipment to Indian transport and vice-versa). Moreover, Pakistani trucks will be able to cross Afghan territory to transport merchandise to the Central Asian Republics.

It is a pity that the agreement could not be expanded to include India, as the Afghan market is captive and/or dependent on Pakistan, limiting its capacity. Given Afghanistan's war-shattered status this is, to some extent, a trilateral issue.

Finally, both Afghan and Pakistani analysts agree that Pakistan has little need to fear the deepening Afghan-India relations, given both the degree of people to people integration between Afghanistan and Pakistan and Pakistan's geo-strategic position. However, the Pakistani government, and especially the military, will need to be convinced that this is the case. As they are unlikely to take the first step, Afghanistan and India need to devise approaches to reassure them.

The Afghan government's recent reshuffles of key ministers and bureaucrats are seen by many as an attempt at reassuring Pakistan, though some argue that it may be too dependent a step.

### ***Bridging the Trust Deficit: India-Pakistan***

As the Indian Foreign Secretary reiterated in her speech to the fourth Dialogue (see Appendix), India has no interest in perpetuating a strategic rivalry or "proxy war" with Pakistan in Afghanistan. India's chief strategic concern is to ensure that Afghanistan is not used once again for terrorist attacks against India or Indian citizens, as it was under the Taliban and more recently through a string of attacks in Kabul. With Pakistan gaining a decisive

role in peace negotiations, it is possible that the Pakistani military's threat perception towards an Indian presence in Afghanistan may decline. If the "no proxy war in Afghanistan" issue comes up in the Indian and Pakistani Foreign Ministers' talks, it could yield a positive discussion.

India's nuanced position on reconciliation and reintegration should also help reduce the India-Pakistan trust deficit on Afghanistan. The Indian government supports the reintegration plan targeting foot soldiers and mid-level commanders, on the grounds that India has done the same in several of its once-conflicted North-Eastern states; its spokespeople also point to the way in which insurgent leadership have been absorbed through the electoral process and taken positions of power in India. In effect this is an endorsement of the Afghan Peace *Jirga's* roadmap for talks with insurgent groups; with the codicil that power-sharing can be most effectively exercised through the ballot. Though India is not happy at the prospect of the Taliban sharing power in the Afghan government, the Indian government will not object if this is what the Afghans desire.

A recommendation was made in our first Trialogue in 2009, that India and Pakistan should discuss their goals and threat perceptions in relation to Afghanistan. This recommendation appears to be gaining traction in both countries and could help reduce the trust deficit if diligently pursued. A strategy based on needs and interests, rather than positions, will have to be given greater consideration moving forward.

On the other hand, evidence indicates that Pakistan-based groups have been behind the string of attacks on Indians in Afghanistan from 2008 on, and the Pakistani government is openly lobbying for Indian presence to be minimized. Terrorist threats against India in Afghanistan could decline in the immediate future due to the influence Pakistan is acquiring in Afghan-Pakistan negotiations (although how long/short-lived the decline will be is an open question), but it will be difficult to reduce India's trust deficit vis-a-vis Pakistan if there is no forward movement on preventing attacks on India from Pakistani or Afghan soil.

The issue of “functional cooperation” against terrorism has been raised in other Track II forums, such as Pugwash, and at Track I level is partly covered by the Islamabad SAARC Home/Interior Ministers’ meeting, which discussed how to better implement existing SAARC agreements on counterterrorism. It may be that a regional mechanism will work better than a bilateral mechanism. Whether India and Pakistan can move to functional cooperation on upcoming terrorist threats in bilateral mechanisms, for example between the FIA and NIA and/or CBI, is debatable given the slow pace at which the Mumbai trials have moved in Pakistan.

