

Cover This Week

The Schiller Institute rallied in New York City on Oct. 14, demanding release of \$9 billion of the Afghan people's money. Here, an organizers' table opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral.



EIRNS/Daniel Burke

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EDITORIAL

Schiller Institute

A Call To Release the Funds of the Afghan People

Oct. 12—The following call was initiated by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, and Jacques Cheminade, former candidate for the French Presidency and president of the French political party, Solidarité et Progrès.

Today and in the coming days, we, informed citizens of the world and patriots of our own nations, stand united, in Washington, Berlin, Lima, Paris, Rome, Buenos Aires, Copenhagen, Madrid, Stockholm, Brussels and in many other cities of the world, to expose and denounce a crime.

On August 15, after four decades of foreign interventions, a new government took power in Afghanistan. While having orientations we don't necessarily approve of, the new government has expressed its willingness to face the immediate humanitarian challenges, eradicate opium production, reconstruct Afghanistan's health system and build the basic infrastructure required to jump-start trade and development. As clearly understood by Pakistan, India, China, Russia, Turkmenistan, Iran, and others, it is in the interest of all to allow the new government to stabilize the situation by engaging in normal international relations. But more is required: without minimal foreign input, Afghanistan will fail in dealing with its deadly food and health crisis, which

started way before August 14.

Hence, it is outrageous that in the days following the Taliban takeover, the White House announced that all assets of Afghanistan's central bank held in the U.S. would not be released to the new Afghan government:

- The U.S. Federal Reserve refuses to release the \$9.5 billion of assets of the Central Bank of Afghanistan, \$7 billion of which are held by the New York Fed.



EIRNS/Daniel Burke

Schiller Institute Day of Action in front of the British Empire Building on 5th Avenue in New York City.

About \$1.3 billion of these assets are held in international accounts, some in euros and British pounds, while the rest of the assets are held by the Bank for International Settlements based in Switzerland. As a result, Afghanistan can only access .1-.2 % of its total reserves!

- The International Monetary Fund has suspended all financing for “lack of clarity within the international

community” over recognizing the new government. \$370 million set to be released August 23 was withheld and access to the IMF reserves in Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) assets, which can be converted to government-backed money, have also been blocked.

- The World Bank (as denounced in a petition of Code Pink) has refused to release some \$440 million, notably funds required to pay Afghan teachers and health workers. Hence, while there is a huge outcry over “women’s rights,” 13,000 female healthcare workers, including doctors, midwives, nurses, vaccinators, and other female staff, are not being paid by the World Bank’s Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).

On February 29, 2020, the Taliban and the U.S. government signed an agreement. Part III of that agreement stipulates, “The U.S.A. and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are committed to continue positive relations, including economic cooperation for reconstruction.... The United States will refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Afghanistan or intervening in its domestic affairs.”

Today, if the United States wants to regain respect and esteem, it has to live up to its own commitments, especially when millions of human lives, both female and male, are at stake, which is the case in Afghanistan as a result of a food and health crisis of apocalyp-

tic dimensions. Two out of five Afghans, many of them children, are facing starvation.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call on President Joe Biden to act in the spirit of the 2020 Doha agreement signed by the United States, and lift all illegitimate sanctions against Afghanistan, including the use of malign pretexts to prevent Afghanistan’s control over the assets of its own central bank, as well as its normal access to the international financial markets. The urgency is now!



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Schiller Institute Day of Action: Tübingen, Germany (left) and Paris (right, above and below). The German poster reads: “Construction of Haiti and Afghanistan with Nuclear Power and the New Silk Road” and the French: “A Call To Release the Funds of the Afghan People.”

I. International: Afghan Lives Matter

SCHILLER INSTITUTE IN DENMARK

International Conference

Afghanistan: What Now? Peace Through Economic Development

October 11, 2021

An Enhanced Opportunity for Afghanistan and the World

by Michelle Rasmussen in Copenhagen

Oct. 15—*The Schiller Institute in Denmark held a successful, combined in-person and livestream conference entitled, “Afghanistan: What Now? Peace through Economic Development,” on October 11, 2021, in Copenhagen. The full video of the event is available [here](#).*

Now that the war in Afghanistan is over, and many in the West are shaken by events, we are presented with a unique opportunity to shift away from a policy based on regime change and military intervention, to a policy of peace through economic development. This applies to Afghanistan, and, also, to the rest of the world. Everyone on the planet can now see the massive failure of the Western regime-change wars since 2001. They have cost millions of lives, and trillions of dollars.

With the acute humanitarian crisis facing Afghanistan, this paradigm shift could not be more urgent. A major relief effort is immediately required, and the Afghanistan government’s funds, now frozen in the U.S. and other countries, must be immediately released. The international community of governments and aid organizations must respond, and quickly.

At the same time, a long-term effort to build up Afghanistan’s domestic infrastructure, improving the country’s education and health care system, and connecting the country to the New Silk Road (Belt and

Road Initiative) is required. It is also a golden opportunity to abandon geopolitics and establish win-win cooperation between the United States/Europe and China, Russia and other nations.

Therefore, on short notice, the Schiller Institute in Denmark took the initiative to organize this seminar/webinar with specialist speakers who traveled to the Copenhagen meeting venue to personally participate: Hussein Askary, Southwest Asia Coordinator for the Schiller Institute; Professor Pino Arlacchi from Italy, who has had significant experience in Afghanistan; and H.E. Ahmad Farooq, the Ambassador from Pakistan to the Kingdom of Denmark. (Their credentials and presentations follow in this issue.)

The two-week intensive organizing process for this event, reached throughout the dozens of foreign embassies in Copenhagen, including personally visiting 38 embassies, and also into the Danish political and defense institutions. In particular, during this period, the Danish Development Minister, Flemming Møller Mortensen, led an event at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), which was convened to advise him about what he referred to as the dilemma involved in dealing with Afghanistan’s acute humanitarian crisis, now, after the Taliban took power. The circulation of the Schiller Institute’s event invitation and its special newsletter on Afghanistan, provided needed perspective to the DIIS audience.

At the Oct. 11 Schiller conference, guests came in person, and more attended via livestream, together representing countries in Southwest Asia, other regions in Asia, Africa, and Europe. There was diplomatic repre-



Flickr/J. McDowell

sentation from Afghanistan and its immediate neighbors to the west, east and northeast. The Afghanistan embassy in Oslo, Norway contributed a report to the seminar, and many points were discussed by the speakers. Statements to the conference came from the Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China, and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Denmark.

The Schiller Institute in Denmark has long played an important role in international policy affairs, but this was its first physical meeting since the onset of COVID-19. The event [invitation](#) offered insight into the crucial issues now at stake by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Schiller Institute chairman and founder of the international Schiller Institutes. The day of the seminar, she sent a special message, announcing that the Schiller Institute would have a day of international action on Thursday, October 14, to stop the freeze of Afghan assets, adding: “maybe if other forces would join this, it will make the demand stronger.” Her call was then answered by remarkably widespread participation, from Mexico City, to Chicago, New York, Paris, Stockholm, Berlin and many more locations.

This activation is very important, in view of the continued blocking of needed response by the United States and Europe. On Oct. 12, EU Foreign Ministers met on Afghanistan, but did next to nothing toward the scale of what is required. On Oct. 14, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price reiterated that the U.S. will not release the \$9 billion of assets it is withholding, which belong to the people of Afghanistan; he repeated U.S. conditionalities about the Taliban.

The Chairman of the Schiller Institute in Denmark,

Tom Gillesberg, moderated the conference. In his opening remarks, he responded to the conference title question, “What now?” by saying that there must be full-scale action to solve Afghanistan’s problems, saying that it “is going to be through collaboration with all the neighbors” and major nations. Gillesberg added, “We now know that you cannot solve problems through military means.” He spoke personally of how his homeland. “Denmark, since 1999, went from participating in peacekeeping operations,

to instead, go into a militaristic foreign policy, basically joining every single war around, despite being only 5.8 million people! Now, in Denmark, there’s a reflection that this was an utter failure. What now?” A well-known figure in Denmark, Gillesberg is a former candidate for parliament and city council. He holds a Schiller Institute webcast twice each month, and also is the EIR Bureau Chief in Copenhagen.

Activate for Peace Through Development

All of the speakers have been actively engaged in matters related to Afghanistan and the region; their presentations were followed by a period of questions and dialogue.

Hussein Askary, the Schiller Institute’s Southwest Asia Coordinator, is a board member of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden. He is the author of the recent [article](#), “Dawn of Geo-Economics – Extending the Belt and Road to Afghanistan.” He co-authored the Schiller Institute 256-page strategic report, “Extending the New Silk Road to West Asia and Africa: A Vision of an Economic Renaissance,” and was responsible for the Arabic translation and editing of the 374-page EIR Special [Report](#) “The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge.” Originally from Iraq, Askary is a resident of Sweden. He has recently participated in many webcasts and been interviewed on TV in several countries.

Prof. Pino Arlacchi, is the former Executive Director of the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (1997-2002), and former European Parliament Member and Rapporteur on Afghanistan. Currently a

sociology professor at the School of Political Science of the University of Sassari in Italy. Prof. Arlacchi participated in two recent Schiller Institute international webcasts on Afghanistan. On Sept. 5, Helga Zepp-LaRouche issued the recommendation that Professor Arlacchi be appointed by the international community to lead a global aid and development mobilization, with full support for emergency aid, and rebuilding of Afghanistan. His home page is available [here](#).

H.E. Ahmad Farooq is Ambassador of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Denmark, serving since April 2020. From 2013 to 2016, he was in Rome as Counsellor/Alternate Permanent Representative of Pakistan at the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the Rome-based UN Agencies, Rome. From 2010-2013, Amb. Farooq was Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations, New York. He was a member of Paki-

stan's Security Council team during Pakistan's membership of the UN Security Council from 2012 to 2013. From 2018-2020, he was Director General (Counter Terrorism) dealing with counter terrorism at the United Nations and other multilateral forums. From 2008-2010, and again, from 2016-2018, he served at the United Nations, dealing with the UN General Assembly, UN Security Council, Counter Terrorism, UN Peacekeeping and other political, and peace and security issues.

The speeches from the seminar, followed by the Chinese and Iranian embassy statements to the event, and excerpts from the discussion follow. We hope that they will give you a better insight into what we must do, now, to ease the suffering of the Afghani people, and chart a new course for the world's political, strategic, and economic future.

Hussein Askary

End the Cynicism: The Cruel 'Great Game' of Empire Is Dead

This is an edited transcript of the presentation of Hussein Askary to a seminar, co-sponsored by the Schiller Institute and the Copenhagen bureau of EIR, "Afghanistan: What Now? Peace Through Economic Development," held in Copenhagen, Denmark on October 11, 2021. Mr. Askary is the Southwest Asia Coordinator for both the Schiller Institute and EIR. He is also Co-Chair of the Belt and Road Institute of Sweden (BRIS). The seminar was moderated by Tom Gillesberg. Sub-heads and hyperlinks have been added.



Schiller Institute/Michelle Rasmussen
Hussein Askary

The general outline for our discussion is that we are not here to analyze things, we are here to start a development process, which Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the Chairwoman of our Schiller Institute, launched already in July, even before the Taliban took over, because she realized that the end of the game has come, and that there's a new paradigm that should replace the old,

failed paradigm, as everybody could see for themselves.

I will be focussing on three parts in my presentation. The first one is on the humanitarian catastrophe; the second one will be on the failure of geopolitics; and then we will go more into detail of what we think is the solution, the way to go forward, concerning not only Afghanistan but all Eurasia and world politics.

The Humanitarian Catastrophe

There is a very cynical game being played by the same forces who had occupied Afghanistan for 20 years, and then they left the country completely in ruins. After cutting all the financial aid to Afghanistan, the United States has frozen \$9 billion of the government funds of Afghanistan. It's not the money of the Taliban, it is for the government and the state of Afghanistan to be able to import food, electricity, medicine and all things. Then they say, "Look, the Taliban are incapable of governing, because there's

famine, there's chaos, hospitals are closed, there's no electricity, there is no food, there is no medicine: Look, the Taliban cannot govern!" That's a very, very cynical attitude which we have to reverse very quickly, because what is at stake is not the Taliban; what is stake is 39 million people in Afghanistan, whom very few people are talking about.

Now, some people try to blame everything on the Taliban, to cover for their own failure, [asking], "Why is it that a country, after 20 years and \$2.5 trillion spent, cannot grow its own food, cannot have hospitals, cannot produce its own electricity, and there is shortage of water, there is shortage of everything?" To cover for their failure, those forces are saying, "Look, the Taliban is a failed state. Afghanistan is a failed state." But I hope this will not happen, as I will explain.

Recently, international aid organizations, but especially the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program have said there are 14 million people in Afghanistan that are [food insecure](#). They're hungry already, but 4 million are threatened by famine; those people can perish, they can die if there isn't enough food sent to them. We have tens, maybe hundreds of small clinics, which were closed because international organizations were pulled out, abandoning their work there. These centers are closed. Although they are very small, they provided some services to the population.

We now have even the Food and Agriculture Organization saying that probably the time has been missed for the farmers in Afghanistan at the end of September to have sown the seed for their winter wheat crop (sown in the fall and harvested in early summer). The additional factor in this, is that the farmers need the seeds to come from outside the country, to plant.

Many hospitals will not be able to provide services, because guess what? Afghanistan imports 80% of its electricity from neighboring countries. With the freezing of the assets of the government, they cannot pay their electricity import bills to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, and they cannot pay for the food, which was coming from Pakistan, which is the biggest exporter of food to Afghanistan. So, the whole country is in a total disaster, and this has to be reversed immediately.

So, we should abolish the cynical view that, "let there be chaos so we can prove to everyone the Taliban have failed; and that the Taliban's neighbors have failed." But I don't think this is going to happen in this way.

I think that for the United States, for the NATO countries, and for the EU, there's a way back from that failure, by contributing to remedying this disaster, allowing the aid to go back, unfreezing the money which the Afghanistan government can use, and collaborating with Afghanistan's neighbors, with China, with Russia, with Pakistan, Iran—all these neighbors—to rebuild Afghanistan's economy, as I will explain.

Now, that's an immediate priority for both of us, the Schiller Institute, but it should be a priority for everyone to mobilize for that.

Failure of Geopolitics

The other aspect of this is the failure of geopolitics. What Tom said, what Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche has said, this is not Saigon 1975, this is the Berlin Wall 1989, because we have an era which has ended, and hopefully the era of geopolitics which extended for 200 years, probably is ending in the same place where it was born. The "Great Game" was born in Afghanistan. A very valuable book on this—it's called *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*—was one of the first books I was given in the Schiller Institute in 1996, when I joined, and it details how the British Empire played Afghanistan as a buffer against Russia.

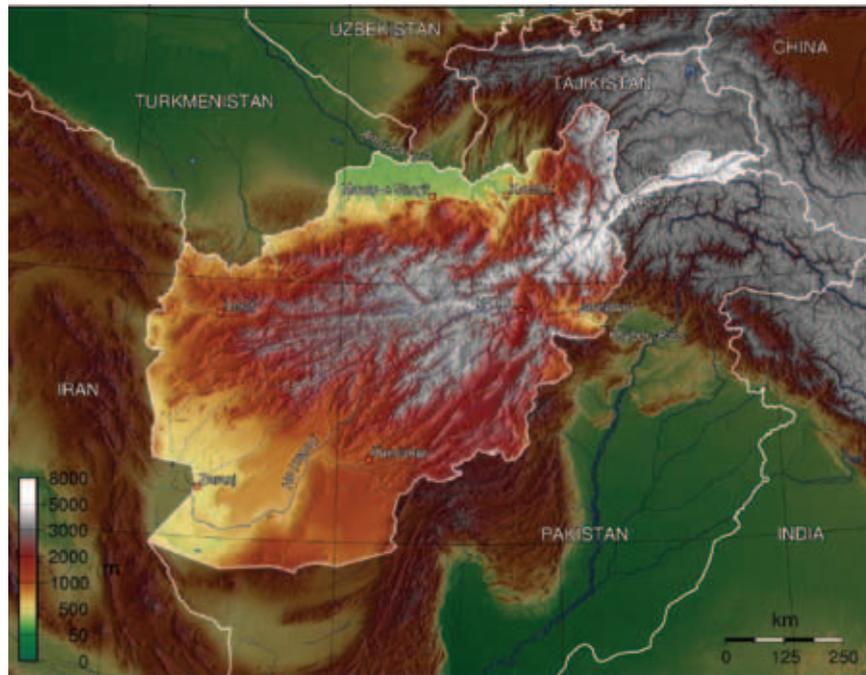
All Afghanistan's borders were created by British intelligence officers who made agreements with tribal chiefs in different parts of the region, especially in the area around the Panjshir River; all these borders were creations of the British, because they could not control Afghanistan: The British lost three wars in Afghanistan, in 1839-42, in the 1870s and in 1919. They invaded Afghanistan, but they could not keep it. So, they turned Afghanistan into a buffer, and if you look at the topography of Afghanistan (see **Figure 1**), it is a natural barrier between the north and the south. So, the British used that.

And the very person, the British intelligence officer who coined the term "Great Game," Arthur Conolly, he was beheaded in Bukhara, in Uzbekistan because he was disguised as a Muslim merchant, and he was caught spying there. He ended up being beheaded by the Emir of Bukhara.

My point is that the same place where the destructive geopolitics, or the Great Game started, can end now. That failure, we saw not only in the whole Soviet era, the mobilization of the so-called Mujahideen

FIGURE 1

Topographical Map of Afghanistan



against the Soviet army in the 1980s, which also had catastrophic results; but then we had a civil war as a result of that in the 1990s, the Taliban coming in; and then now, we have had since 2001 a catastrophic, new page in that history of geopolitics, which we hope, we believe, it can end now.