For India, Pakistan’s prosecution of the Mumbai accused is a key pillar in reducing the trust deficit. Its inordinate delays have created a public weariness with peace initiatives in India. The Pakistani government says the prosecution case is still not strong enough. If functional cooperation were to begin with this case, it could be a building block for broader counterterrorism cooperation, whether under a revitalized Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism or another mechanism. A small CBM could comprise allowing an Indian lawyer to attend the Adiala jail hearings (a Pakistani lawyer attended the Kasab trial as observer, but it was not a closed court). A bigger one would lie in Pakistan’s putting together a joint investigative and prosecutorial support team to push the case forward, sharing intelligence, police work and legal expertise, including by eminent Pakistani and India lawyers (perhaps an eminent Pakistan-India lawyers group could be formed to monitor the trial?). The Home and Interior Ministers of India and Pakistan agreed, on June 26, 2010, to a joint investigation of the Mumbai attacks, by the CBI and FIA. Similarly India should share information on the Samjhauta train blasts’ investigation and prosecutions, as and when new information emerges. If there are any cross-border links behind the blasts, joint investigation could be considered.

Indian analysts agree that on its part the Indian government could do more to lay Pakistani misperceptions to rest, in the spirit of the Sharm el Sheikh declaration of 2010, even if these misperceptions are somewhat fanciful. The accusations that India is aiding Balochi armed groups and at-

tempting to starve Pakistan of water are not credible, but the two countries' Water Commissions still worked doggedly to show that the latter was not based in fact. It was a confidence-restorer to hear Pakistan Indus Waters' Commissioner assert that the Indus Waters Treaty should remain in force and all disputes can be resolved under it.

In any case accusations play into a zero sum game. Fears and suspicions can be aired in dialogue rather than the media and settled through dialogue. This will help ensure uninterrupted engagement. Moreover, a regular and frequent dialogue mechanism needs to be instituted, and if it can plug into existing symbols and create new ones, it may acquire public traction too. One suggestion is to physically locate such a dialogue at the Wagah border, with designated rooms.

Dialogue can only be uninterrupted if it has a military-military component, given the strong policy role of the Pakistani Army. In previous Dialogues a series of suggestions were made on this issue, to which the following recommendations for CBMs were added: hotlines between the two countries' DGMI and intelligence chiefs, visits between war and staff college students and/or the creation of special courses for them.

A more difficult issue to tackle is support for the Afghan National Army. With the incremental drawdown of US and coalition troops from 2011, the onus will gradually shift to the Afghan army. The functionality and efficacy of the Afghan security forces is an important factor for the transfer of duties in 2014. A model needs to be created in which the Afghan security forces become stakeholders in this process.

This could potentially be an area for India-Pakistan cooperation in the future. Both India and Pakistan have offered assistance for training the Afghan army. The Afghan government had earlier indicated that they would eschew assistance from within the region, but are now thinking of joint military assistance as a political CBM. The two governments could stand prepared to implement their offers as and when the Afghan government asks.

Finally, the India-Pakistan track has been in existence far longer than the Afghan-Pakistan track, and has therefore identified a larger number of issues on which some amount of work has already been done. At the Foreign Secretaries' meeting in Islamabad in June 2010, it was decided that the two countries would focus on the doables. While first priorities will be counter-terrorism and CBMs, including trade, there are several agreements that have not been fully implemented, such as the 2008 agreement on consular access to prisoners to make the due process as seamless as possible.

### ***Building a Regional Consensus***

As mentioned earlier, for stability to take root in Afghanistan the national, regional and international tracks need to intersect. National reconciliation and regional efforts for peace and stability have to be mutually reinforcing. The international track will fall into place if the first two levels are taken care of, in parallel.

Two possible ways of bringing stability to the region are: (a) through conquest and the elimination of those elements attempting to destroy Afghanistan; and (b) genuine national reconciliation that is not externally driven. Whilst foreign intervention has, to a certain extent, exacerbated Afghanistan's problems, the role of internal conflict and mistrust should not be underestimated. Both external and internal parties must accept responsibility. Although genuine national reconciliation is not currently on the table, some form of reconciliation does need to happen, and it is unlikely to occur without strong regional backing, and in the case of Iran and Pakistan, active participation as well as backing.