I usually don't like to talk about numbers of victims, but it gives an idea about the enormous suffering, which was created since 2001, both in Afghanistan, but also in Iraq and other countries that were "regime changed" in a sense. We have these numbers, from a [project](#) at [the Watson Institute of International & Public Affairs at] Brown University in the United States, called "The Costs of War." I have written an article about what these wars have cost. It's massive suffering of the civilian population in Afghanistan. Now, some people have told me these are conservative numbers, but these are documented: Since 2001, we had 270,000 civilians directly killed in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, because Pakistan also suffered from this war. We had 73,000 Afghan soldiers killed; we had 2,298 [American soldiers killed in Afghanistan from 2001-2018] and 3,394 American so-called "contractors"—these are mercenaries[—killed]. But then, look at the massive, 30,000 American soldiers or vet-

erans who committed suicide after going home. You can also imagine the enormous suffering of their families, of the community where they lived.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, since 2001 there have been 2.5 million refugees from Afghanistan in neighboring countries, mostly in Pakistan and Iran. I think this is also a conservative number. There are also 3.5 million people internally displaced because of the civil war and conflicts; people had to move, especially to the big cities, creating even more misery.

And then, we had the financial cost of the war in Afghanistan: \$2.2 trillion! This is an enormous amount of money, and there was nothing built in Afghanistan all these 20 years! All this money was used on fighting, on

weapons, on soldiers, and also on fostering corruption in the community. But totally, since 2001, all the wars the United States was involved in cost \$10 trillion.

This is incredible—I tried to quantify in my head what you can do with \$10 trillion. You can build 17 times China's high-speed railway network, 30,000 km. You can build 17 such networks with that \$10 trillion. You can build 322 Three Gorges Dams in the world, producing 6,400,000 MW of power. This is what the world needs, actually! 6.4 million MW of electricity, this is what you need to cover every person on the planet, that they would have electricity in their homes. This is what these wars have cost. But none of this was used.

I wrote an article about the cost of war and the cost of construction: I compared all the disasters the United States and NATO have been involved in, to China's Belt and Road Initiative. With less than \$1 trillion, China built thousands of kilometers of railways, power plants, ports, airports, agricultural projects, industrial zones and so on and so forth, with less than 10% of what was spent on these wars.

In this sense, we have come to—this is the third section of my presentation—as Biden said, "this is the end of an era." What is coming after that era?

A New Era of Peace Through Development

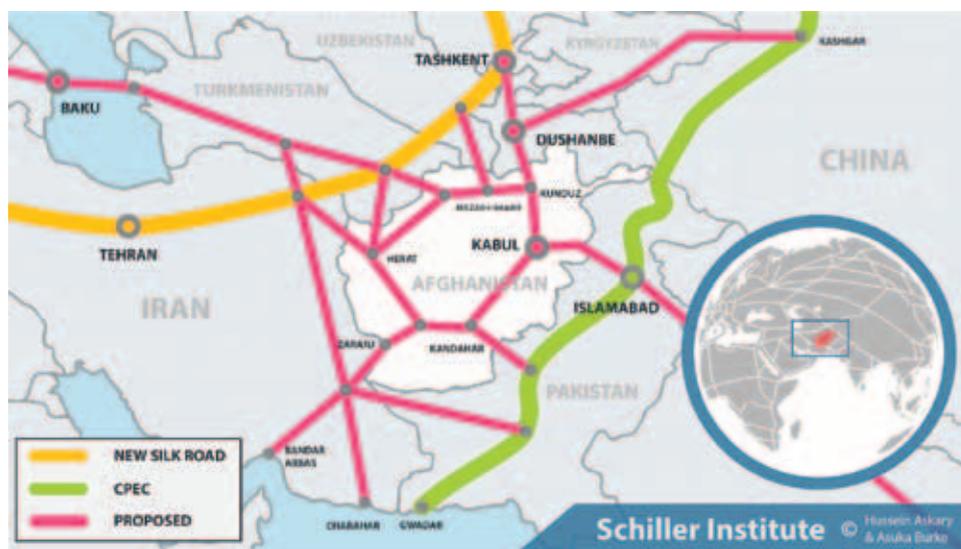
As Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche has said, it's the era of peace through economic development. And the best model we have is the Belt and Road Initiative, because that thing works; it has proven it works. China's own massive economic and industrial development is a proof of the method of how to finance and build infrastructure and pull people out of poverty. China pulled 800 million people out of poverty in the last 30 years!

In any case, this idea of connecting the *whole* world, not creating two camps, where one is China/Russia, and one is the West—this has been the concept of our Schiller Institute since the 1990s. So we are not analyzing things, we are campaigning, we are lobbying to change the world policy, and therefore, all these years, we have produced all this material; we have been in dialogue with governments, we have been in dialogue with think tanks, with engineers, with companies, and so on and so forth, to make sure that people both understand the importance of connecting nations, regions and continents, for their own economic prosperity; but also as a means to establish peace among nations.

The map of Afghanistan in the context of intercontinental development corridors (see **Figure 2**), shows green lines for the Belt and Road Initiative—the different corridors proposed by China, but the other lines, including the Belt and Road, are our ideas for how to connect these continents and include every country in that development.

In the past 20 years—people ask me, how can you know that the Taliban have changed? I've said, I have no idea if the Taliban have changed; I'm not a Taliban expert. What I know is that the world around Afghanistan has changed! That's what I know, and that's what I've been working with. Because if you look at the region around Afghanistan, especially look at the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and how it is creating an economic revolution in the country, although people are in a hurry to harvest the benefit and

FIGURE 2
Integration of Afghanistan into the BRI



Schiller Institute/Hussein Askary & Asuka Burke

say, “OK where is it?” It is a massive development program between China and Pakistan just south to the border of Afghanistan. To the north of the border, you have the New Silk Road, the Iron Silk Road, but also there has been a very big shift in the Central Asian countries to work with Russia and China, but mostly with China, and become the bridge between East and West.

Many of these nations in Central Asia and the Caucasus had been told, if you don't work with Russia, if you don't work with China, if you don't work with Iran, we will help you get your oil and gas, somehow, shipped somewhere to the West. It didn't happen. There's a physical, geographical reality, and you cannot jump over that reality.

Now, therefore, Central Asia is oriented toward Asia; even Iran is oriented toward China with this strategic agreement they signed last year, and the new President of Iran has also indicated very clearly that going East is the aim.

But all these years, all these things have been happening, but Afghanistan is not touched by it. No development inside Afghanistan, under U.S./NATO control. The country was almost sealed away from its natural environment. And what happened is like exactly what also happened in Iraq: you had the failure of Western politicians, not only in grasping strategic issues, but also in understanding economy.

They told the Afghans, “OK, you need electricity?”

Here's some money, you can buy electricity from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and Iran. You need food? Here's some money, you can buy food from Pakistan. You need medicine? Here's some money, you can buy medicine from China." So, they think they controlled everything with money. But what happens when the money is not there?

Why not get the Afghans build power plants in their country so they can produce their own electricity? There is a lot of hydropower potential, there is coal and so on. Why not build some power plants in Afghanistan, using a little tiny bit of the war budget? Why not allow the Afghans to grow food, instead of opium? I'm not going to discuss the opium question, because Professor Arlacchi is going to discuss it. [See Mr. Arlacchi's presentation in this issue.] But all these years, while things were happening around it, Afghanistan was left behind in this process.

Another thing which has happened, which very few people in the West have grasped, is the orientation to the East—but it's not really just an orientation to the East. Last month, there was the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was preparing for the U.S. and NATO withdrawal a long time; they were prepared to step in, in case the United States and NATO completely abandoned Afghanistan. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which was initially a security cooperation organization, has now become a security, but also an economic cooperation organization; and last month, Iran was admitted as a full member.

So you have a physical bloc, a geographical bloc, going from China, including Russia, including India, Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia all the way to the borders with Turkey. Though Turkey is a NATO member—the Turks are getting more and more frustrated by the U.S. and the West, and they are moving slowly to reorient towards Russia or China. You even have the Caucasus. So you have a huge, uninterrupted bloc of nations where you don't have British intelligence spies or American troops in between them. This is very, very important: Those nations can now work freely to establish a stronger economic unity, but also use that to secure the situation.

Build the Economy, Then Comes Security

Now, people say, "well, first you have to have security, then you can build the economy." Wrong! You have to build the economy, to be able to stabilize the

security situation. In Pakistan, you have many attacks on the Chinese companies and the Pakistani engineers who are building the infrastructure in the CPEC project. But the Prime Minister decided to go ahead; you cannot stop building the economy, because if you stop it, then the terrorists will win. You prove that it works. What the Pakistanis are doing is, they are saying, terrorism will not stop us; we will not wait until the situation is "stable," because the economic backwardness is a big source of instability and terrorism, and it can be used by intelligence forces to finance extremist, separatist groups and so forth.

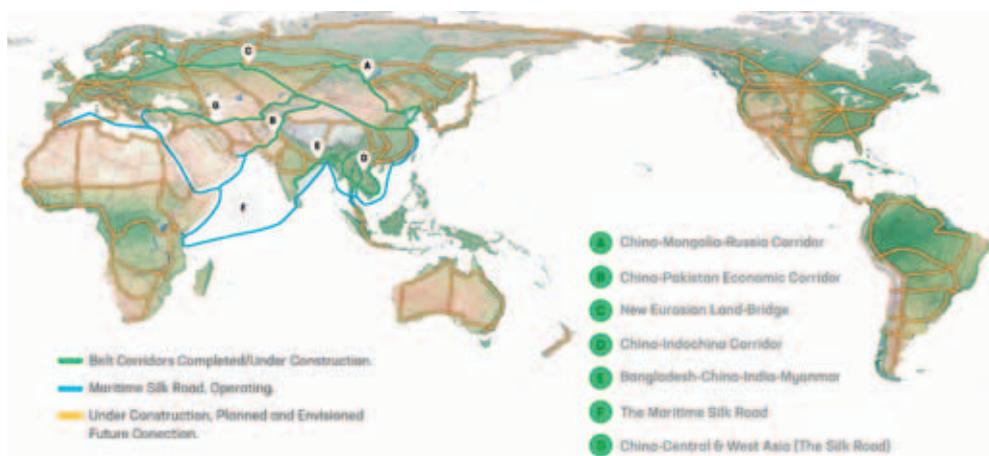
So then, we come to our vision of how this new paradigm, what to do with Afghanistan. Now there are many internal Afghani things. We are not interested in micromanaging the Afghan society as the EU or the United States were doing, telling people how to dress, what to eat, how to treat their children. You cannot do this to another nation! What you can do from the outside, is you make an offer they cannot say no to, by saying: We will help you integrate your economy into this Belt and Road process. We can build infrastructure, we can help you immediately with the humanitarian problem; if you respect us as neighbors, if you work with us on security matters, we can also help build your infrastructure—it's important for you, but it's also important for us. So, everybody wins. This is the win-win concept.

In that sense, we try to take ideas from different sources, including from the Afghan former Foreign Ministry. One important thing about our work is we don't play geopolitics. Because there are many infrastructure projects proposed by the United States, for example, the so-called TAPI pipeline, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline. The idea—and we said at the time this will never be built, because there's a geopolitical intention behind it; it's not to help people. The idea was to make sure that Turkmenistan, which has a huge gas reserve, does not work with Russia or China. So you can take the gas directly through Afghanistan and Pakistan, to India, our allies and then to the international markets. They wanted to prevent Iran and Pakistan and India from building the "Peace Pipeline," to export gas from Iran to Pakistan and India. That was stopped, too.

But reality asserted itself and now Turkmenistan is exporting almost all of its gas to China. And Kazakhstan and other nations are dependent on Russia to export their gas. In our idea, all these projects would be inte-

FIGURE 3

Development Corridors of the Belt and Road Initiative



BRIX

grated together, not to play geopolitics, but to integrate the economies of these regions. This is one of the ideas from the former Foreign Ministry, the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan.

Afghanistan joined the Belt and Road in 2016. Abdullah Abdullah went to China, signed the agreement, but nothing was done. Afghanistan also became a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to get loans for infrastructure, but that didn't lead anywhere for the obvious reasons—opposition from the West, but also corruption inside the country. But they had very brilliant ideas for connecting the major cities of Afghanistan, and also connecting Afghanistan to its neighbors. What was missing were the connections to Pakistan and China. They didn't want to have that included, because the Afghan government had problems with Pakistan.

So now we want to remove these kinds of differences, and there is no reason why the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline should not be built. It will benefit everybody; it will ease the tension among these nations, and make sure that India is working with China, with Pakistan, with its environment, rather than playing a bad, geopolitical role. The ideas are there, the plans are there, many agreements were signed, but they were never implemented. So that should become a priority for discussion, now, not later, with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization inviting Europe and the United States in too, with the SCO saying, we want you here, but we want to talk about this. We don't want to talk about war against terrorism, we don't want to talk about fundamentalism, or chang-

ing the culture or changing the regime. We want to see whether you can contribute to this, can you help finance and build projects?

There should be a global dialogue for all these projects. There are also old Russian plans; we have those in our first [report](#), *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge*, in 2014. The Russian Academy had designed plans for connecting Afghanistan to

Central Asia and northern Siberia.

The Enormous Potential of Afghanistan

We have enormous potential in Afghanistan, most importantly the human potential, the human resources. You have 39 million people, but more than 60% are below the age of 30. People who are above 62 years in Afghanistan are only 2% of the population, because the longevity has gone down because of all these wars. But you have a *huge* young population. If they are provided with education, with the resources, the infrastructure, then they can become the most important wealth of the country.

Everybody has heard about all the great minerals that are in Afghanistan, worth \$1 trillion. You have the copper mines, iron mines, but also lithium and rare earth minerals—all over Afghanistan, which is true! But it is not the focus on the money, because otherwise, it's "\$1 trillion, \$1 trillion." These can actually be used as an asset to establish a national bank of development, using their natural resources as a guarantee for issuing credit for development—but that's another discussion.

The United States Geological Survey did a fantastic job—this is one of the few things they did well; they surveyed the whole surface of Afghanistan, including remote sensing, satellite imaging; they had sent geologists, and they had covered every part of Afghanistan, to find out the non-oil-and-gas minerals in the country. And this is a report, interestingly, after the United States withdrew from Afghanistan, the site disappeared which has all the studies. You click on it, and it doesn't open up... That huge database is no longer available,

since the United States withdrew. All the regions of Afghanistan were studied—the Mes Aynak major copper mine. I will come back to this, because there are certain things which we have learned from Lyndon LaRouche about physical economics which have nothing to do with money, have nothing to do with these things: There is a physical reality that people have to pay attention to.

For example, one of the reasons the Chinese company which took the contract for the copper mine, did not fulfill the contract, is because if you want to extract any mineral, especially lithium, but also copper and iron, you need huge amounts of fresh water. You cannot take the iron from the ground and sell it on the market: It's mixed with other things. You have to crush it, you have to wash it, and separate the iron or copper or lithium, and that takes huge amounts of water, and Afghanistan is a dry country. It takes a lot of electricity, and power; you need transport.

Afghanistan does have rivers; the problem is that most of those rivers depend on snow melting in the mountains. Also, these are transboundary rivers, they share it with other countries, and Afghanistan has only one agreement with Iran on transboundary rivers. They have no agreements with other countries; nobody knows who can control the waters.

Afghanistan receives 55 billion cubic meters of water every year, through precipitation and other means; it's as much as Egypt gets in the Nile area. But that water is spread all over the place; it's not used. To do that, you need to build dams, you need to build management systems, you need all kinds of modern infrastructure to save the water and to use it in the right way. So, this is one of the big problems that has to be solved, and that will help also to utilize the minerals in the country. Without water, you cannot do it.

The lack of electricity is a big disaster which was left in Afghanistan. Afghanistan produces, as I said, only 600 MW—that's a small power plant in Denmark. The rest, they import from other countries, mostly from Uzbekistan. But Iran, which is under harsh economic sanctions, not only produces electricity for its own people, it [also] exports part of it to Afghanistan and exports part of it to Iraq, which has been under U.S. and Western control all these years! It's a big irony.

For all these years, nobody thought, why not build some power plants in Afghanistan? In Pakistan, in the last 5-6 years, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects planned and produced 17,000 MW of power—

hydropower, coal power, and including two nuclear reactors being built in Karachi. And everybody's attacking China, but nobody's saying anything about this disaster we have in Afghanistan.

I make jokes about the geopolitics of pipelines, because they never happen. But if we have a new paradigm of relations, there is an irony to understand: geopolitics doesn't work, but geo-economics does work. The reality today is that Central Asia's major gas and oil market is China. It's not Denmark, it's not Brussels, it's not Washington. There is a physical, geographical reality which governs the new situation here, and all nations around Afghanistan, I think they have realized this, but the important thing now is to avoid that Afghanistan descends into chaos, because what you will have is, if the current government collapses, if you have famine, you'll have refugees everywhere, but then you'll have terrorist groups taking over the country. It will spill over into the neighbors, and it might have international implications.

Therefore, I'm very sure that the neighboring countries—and they are already—are responding with humanitarian aid going from China, Pakistan, Iran. I was in Iran recently; there are regular flights from Tehran to Kabul. So, there is a certain normalization. All the countries now realize, around Afghanistan, I think they have plans, to help normalize the situation in Afghanistan, no matter who is in government.

Our job is to make sure that Europe and the United States, instead of cynically sitting here, hoping to see the Taliban collapse and the country going into chaos, to prove the fact that the Taliban are no better than us, they should join in. There is room for atonement. There is room for changing your way of doing things, and joining the new paradigm, by opening a dialogue with the neighbors of Afghanistan, with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and seeing what kind of projects the United States and Europe can contribute to. The United States, under President Franklin Roosevelt in World War II, already had many plans for the development for Afghanistan, development of African nations, and even for China. There was a different mindset governing the policies of the United States, and people can go back to that, and Europe can go back to its humanist traditions and contribute to something, to not pay for all the sins, but to create a new situation whereby these old mistakes are not repeated.

This is what I have to say so far, and I am looking forward to the discussion.