The Pakistan connection has already been discussed, and Iran was not a part of the Trialogue. However, Iran is an important player in Afghanistan and without its cooperation Afghanistan will continue to be unstable. As long as there are U.S. sanctions against Iran, there will be no incentive for the Iranian government to cooperate. But if there is a genuinely regional approach to solving the problem, Iran may participate in a constructive manner.

Today the conflict is no longer about settling the war as the stakes are much higher, with terrorism taking on international and regional dimensions. There needs to be an analysis of what models could potentially work in the region.

As far as a regional approach is concerned, the 6 plus 2 mechanism was attempted during the civil war, unfortunately without any real progress. The discussions that took place revealed that every country had a different point of view with regards to what a stable Afghanistan should consist of. No real attempt was made at peacemaking. More recently, Uzbekistan followed the 6 plus 3 model, but had to face the problem that the larger the group, the more unwieldy the chances of developing a common action plan.

Nevertheless, initiatives such as the one taken by Uzbekistan are essential if any momentum is to be built towards a regional consensus for stabilizing Afghanistan. The starting point could be a regional compact built on non-interference and non intervention, where all the regional countries agree to a settlement. The key role for such a consensus could be taken by the UN.

A UN role in brokering a regional agreement for Afghanistan is provided in historical precedents such as the Geneva Accords and the Bonn Agreement, which included pledges of non-interference and sovereignty. The Afghan government could make a request to the Secretary General to pursue those pledges, giving him the authority to implement the relevant provisions of the Geneva Accords and the Bonn Agreement.

If the UN were to appoint a special envoy to consult with the rest of the international community, along with a process of definition to lay down the parameters of what is meant by foreign or external interference, it could be an important step towards developing a regional consensus. This would be a two-stage process – a regional compact would be followed by an international conference with the P5 to come to an agreement. There could be a monitoring body or authority (for instance, an observer or peacekeeping force) to ensure that the compact is properly implemented. There could also

be a complaints procedure which bestows on the country the right to complain to the Secretary if it feels that its sovereignty is about to be violated by an aggressor country.

The model of neutrality which was used to declare Turkmenistan a neutral country through a UN mandate is also available, though relatively unpopular in Afghanistan. The key point is to ensure that any pledges that are made or reiterated are accompanied or followed by tangible actions.

There has been greater progress in regional trade mechanisms than in peace and security. Though the RECCA process, which was initiated in India, has gathered slight steam with its declaration to revive the Afghan economy as a silk route and hub, thus far few of its targets have been met. The same can be said of ECO. Then there is SAARC, which has still not been able to open its markets or trade with Afghanistan, because trade would have to transit through Pakistan and India, and Pakistan has yet to agree to allow transit trade through India to Afghanistan. The entry into force of SAFTA would help. SAARC member-states could consider whether they can fast-track SAFTA so that it can feed into the transition process in Afghanistan.

The SAARC countries could also work towards better cooperation with the UN against terrorist financing and to restrict the flow of illegal arms. The latter is a problem for the whole region and merits a separate agreement under the SAARC Convention.

### ***Concluding Recommendations***

*Begin consultations for a regional compact.* Wider regional stabilization and security meetings are required, that will involve Iran, neighbor CARs, China and Russia, as well as India and Pakistan. Though there are fears that a multiplicity of regional initiatives can muddy the waters, if they coordinate with each other and the Afghan government, they can encourage consensus building in the region.

*Develop a regional forum to identify the root causes of terrorism.* Such a forum would also identify the sources of support for terror groups. It is

felt that unless terrorism is addressed and discussed directly, other CBMs will remain largely cosmetic.

*Develop and implement existing pledges on non-intervention and sovereignty.* The Geneva Accords and the Bonn Agreement include pledges of non-interference and respect for Afghan sovereignty. The Afghan government could make a request to the UN Secretary General to pursue those pledges, giving him the authority to implement the relevant provisions of the Geneva Accords and the Bonn Agreement. A UN role in brokering a regional agreement for Afghanistan is already provided in these agreements.