Pino Arlacchi

A Successful Strategy for Eliminating Opium Production in Afghanistan

This is an edited transcript of the presentation of Pino Arlacchi to a seminar, co-sponsored by the Schiller Institute and the Copenhagen bureau of EIR, "Afghanistan: What Now? Peace Through Economic Development," held in Copenhagen, Denmark on October 11, 2021. Mr. Arlacchi is a former Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna, a former Executive Director of the UN Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention, and Member of the European Parliament, and a former EU Rapporteur on Afghanistan. Currently he is a sociology professor at the University of Sassari in Italy. The seminar was moderated by Tom Gillesberg.



Schiller Institute

Pino Arlacchi

Thank you very much to the Schiller Institute for the invitation, that I accepted with enthusiasm. Talking about the subject that I'm dealing with for three decades, now, Afghanistan, that I dealt with in a couple of roles. First, because Afghanistan is the main producer of narcotics crops in the world, producer of most of the opium and heroin that is consumed in Western Europe, and my role at the time was that I was the Executive Director of the UNODC [UN Office of Drug Control]; and then, as a Member of the European Parliament, I dealt again with Afghanistan, as the author of the strategy for Afghanistan for the European Union. It is a report that has been approved largely by the European Parliament in 2010, and then ignored by the European Commission in the subsequent years.

So, Afghanistan is in my heart, not only as a student of political affairs and a sociologist, but as a country that has plenty of meaning and symbols for all of us in Europe and in the rest of the world.

Last Summer, we had evidence about it, the issue of Afghanistan seemed to become the number one priority in the world. Just two months later, a complete collapse in interest about Afghanistan and all that is related to it. I am struck, these days, about the radical shift of the inter-

est in financial and public opinion, both in the media and politics, about Afghanistan. Once the last American soldiers left the country, after almost all Western people evacuated the country, suddenly a curtain of silence fell over Afghanistan. In the last two weeks, I read in Italian papers, just one article about Afghanistan. No one now seems to be particularly interested in the subject.

And this is, unfortunately, confirmation of an attitude that we in the West have, about whatever does not fit into our vision of the world. As

Hussein [Askary] said before: We have a completely new paradigm in the world order, and in political affairs, that is now showing more and more clearly, from one day after another. But this paradigm did not start with the Afghanistan crisis. It started several decades ago, and what is happening now is just that we are being aware of this new configuration of the world.

But let's go, first, phase by phase.

My Plan Eliminated Poppy Production

My interest in Afghanistan was about drug control, and when I got my job at the top of the UN, I thought it was an opportunity to put into practice what, as a student, I had elaborated several years before: The fact that the problem of heavy drugs, both heroin and cocaine consumed in the West, has its origin in the country that produces the drugs. Not only by physical—obviously, these are natural drugs that are produced elsewhere, not in Europe—but also from an economic and social point of view.

So, the best strategy was not to attack the problem here, in the final stage of the drug trade. The best way was to go at the source, for one main economic reason: The fact that at the source, the opium problem is very small, in economic terms. The opium issue, the heroin issue, drug addiction becomes a big problem at the end of the chain. What always struck me about the figures of heroin production in Afghanistan: 10 kilos of opium

poppy is transformed into 1 kilo of heroin: 1 kilo of opium poppy in Afghanistan does not cost more than \$10 or \$20. The price of 1 kilo of heroin in Afghanistan, at the farm gate, does not go for more than \$100, \$200, \$300. 1 kilo of heroin here, in Copenhagen, costs around \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000. So strategically, it was much more reasonable to intervene at the source.

The farm gate production of opium poppy in Afghanistan when I started to deal with the country, was around \$100 million a year. Last year, 2020, it was \$350 million, all the production of opium poppy in Afghanistan. It means 90% of the world's heroin: So, \$350 million becomes \$15 billion here in Europe, and almost the equivalent in the United States.

I was not the first to think we could drastically intervene with a very small amount of resources, at the source, simply eliminating the production of opium poppy, providing Afghan farmers a viable alternative in terms of crop substitution; or, we elaborated the concept. We did not speak any more about simple crop substitution, [but] integral economic development.

I developed the plan to eliminate opium poppy in Afghanistan in 10 years—this was the year 1997. The plan was very simple; it cost \$100 million—\$20 million a year for five years to eliminate the production—20% a year—and then, another five years to consolidate the result. I presented this plan in Vienna to all member states and I got substantial approval. I remember very well, particularly Denmark and Sweden: They were the only countries that pledged immediately around 10% of the figure, trusting just the plan that we presented then. But I got a substantial OK by all member states, and *even* by the Americans, who were at the time on very good terms with the Taliban.

The Taliban in that year, basically, had control of 80% of the country. They were the government of Afghanistan. And even, particularly the United States told me, “Green light. Go there. This is a country that we are not particularly interested in anymore, so Europeans work there. We will support you, the program, and everything”—even if they never believed in two-crop substitution.

The only countries that believed in crop substitutions were northern European countries—Scandinavian countries—and Italy, and Germany. They were supportive of the idea. Many other countries never supported that, either because they didn't have any idea about it, or because the Americans always supported

the idea of destroying the cultivation by burning the crops, and they were always very skeptical about any alternative process.

So, I, at the time, during the Clinton administration, convinced the Americans that they should at least look at the results of this program and then see. So, they did not oppose it. We are talking about a unipolar moment of the world; at that time, the United States was really the only superpower on the stage, so you could never do anything at the UN without their OK.

I went to Afghanistan, where the UN had a quite huge intervention; not only humanitarian programs, but also my program which was a middle-size program in the family of the UN programs. [We] had a sizable amount of people, particularly, we had a couple of hundred people doing a survey of the opium poppy production in Afghanistan. We did every year a terrestrial analysis, province by province, area by area, of all opium production. The other source was the U.S.A. government, particularly the CIA, which at that time was the only owner of the satellites, which did the aerial survey of opium poppy production.

Then at a certain point, we clashed, drastically, on the results, because our people on the ground were mostly agronomists. I recruited basically all the agronomists, with an agronomical degree in Afghanistan—all the local people, with other people, that were around for a couple of months, in Afghanistan at the time of the crop—to determine, with very substantial detail, the production. And then, there were these satellites by the CIA, who were very frequently wrong, because they could not detect many areas in which opium poppy was cultivated on hills, or not plain areas. In this case, satellites can make huge mistakes; or, when opium poppy was cultivated close to other crops and so on, that was a big mistake. And also there was a sample survey: They did not survey all of Afghanistan. They surveyed some areas and then [deduced] the result with a very ample margin of interpretation. That, too, was subject to a lot of discussion with us.

Since—at the end of the story, they were the dominant power. Before me, I mean, there was a delegation of CIA coming to Vienna, with our experts who discussed the result. At the end of the story, there was a kind of agreement on a middle ground, on figures about what was the production of opium poppy, and also coca production in Latin America, in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia—same story.

I stopped this good cooperation, or, I said then that

the party was over. Our survey *is* the survey that must be taken into account, because it comes from an independent source, which is the United Nations. The survey is funded by several countries, including the United States, and then the satellites are not reliable and sometimes they suddenly change the result.

For Colombia, for instance, suddenly the result by satellite, funded by the CIA, and the result by the ground survey in Colombia, done by us, and funded by the State Department—the same American government funding and so on—diverged completely; to the point that Colombia was put on the blacklist—of course, the CIA prevailed. Colombia was put on a blacklist of countries against *our* opinion, the opinion of the State Department, and the opinion of all the other countries that funded the subject, which detected a decrease in coca production in Colombia, which would not put Colombia on the blacklist. But, that was a parenthesis.

Negotiating with the Taliban

Then I went to Afghanistan with this blessing on my head. And I met the Taliban leaders of the time. The Taliban Prime Minister at the time came to the meeting. He told me at the beginning of the meeting, “You want to eliminate the opium poppy production in Afghanistan in 10 years?” It was \$250 [million], the figure, the correct figure. “Why do you want to wait 10 years? You give us the \$250 million, and we will do it in one year.”

I interrupted the negotiation to consult with my people, because this was a huge thing. And then I said to him,

No, it’s not feasible. First, I don’t have \$250 million, and I have to ask donors to do it. Donors will never give me even one dollar because of your reputation on the issue of women, and the issue of narcotics. You have no credibility whatsoever in the international community.

So, first, you go ahead, show that you are credible, and then I can tell you that I will do whatever is in the power of the United Nations to support you on the issue of finding alternatives for the peasants. Of course, you don’t want to use force or violence against the peasants, and so on.

They told me, yes, they did not like the answer....

“But, first,” I told them, “you have to prohibit opium cultivation, because you never did it.” They were playing with the *Quran* interpretation about “intoxicants.”

The *Quran*, according to them, was not clear if intoxicants, which is alcohol and so on, included opium.

So, we involved some big religious experts on their side, Sunni experts, about *Quran*, who concluded—we funded also the study of these experts—and their conclusion was that opium was an intoxicant. And they made a prohibition of opium poppy; we physically wrote the law, and then, they started to really say that they were going to enforce it.

Then we decided at the same meeting—the Prime Minister left—and the Governor of Kandahar stayed, negotiating with me a kind of experiment in the Kandahar area. They would eliminate opium poppy in the Kandahar area, and we would rehabilitate a whole factory which was inactive there, which would give jobs to more than 2,000 people, women included. It had been built by a German corporation decades ago, and was abandoned. But abandoned in very good condition. It would mean just providing electricity to this factory. We did the experiment, and the factory was working.

So, our proposal was: elimination of opium poppy in Kandahar area, and rehabilitation of the factory and jobs to the people, women included.

At this point, there was negotiation inside the Taliban, because, initially, they said “No.” Then they said, “OK, goodbye.” Then I said that I would make a statement: “You refused to rehabilitate the factory, which would give more than 1,000 jobs to your people, because of the issue of women who would not [be permitted to] work in the factory. At this point, the Governor consulted the Supreme Leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammed Omar, who was living just a few kilometers away, and at the end of the story, they said, “Yes, women can work in the factory, but in a separate area of the factory.” OK, no problem, but they will work in the factory like all the others.

They started to implement the agreement. At a certain point, the agreement stopped. We had started to work on the factory. They said, “No, no, you stop the factory, because we sold the factory to an investor, a foreign investor, who will take care of the factory instead of you.” I said, “Yeah, OK,” but then I discovered the name of the foreign investor, who was a certain man coming from Saudi Arabia, called [Osama] bin Laden, who was living just one village away from Mullah Omar in Kandahar at that time. We are talking about November 1997.

And when I went back, I told the Americans everything. I had a meeting with all the donors of the pro-

gram, and they said then what I'm saying to you now, about bin Laden included. So, no one can say that they didn't know about bin Laden and all the rest.

Anyway, then we started to have very uncertain behavior on their [the Taliban's] side, the following years, but we were pushing them continuously, maintaining always a degree of negotiation. I met them in Kandahar; I met them in Pakistan, where they had an important office; and they had also another very important office in New York, where they dealt with all countries, an office with two people, a man and a woman—a woman who was coming in blue jeans, a Taliban woman; I asked her “How can you do that? If I take a picture of you now here, and send it to Afghanistan, what will happen to you?” She said, “Nothing. I am here with the full permission of the government, they know perfectly. I am a diplomat, and I'm authorized to talk with you and anybody else, and to dress this way.” Well, well.

Zero Opium Production

Well, they started to be uncertain. In some areas they were cooperating with us, discouraging cultivators; the donors got quite disappointed and withdrew their commitment for the program. But I continued to pursue the program, but donors funded our limited program in part for Afghanistan, funded other parts of our program, but lost enthusiasm for the issue, until the Summer of 2001: In the summer of 2001, there was no opium production in Afghanistan, because they, under pressure from us, and also because they wanted to recover the trust that we lost for them because of their uncertainty in the following years; I also demanded some sanctions by the Security Council against them and so on. But we never, never ever lost track with them. We always had a positive negotiating relationship with them, also on many other issues on which I don't want to go into too much details.

Anyway, what happened: Zero production in Afghanistan. We could not believe our eyes—there was no production, zero! Because they had forbidden the cultivation in September/October, and there was no production of opium poppy in the country. So, we demonstrated that it is possible to not produce opium in Afghanistan.

Year 2001, Summer: 11th of September, same year. October invasion of Afghanistan by U.S.A., with the full support of the international community. We gave to the United States a blank check in post-September 11th events. They invaded the country, and we were hoping that would consolidate the result on our side, who were

dealing with the drug control.

I spoke with all the State Department officials responsible for narcotics. They told me, “Yes, yes, yes, we will tell all our military that we got this huge result, also thanks to your intervention,” and all the rest. “Rest assured that this result will be confirmed the following years.”

Well, what happened was exactly the opposite. The top American leaders, starting with the Secretary of Defense [Donald] Rumsfeld, they went to Afghanistan, and he personally made a set of agreements with the main warlords of Afghanistan, the enemies of the Taliban, the leaders of the Northern Alliance, on fighting together against terrorism, which was in large part not an alliance, or outgrowth; in exchange—not a written exchange and so on—but they put aside the narcotics issue, basically giving a *de facto* green light to cultivation, so that the next year [poppy cultivation] jumped again to huge levels.

At the end of the same year, we had discovered, by data that Russian intelligence gave us, a full set of deposits of heroin on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Forty deposits of heroin, for a total of 100 tons of heroin. 100 tons of heroin is the demand of all Western Europe for one year. So, traffickers built this set of warehouses, where they were stocking huge amounts of heroin. We had the picture of these deposits, and I went to the [UN] Security Council asking for an intervention.

The U.S., the Security Council, and the EU Sit on Their Hands

First, I spoke, of course, to the Americans, and with others, the five permanent members of the Security Council. The Americans were extremely embarrassed; they had a big meeting of all the U.S. agencies involved, and the conclusion was they would be neutral. They could not corroborate and support our intervention to destroy these laboratories, and they would not oppose it. The reason was very simple, a top State Department official told me. [Secretary of State Madeleine] Albright. The reason was that they could not admit that they had not discovered it; that we did it.

If we go to the Congress and we say that your agency which has a \$70 million budget, did this, they will immediately ask to destroy us and all others, because we spent in the area several billions of dollars in intelligence in everything. “How much did you pay for this?” I told them that it was Russian intelligence that gave us

the data, and they asked, “How much did you spend?” I told him, “Around \$200,000.” “If I go there [to the U.S. Congress] and say that you, the UN, with [only] \$200,000 did this, and we had no idea about this, so many people will lose their jobs.” The final result was neutrality.

I went to the [UN] Security Council with the data, with the maps. We showed them the maps, with the laboratories and so on, and we had several options for what to do. The simplest thing was a very simple intervention, destroying—the Russians at the time had 10,000 people on the border of Tajikistan. They could do this with nothing, with an extremely small—we had a lack of everything at the time. We could finance—with a very small amount; I could do it also with my personal funds, as director of the program.

We would do it immediately, as agreed. But, of course, we need a mandate by the Security Council. The mandate never arrived, because of the frontal opposition of the British. The U.K., first they told me that they thought I should not even talk about it. When I told them that I was working for the United Nations and not for the Queen of England, they said “You will pay for that.” And I paid afterwards. But the Security Council listened throughout this huge presentation, and the U.K. put a veto on continuing the discussion, and everything died this way.

What We Demonstrated

Just to conclude the story, about what we demonstrated.

We demonstrated that with a minimum investment of resources, with a close negotiation with the Taliban, you can get these results. We could get results again, and this is what I’ve just proposed to my country. I wrote to Mr. [Mario] Draghi, the Prime Minister, saying that the EU, and Italy in particular, should start proposing again to the Taliban to repeat what they did in the Summer of 2001.

Funding an alternative development program that would cost not more—doing it immediately, not in five years or ten years—now Afghanistan is not the same as 20 years ago, this can be done, really, in one year, with the modest investment of less than \$100 million a year, and for not more than three or four years. The answer of my Prime Minister was, “Oh, yes. The proposal is very good, it makes sense a lot. But it is the UN that should do it.” I told him: “Look, the UN is not the world government; the UN is an association of states. *We* are the

UN.”

They said they will talk about it in the EU Council and all the rest.

Why am I saying this to you now, because I believe this is still feasible and the chances of success are much bigger now, than 15 or 20 years ago. Because ... the Taliban are basically the same. They’re not new or old Taliban and so on, but basically the same. But of course, as a government of the country, they have to deliver things, and the most important thing from the European point of view that they could deliver is the elimination of narcotics production, that struck directly 1 million in the heart, young Europeans, men and women. So, this should be the number one priority, within a humanitarian intervention that my colleague Hussein [Askary] already explained in great detail, and that would be, at minimum cost from the European Union. In my report, I demonstrated that the EU spends every year €1 billion, in non-military intervention in Afghanistan. €1 billion are enough, *if they get into the hands of the Afghan people*; enough, to sustain a process of change and to develop Afghanistan.

The Obstacle of ‘Legal Corruption’

But the main obstacle in this case is another one: It’s the fact that out of €1 billion—I discovered in the investigation I did for my report—out of €1 billion, only 20% arrives in Afghanistan. I collected all the figures of the member states, and it’s €1 billion. But when I went to Afghanistan and I saw the data from the Treasury and so on, the real money that arrived from the EU, was about €200 million. I calculated that out of this €200 million, 50% ends up in the pockets of Afghan ministers, President and all the rest. So, to the people of Afghanistan, one-tenth of this figure arrived.

You ask, “Where is the 80%?” Eighty percent is what I call “legal corruption.” It’s not corruption, it’s waste. Sometimes, it’s corruption, sometimes waste, and so on, which is a huge amount of money that stays in the donor area. The EU [alone] spends between 15-20% of every project in consultancies—consultancies, feasibility plans, consultants, visits, and so on. The data that they give to me is 15%. Then you have a huge amount of waste into the channel: this money goes to some NGO, which in turn puts the money into the hands of another NGO; or, then you have not only NGOs—NGOs are the best part of the story. Then it goes also to specialized companies, technical companies, and so on, that overcharge: Everything they do in Afghanistan—

so a road that would cost €1 million is written in the books as €10 million. Whatever you do in Afghanistan is charged between 5-10 times its real value.