*Support reintegration and reconciliation.* The suggestion that a Taliban office be opened for negotiations in a third country is a good one – it will help clarify whether the Taliban can be a negotiating partner or not.

*Fast-track the repatriation of refugees from Pakistan.* The misuse of Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan is continuing to grow. Some of the refugee camps have been moved to Taliban strongholds and others may follow. The Pir Ali refugee camp, for example, is now used as a training center for the Taliban. The Pakistani government has requested the Afghan government to arrange for repatriation so that the refugee camps can be closed down, and this process needs to be put on a fast track.

*Help Afghan capacity-building.* As a safe and non-controversial area, India and Pakistan can cooperate on joint projects for capacity-building. For instance, Afghanistan may benefit from training in primary education from Pakistan, whilst also benefiting from higher education training from India. Such projects could also be launched under the SAARC Social Charter.

*Initiate military-military CBMs.* The idea of joint military exercises in peace-keeping, involving the three countries, was floated in our first Trilogue, and we note it is now being suggested at the Afghanistan-Pakistan-Turkey trilateral. While this suggestion is still some way away from acceptability in the three countries, India and Pakistan could consider mutually supportive training and military capacity-building for the ANA.

*Cooperate against terrorism.* The issue of “functional cooperation” against terrorism has been raised in other Track II forums, and at the Track I level is partly covered by the Islamabad SAARC Home/Interior Ministers’ meeting. It may be that a regional mechanism will work better than a bilateral mechanism. Whether India and Pakistan can move to functional cooperation on upcoming terrorist threats in bilateral mechanisms, for example between the FIA and NIA and/or CBI, is debatable given the slow pace at which the Mumbai trials have moved in Pakistan, but there is no alternative but to doggedly pursue it.

*Begin an India-Pakistan dialogue on Afghanistan.* Many of the above recommendations would be facilitated through an India-Pakistan dialogue in which both countries could clarify their misperceptions vis-à-vis each other’s interest in Afghanistan.

*Economic development.* Speedy coming into force of SAFTA could contribute to economic revival in Afghanistan and should be pushed by SAARC member-states. India and Pakistan also need to move discussion on an India-Pakistan transit trade agreement as counterpart of APTTA. Moreover, all three countries formed an important tributary of the Silk Route in its heyday. The concept of Afghan development as a Silk Route hub, which is being promoted by the international community, will benefit all three countries greatly and should be vigorously backed.

*Women’s empowerment.* Each country has very strong women’s groups that are already working together. However, each country faces severe human security threats for women, and each could do more to promote reforms offering women better opportunities, as enshrined in the SAARC Social Charter and the UNSCRs 1325 et al. India and Pakistan have National Commissions on Women, if Afghanistan were to set one up then all three could share best practices on reform.

*Media.* Better access for the media of all three countries is a must, but the role of the Indian and Pakistani electronic media in exacerbating bilat-

eral hostilities and spreading fears makes it very difficult to recommend easy broadcast access. The media in both countries could consider training in conflict and peace reporting and perhaps South Asia as a whole, need to look at how non-governmental mechanisms for remedies against biased and false reporting can be beefed up.



# Appendix

## **Speech by Foreign Secretary to the Afghanistan-India-Pakistan Trialogue, June 2010**

1. I am privileged to speak to such an eminent gathering from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan assembled here. I would also like convey my appreciation to Delhi Policy Group and Prof. Radha Kumar for organising this trialogue. I looked at the summarised report of the Trialogue for 2009 and was struck by the forward looking ideas delineated there.

2. I think it is a truth universally acknowledged that India, Pakistan and Afghanistan share bonds and linkages that transcend the immediacy of the present. Often, we are also treated to the refrain that India-Pakistan issues have impeded the collective progress of the region. There are those who maintain that for peace and stability in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan should resolve all their differences. The complexities in such equations are not resolvable through the application of simple formulae, although it can be conceded that peace between the two largest countries in South Asia would have a salutary impact on the destiny of the entire region. Of course, the issue of peace and stability in Afghanistan needs to be addressed separately and comprehensively and not within the matrix of India- Pakistan relations.

3. I believe that the issue of peace and stability in Afghanistan has facets to it which concern governance, which concern issues of grass-roots level administration and deliverance of public goods like transport, trade, health, education and women's empowerment, the mitigation of the culture of the gun, the eradication of terrorism, the creation of a strong Afghan National

Army and Police and, structuring the role of regional countries in ensuring that long term peace and security in Afghanistan cannot be a bridge too far. A good outcome, and the realization of these goals, in Afghanistan can change the current of history in our region.

4. When the searchlight is turned on what we – as India - do in Afghanistan, the vista is clear. India is engaged in developmental and humanitarian work to assist the Afghan people as they build a peaceful, stable, inclusive, democratic and pluralistic Afghanistan. The landscape of destruction must change. India neither sees Afghanistan as a battleground for competing national interests nor assistance to Afghan reconstruction and development as a zero sum game. (Indeed, may I venture the proposition that development and security in the entire region of South Asia should not be a zero sum game. We must be creative and flexible in our thinking on such issues). Our \$ 1.3 billion assistance programme is aimed at building infrastructure, capacity building in critical areas of governance, health, education, agriculture etc. and generating employment. We have paid a heavy price in terms of the lives lost of our citizens who work in Afghanistan, as we are targeted by those whose agendas conflict with the emergence of a strong and stable Afghanistan. Last year, over 300,000 Afghans- mainly women and children trekked long distances to avail of free medical treatment from the Indian Medical Missions in Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif. The economy of battle-scarred Nimroz province was transformed with the building of the Zaranj-Delaram highway and the homes of the people of Kabul have been lit after more than a decade by the Pul-e-Khumri transmission line from the Uzbek border. These are by no definition, activities that are inimical to the interest of the people of Afghanistan or its neighbours. We have sought to assist Afghanistan within our means. In fact, the international community as a whole has made great contributions in terms of diplomacy and development, in assisting Afghanistan to stand on its feet. We welcome these efforts and are fully supportive of them.

5. The security of Afghanistan and what happens there impacts us, as a country in the region, as a close neighbor whose ties with the Afghan people

stretch into antiquity. A stable and settled Afghanistan, where the rank and file of the Taliban has given up violence against the government, and the people, cut all links with terrorism, subscribe to the values of the Afghan Constitution and its laws, and where development is the hard rationale, is what we seek and quest for. It is important also that for such a structure to be durable and enduring, Afghanistan's neighbours, and regional partners, will need to be in the picture – both by consultation and by adherence to the principle of non-interference in the country's affairs, ensuring that it thrives as a trade and transit hub for the region, and by eradicating transnational terrorism.

6. I will now focus on the dynamics of our relationship with Pakistan, particularly following the meeting of the two Prime Ministers in Thimphu in April. India- Pakistan relations are, by virtue of a complexity that has grown, rather than diminished over the years, literally, a class apart. Theories about why such distances separate us, abound. Geographical contiguity and shared history, ethnic and linguistic affinities, and similar developmental challenges have not induced an inevitable congruity between our interests. That is the tragedy of our relationship. The last sixty years have had more than their share of bitterness, recrimination, mistrust, misunderstanding and miscommunication. There is a trust deficit. Some also refer to a vision deficit, especially since India has over the years sought to spell out a broader vision of our relationship while a similar definition has not been easy for Pakistan to enunciate. Therefore, there is need for articulating a common definition of what kind of relationship we want for the future. The welfare of our millions should be the common denominator of our efforts.

7. So, what has gone wrong so far? While some would trace the current state of India-Pakistan relations to the circumstances that led to the birth of the two countries, others would blame events thereafter, but what is important for us today is to try and assess the reasons underlying the existing state of this relationship and to think afresh on the way forward. It is only through such an analysis that we can overcome the difficulties in our relationship. This is the spirit of Thimphu.