A school in Afghanistan—I was in Herat, and I saw the Italian Army was there. Herat was quite a safe area in Afghanistan, and so the army had nothing to do than do some social work projects, a couple million-dollar projects, that the government of Italy gave them. I researched all projects. The army was outside the chain of international aid; it was an army. Very simple. I researched this and I discovered that the school cost \$100,000. A hospital cost a couple of million dollars. When I saw the books of the regular international intervention, a school cost \$1 million and a hospital cost \$20 million.

At the time I was there, there was just one pediatric hospital in all of Afghanistan, a country at that time with less than 30 million people—one pediatric hospital, and 20,000 women died in delivery every year, 20,000! So then, the real problem was not the war. The war had casualties, much inferior to this. The real problem then was health, and so on. I measured this huge amount of waste that must be absolutely reformed. Fortunately, now after 20 years, you have a much better program of assistance. There are international experiences that show that with this money you can have a much better effect delivering money directly, like Brazilian experiments demonstrate; the Chinese experiment with poverty elimination is probably the best in the world, in obtaining effect.

So now, the chain of delivery is improving. This is why I'm saying that the EU should not make any special effort for Afghanistan. It should simply deliver the international aid, delivered in the last 20 years for non-military purposes, [but] in a better, more efficient way. Narcotics is just one part of it, not the biggest. And for sure, for sure, this can be a very strong argument of negotiation with the Taliban. I can guarantee you that in negotiations with the Taliban, putting on the table the recognition of the government and a serious program of international aid, the government will capitulate on the issue of women. I'm sure. Because I know them. I know them.

The issue of women for them is—and I don't like this of course, this is just the substance of negotiations—they do it to raise the price of negotiation. They know perfectly what we think about them and women; they know perfectly what we think! And they do it for a purpose, these restriction policies on women, because they know that this is a very hot issue for us, on which

they extract power, money, and recognition.

We Must Not Do Nothing

But this is an operation that must be done. What other way is there, other than that described by Hussein [Askary]? Do nothing and the country starves, people continue to die, Taliban collapses, and again instability, terrorism, and violence, and whatever Afghanistan got in the last 40 years returning on the stage. It's not very difficult to make this prediction. If the Taliban collapses, the country goes *again* into complete chaos!

It is possible to talk to them. They are extremists, they are not, I mean, normal people. They won an independence war. They are radicals. It's natural. You never saw a movement that fought for 20 years, arriving to power, and being like the government of Denmark. I mean, people project in relation to the Taliban! They order them to be tolerant, inclusive, respecting of everybody's rights and so on. I mean—I met these people. They fought for 20 years, with a Kalashnikov, a cup of tea, and a piece of bread. They now have power, and they don't—the issue is, if they are not helped, if they are not pressed, they can make mistakes. They are not up to the job. This also is quite normal.

When I went to South Africa, after the end of apartheid, immediately after the big war of apartheid, the government of South Africa was made by people who were so incompetent. I have to say, I have always been supportive of their fight, since the beginning, so I went there with a big idea about it. The first thing I did, I went to Soweto, and I saw a terrible situation, terrible! In Soweto there was plenty of violence, drugs—drug consumption all over, and so on. I talked with all the ministers and so on, and they were totally inadequate for their job! They had a very vague idea about what to do. Because they were fighters, they were not administrators.

This process of transforming fighters into administrators is very long, difficult, but many other countries did, with different results. Algeria is another example of a total failure. The Liberation Movement that took power against a very strong colonial power, France, and the result was that they were incapable of building a modern Algeria. They are still trying to build it. So, these are difficult processes, that should be understood, before launching sentences and judgment and all the rest.

Maybe I'll stop. Thank you very much! [applause]

Tom Gillesberg: Thank you Mr. Arlacchi. I appreciate why Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the interna-

tional president of the Schiller Institute proposed that the Western countries should make you a special representative for Afghanistan to have a common approach for how to do this thing. And in that connection, I would just reflect, as a Dane, you say that when you first set up the program, Denmark was one of the main sponsors. You know, doing above its share of funding concerning how to get rid of narcotics. It's very ironic that later, we find the Danish troops being deployed in the Helmand province under the leadership of the British troops, and going around, year after year after year doing the fighting,

while the poppy seeds numbers were going up by 30-fold during this "liberation" by British and Danish troops.

And therefore, when the Danish government right now is sitting, thinking through what went wrong, they could actually go back to what we did then, and say, "We have a moral obligation to do this right again, and what better way than by helping out directly, funding and contributing to such a program. Now we want to get rid of the poppies, and we want instead to have real economic development." But that's just me, as a Dane, reflecting on this!

H.E. Ambassador Ahmad Farooq

A Perspective on Moving Afghanistan Forward

This is an edited transcript of the presentation of H.E. Ahmad Farooq, the Ambassador from Pakistan to the Kingdom of Denmark, to a seminar, co-sponsored by the Schiller Institute and the Copenhagen bureau of EIR, "Afghanistan: What Now? Peace Through Economic Development," held in Copenhagen, Denmark on October 11, 2021. The seminar was moderated by Tom Gillesberg.



Embassy of Pakistan in Denmark

H.E. Ambassador Ahmad Farooq

Thank you very much, Tom, and thank you very much to the Schiller Institute for organizing this event on a very important issue: the future of Afghanistan and which way we would like it to move forward; and for giving me this opportunity of presenting Pakistan's perspective on this subject.

A Bit of History

I would like to begin by giving some context to what Pakistan feels should happen now with regard to Afghanistan, with a bit of history of how we see this situation has evolved over the last 40 years, because Afghanistan has been in a state of turmoil for 40 years, and not much is said [about the fact] that the conflict actually started in 1979, and not in 2001; and Pakistan, along with Afghanistan, has been facing its fallout for the last 40 years.

The withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1988, was

followed by a civil war that took place between the different factions of the Mujahideen, that were fighting the Soviets. And a key reason for that to happen was that once the objective, of expelling the Soviets from Afghanistan was achieved, the West and the U.S., they decided to walk away from Afghanistan. If they had stayed there, and had supported the peacebuilding process in that country, perhaps the history of that country would have been much different.

From this chaos of the civil war, we saw Afghanistan descend into the top drug producing country in the world. It became a safe-haven for the international terrorist groups, al-Qaeda in particular, and organized crime that was going on there. The Taliban, basically, they emerged from this chaos of the civil war, with the promise of bringing stability and peace to the country. What we remember, however, from their rule, is more the kind of human rights violations that were committed, especially against women and girls.

In the period that followed the September 2001 attacks, Afghanistan did make progress, at least from the outside, one can say; but obviously, as both Professor Arlacchi and Hussein [Askary] stated, and the facts that they have presented [at this seminar], actually there were serious problems that remained unresolved.

The conflict continued to linger, and the country

faced serious challenges, in terms of bad governance, and corruption of the various Afghan governments. The fact that there was never a clear exit strategy for the international community to come out of Afghanistan, is basically what played a role in what we see today and the fact that we were not able to achieve long-term peace in the country, despite such a large international military presence and despite the fact, as it is claimed, \$2 or \$3 trillion were spent in the country.

Eventually, in the last two years, the U.S. came to this realization that there is no military solution and they have to get out of Afghanistan. At that point, they decided to talk to the Taliban. Pakistan had been advocating—for a long time, from the period when al-Qaeda had ceased to be a threat, as a terrorist entity, that there was a need for a political process, a dialogue in Afghanistan, because there could not be any military solution there. The Afghans, if you look at their history, they have never succumbed to any foreign military pressures. So, the Taliban were a political reality, and the Americans needed to talk to them. Eventually, when the Americans decided to talk to them, Pakistan did play its role in facilitating the dialogue process. However, we also advised them, that the withdrawal from Afghanistan has to be accompanied, in tandem, by progress in the peace process. Once a withdrawal date was set which was not connected with the progress in the peace process, the prospects for a political solution faded.

The ultimate collapse of the Afghan Security Forces, without putting up a fight, and the fleeing of the former President Ashraf Ghani and his associates, has basically brought us to where we stand today.

During the four decades of conflict in Afghanistan, my figures may be a bit different from what Hussein presented, we believe over a million Afghans have been killed, injured, maimed, traumatized, and it has basically resulted in destroying the polity and the economy of the country. The people of Afghanistan, they desire peace, they desire development, and so do Afghanistan's neighbors, especially Pakistan.

Pakistan has a very long and complex history in terms of our relations with Afghanistan, and the last four decades have particularly been the most difficult. The two countries are linked, inextricably, through ties of geography, history, ethnicity, religion, and culture. Most importantly, Pakistan provides Afghanistan its lifeline: Afghanistan is a landlocked country, and most of its international trade takes place through Pakistan,

as we have a transit trade agreement with them. Over the last four decades, Pakistan has hosted over 3-4 million refugees; several generations of Afghans have grown up in Pakistan and have not ever seen their home country. So, no matter what happens in Afghanistan or whoever is in control of the country, it has serious ramifications for Pakistan. We do not have that luxury of walking away from that situation, as has been done by the West—twice.