8. And, as we commence this exercise, it is important to reiterate a few points. We seek a stable, peaceful, economically progressing Pakistan. Secondly, we sincerely desire peace with Pakistan. Thirdly, we have to learn to live with the asymmetries in our sizes and capabilities. Such differences of scale should not deter us from working with each other. Pakistan should shed its insecurity on these counts. Fourthly, India is a neighbor which has exhibited true restraint despite misguided and serious provocations. Fifthly, the entry of radical ideology into the domain of religion, and, the consequent implications for peace and security between India and Pakistan, making differences over Kashmir even more difficult, must be prevented. Radical, terrorist forces are also increasingly battling for larger space in a deathly struggle that seeks to overwhelm moderate, democratic forces in Pakistani civil society. The writing on the wall must be seen.

9. There is agreement today on both sides that dialogue is the only way forward. Consequently, our Prime Ministers have charged the Foreign Ministers and Foreign Secretaries with the responsibility of working out the modalities of restoring trust and confidence in the relationship and thus paving the way for a substantive dialogue on all issues of mutual concern.

10. For bridging what is called the “trust deficit” between the two countries, we are ready to address all issues of mutual concern through dialogue and peaceful negotiations. Let me however, pose a question, here. The progress in our Composite Dialogue especially from 2004-2008, and the frequent references to the deliberations of the back channel during the same period, do not diminish the import of one dilemma. How do we deal with the persistent threat of terrorism? It is a given, that this dialogue can best progress in an atmosphere free from terrorism, which has been the bane of our region. Most terrorist attacks in India and elsewhere have their origin in our region. Every terrorist attack, including the one in Mumbai, hardens Indian public opinion, making our task more difficult. Terrorism as a continuation of war by other means, and the use of terrorist groups selectively, as strategic assets against India, cannot and must not, continue. As an intrinsic part of the long-term vision of relations it desires with India, Pakistan must act effectively against

those terrorist groups that seek to nullify and, to destroy the prospects of peace and cooperation between our two countries.

11. We often hear about Pakistan's apprehension about India's conventional defence superiority and growing strategic capabilities after the civil nuclear deal with the United States. Suggestions have been made for a strategic restraint regime in South Asia. I would like to reiterate that India's defence posture and capabilities are not of an offensive nature, and not targeted against any country, including Pakistan. We want to see a peaceful, stable, energy-secure and prosperous Pakistan that acts as a bulwark against terrorism for its own sake and for the good of the region. Asymmetries in size and development, should not prevent us from working together, building complementarities, and realizing a vision of friendly, bilateral relations. In my opinion, there can be no better strategic restraint regime than greater economic and commercial integration; more and more people to people contacts and cultural exchanges, which lead to mutual understanding of each other's views. Here rests the key to bridging the trust and vision deficit.

12. In recent times, we have also seen unprecedented focus on the "water issue" between India and Pakistan. Breast-beating propaganda and baseless charges alleging stealing of water and illegal construction of dams have been spread and poisoned the atmosphere of our relations further. The myth of water theft does not stand the test of rational scrutiny or reason. India has never sought to deny Pakistan its fair and stipulated share of the Indus waters. We firmly believe that the Indus Water Treaty is an example of mutually beneficial cooperation between India and Pakistan. For fifty years now, it has been a very successful and useful mechanism for discussing water-related issues between the two countries. India has always adhered to its Treaty obligations, even during the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971, and will continue to do so. We are committed to resolving whatever differences that exist in this regard under the mechanism that is provided by the Treaty. This apart, as developing countries, India and Pakistan also stand to benefit from consultations in the context of multilateral processes dealing with environmental issues, including water. In future, India could consider,

under a suitable bilateral intergovernmental mechanism, co-operation, such as sharing best practices in water utilization and irrigation.

13. India Pakistan relations have been discussed under the Composite Dialogue process. The Composite Dialogue, which was resumed in June 2004, was predicated on the solemn commitment given by Pakistan that it would not allow any territory under its control to be used for terrorism directed against India. Four Rounds of the Composite Dialogue were completed. During the 5th round, the dialogue process was paused after the terrorist attack on Mumbai. We appreciate the relevance and achievements of the Composite Dialogue, particularly in the period 2004-2008. During this phase, all issues of mutual concern, including Jammu & Kashmir, were discussed. Amongst the achievements, we can cite a number of Confidence Building Measures related to peace and security, such as agreements on pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles and reduction of the risk from Accidents relating to Nuclear Weapons, hotlines between various officials on both sides; enhanced people to people contacts through bus/truck and train services; revival of the Bilateral Joint Commission after 16 years; setting up of the Judicial Committee to look into the humanitarian issue of civilian prisoners/fishermen held in each others jails and growth in bilateral trade by 550% between year 2003-04 and 2007-08 from US\$ 344.59 million to US\$ 2.23 billion.

14. On Jammu & Kashmir, progress was made based on the common understanding that boundaries could not be redrawn but we could work towards making them irrelevant; and people on both sides of the LoC should be able to move freely and trade with one another. Towards this goal, a number of cross-LoC CBMs were put in place, which included the opening of five crossing points on the LOC; introduction of triple entry permits; increase in frequency of Srinagar- Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalkot bus services; starting of cross-LOC trade on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakote routes through movement of trucks, etc.

15. On the way forward, we have to build on these achievements. We also

have to reaffirm the progress made through complex negotiations and dialogue through patient and unsung effort whether in the composite dialogue or back channel diplomacy, during this period. We must seek creative solutions.

16. India's rise should not be seen in subjective or negative terms by our neighbours. In fact, our fast growing economy and large market should be seen as a growth opportunity: a reliable source for investments, technology and entrepreneurial resources, besides being a rapidly expanding market for our neighbours' exports. Unfortunately, economic and commercial integration within SAARC has been stymied by political considerations at the cost of economic benefits. Intra-SAARC exports are a mere 5% of the total SAARC exports.

17. Pakistan has nothing to fear from Indian commerce and industry. This has been said by its own Panel of Economists, appointed by Pakistan's Planning Commission. The Panel in its report on Medium Term Development Imperatives and Strategy for Pakistan has assessed that bilateral trade between our two countries, can grow from the current around US \$2 billion per annum to a range of \$3 to \$10 billion. The report enumerates several advantages for Pakistan if trade is normalized with India, which includes geographical proximity and cheaper transportation costs. It concludes that shorter distances will render it unnecessary for Pakistani industry to carry high levels of inventories of raw material. We hope that Pakistan implements the recommendations of its own economists to give India MFN status and shift from a positive list to a negative list regime. Growing economic integration will not only contribute positively to our common developmental imperatives but will also facilitate in building trust and confidence. Moreover, Pakistan could benefit from trade and permitting transit through its territory between India and Afghanistan, thereby creating a win-win situation for all three countries.

18. In conclusion, I would like to echo what Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on the 7th June at the Convocation of the Sher-e-Kashmir Univer-

sity in Srinagar: “Our issues with Pakistan are well known. Good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan are in the interest of both the countries. At the same time they are necessary for peace and harmony, stability and development in our region. The relations between the two countries over the past one and a half years have been under the shadow of the terror attacks in Mumbai on November 26, 2008. As you are aware, I met the Prime Minister of Pakistan in Thimphu last month. Both the countries accepted that there is a trust deficit between us. We also agreed that this distance between the two countries must be reduced. Prime Minister Gilani Saheb has assured me that Pakistan will not allow its soil to be used for terrorist activities against India. Meaningful talks between the two countries, which can lead to a resolution of old issues, are possible only when Pakistan does not let its territory be used for acts of terror against India. The destiny of our people is linked to each other. Therefore both the countries should adopt effective ways of co-operation to the benefit of the people of the two countries. A strong, stable and prosperous Pakistan is in the interest of our whole region”.

The road ahead is a long and winding one. But as fellow travelers, India and Pakistan must tackle the challenges of this rocky road with the belief that a secure and prosperous future vitally and crucially depends on our ability to do so.

**June 13, 2010**  
**New Delhi**