For us, it has also been a compulsion, that whoever is in control of Afghanistan, we have to have some kind of working relationship with them. When you look at the situation, if the trade of the country is going through Pakistan; we have a long border with them; there are people who have ties, who belong to the same tribe, they are crossing over; so all that requires that we have to have a functional relationship with the government, whether it's *de jure* or *de facto*.

Now, in the entire duration of this four decades of conflict, Pakistan after Afghanistan, has been the most affected country by this conflict. In the initial period of the war, we had to suffer the weaponization of our society; we were affected by drugs coming in; we were affected by the pressure of the refugees, because when they came in, they had to be housed. But eventually with such a large number of people coming in, they destroyed our ecology, especially in the area where they were living in huge camps, in those days.

And then, following the September 2001 attacks, the conflict, which was previously restricted to Afghanistan, was brought to within our own borders, as Pakistan became the battleground for the fight between terrorist groups. Over these last 20 years, we have suffered casualties of almost 80,000 people, and economic losses of over \$150 billion. The return to normalcy has been achieved at great cost, both in terms of the lives that we've lost, as well as treasure, and that's what our government and our people want to preserve.

Moving Ahead

After these decades of instability, Pakistan wants to focus on its economic development, and a key aspect of that is regional connectivity. We want to reach out especially to the countries of Central Asia, to meet our energy needs, for promoting trade, and attracting international investment. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has recently outlined a policy of geo-economics for the future of Pakistan, rather than focussing on geopolitics, of what we had been doing in the past, and a peaceful

Afghanistan is the centerpiece of that. Without peace in Afghanistan, it is not possible for us to achieve the economic progress that we desire for our future.

Any continued instability in Afghanistan, obviously, if (God forbid) Afghanistan descends into a civil war, Pakistan will be the country, and perhaps our other neighbor Iran, which will be most directly impacted by it, in terms of terrorism, and the spillover of refugees. We continue to host over 3 million Afghan refugees as I mentioned before, and we provide sustenance to them, through our own resources, because the international assistance for the upkeep of refugees dried up somewhere in the early '90s. The Afghan refugees can access our health services, our educational institutions, our banking system, and they can earn a livelihood.

The fact that in this last 20 years, when supposedly there was so much money that was being poured into Afghanistan, and there was no civil war, none of these refugees decided to go back to Afghanistan. So, if there had been any attraction for them, they would have left, and gone back to their home country, because despite the fact that they're able to earn a livelihood in Pakistan, even for the children that have been born in Pakistan, they don't enjoy Pakistani citizenship. They remain Afghanistan citizens. So, they would have gone back to Afghanistan, if the situation there had presented them a better option.

So, now, as we move forward, Afghanistan stands at a critical juncture, and the Afghan people, with the support of the international community, can definitely build a better future for them. Learning from the mistakes of the past, we've seen now, what happened in 1988, and again, the fact that the West has decided to leave Afghanistan, it should not mean that they abandon Afghanistan because obviously, that will prolong the conflict and cause suffering for its people, which will not be to the benefit of anyone.

The recent humanitarian statistics about the humanitarian situation which are coming out from different UN agencies, are quite alarming: According to UNICEF, 18 million Afghans are in urgent need of assistance, and over 1 million Afghan children can suffer serious malnutrition and starvation in the coming months. So, it is important to prevent this situation from deteriorating any further, because that will create a huge humanitarian disaster, which will affect not only Afghanistan itself, but the region, and other areas of the world.

Pakistan's Contribution

Pakistan believes that it is important that we should provide access to Afghanistan's financial resources, in order to prevent a further deterioration of the economy of the country. It is also essential to prevent inflation, rising prices, growing poverty, and preventing a mass exodus of refugees from the country.

On our part, from Pakistan, we are playing the role in terms of assisting the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, and together with UN agencies we have developed an air-bridge through which emergency supplies are now being airlifted to Afghanistan: That includes food and medical items. Pakistan itself has dispatched three plane loads of emergency equipment, especially medical supplies to Afghanistan, and we are continuing to do so, especially food aid, through the land corridor. This fact was recently acknowledged by the visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman—she was in Islamabad on Friday [Oct. 8]. She appreciated and acknowledged that and encouraged Pakistan to continue doing that.

We are also, in terms of the overall political environment, in consultations with all the neighbors of Afghanistan, including China, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and also Russia, in finding a long-term peaceful solution for the country. We continue to call on Afghanistan—and the Taliban, to form an open, inclusive governmental structure, that practices moderate and sound policies with regards, especially to human rights, and ethnic groups, women and children.

Terrorism that has emanated from Afghanistan, remains for us a major concern since we have been a major victim of terrorism. And so, we have been calling upon Taliban that they should not allow the use of their territory by the various terrorist groups that are present there.

Pakistan is also part of the extended Troika format, so that includes Russia, China, the United States and Pakistan is the fourth country, in terms of finding the political options for Afghanistan.

As my other co-panelists have said, this is a time where the international community has to apply a different approach, for bringing peace to Afghanistan. Military options have been tried, and they have failed. We have to look towards how we can help Afghanistan develop economically, and there has to be an engagement and incentivized approach, as Professor Arlacchi also mentioned, in encouraging the Taliban to do what

we expect of them.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank the Schiller Institute for organizing this very important debate, and indeed, we would like to continue working with you, in finding answers.

And, at the end, I would just like to state that the national poet of Pakistan, his name is [Muhammad] Iqbal—the Iranians know him as “Iqbal Lahori”—he

said somewhere in the early 20th century, in the 1920s about Afghanistan, that Afghanistan is the heart of Asia. So that’s where the name of that political process “Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process” comes from. He said, if there is peace in Afghanistan, there is peace in Asia. And if there is unrest in Afghanistan, there will be unrest in Asia.

Thank you very much. [applause]

Statements Received from China and Iran

The Embassies of China and Iran to Denmark, submitted the following statements to the seminar, “Afghanistan: What Now? Peace Through Economic Development,” co-sponsored by the Schiller Institute and the Copenhagen bureau of EIR, held in Copenhagen, Denmark on October 11, 2021.

Statement from the Chinese Embassy on Afghanistan

As a close neighbor of Afghanistan, China has always respected its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, adhered to non-interference in its internal affairs and pursued a friendly policy towards all Afghanistan people. We hope that the Taliban will build a broad-based and inclusive political structure, pursue moderate and prudent domestic and foreign policies, protect the rights of women and children, resolutely combat terrorist forces, and develop friendly and cooperative relations with its neighbors and other countries. We sincerely hope that Afghanistan can find a development path suitable to its national conditions. To meet the immediate needs of the Afghan people, China has announced that it will provide 200 million RMB worth of supplies to Afghanistan, including 3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. When the security and other conditions allow, China is willing to assist Afghanistan to build projects that will help improve livelihoods, and will do its best to support Afghanistan in its peaceful reconstruction and economic development.

We call upon the international community to play a constructive role in Afghanistan’s peaceful reconstruction on the basis of respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, respecting the will of the Afghan people, and adhering to the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned principle. We need to have more dialogue and give more advice to the new

authority in Afghanistan without any prejudice or pre-conceived idea, and we should not create any difficulty for them. Humanitarian assistance is of utmost urgency. Economic sanctions must stop. Unilateral sanctions or restrictions on Afghanistan should be lifted. The country’s foreign currency reserves are national assets that should not be used as a bargaining chip to exert political pressure on Afghanistan.

The abrupt change in Afghanistan reminds us once again that military intervention and power politics do not have popular support, and foreign models and the so-called democratic transformation are not sustainable. What relevant countries have done in Afghanistan in the past 20 years has ended in failure. They should seriously reflect on it and correct mistakes timely, instead of walking away from the problems of their own doing and leaving them to Afghanistan and other countries in the region. After all, they bear the inescapable political, security, economic and humanitarian responsibilities for Afghanistan and are more obliged than other countries to help Afghanistan maintain stability, prevent chaos, and embark on the road of peace and reconstruction. They should earnestly honor their commitment to the Afghan people and take concrete actions to participate in the international community’s assistance efforts in Afghanistan.

Statement by Iran Embassy Representative at Schiller Institute Seminar on Afghanistan

The representative of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran at this seminar, whilst emphasizing on the need for an inclusive government, respect for civil and democratic rights of all citizens without discrimination in Afghanistan, highlighted the important role the neighboring countries can play in helping peace and security to be established in the country, and alleviating the sufferings of its people.

He pointed out that with terrorist activities in the region and with drug production in Afghanistan reaching record levels, the security and law enforcement forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the past four decades, have been constantly engaged in combating terrorism and drug smuggling along its 900 km border with Afghanistan and have suffered casualties in their efforts to close off this route for drugs reaching the West.

Throughout this period Iran has also hosted millions of Afghan refugees, estimated to have peaked at 4 million, accommodating and providing them with health and educational services on a par with that afforded to its own population, including Covid-19 vaccinations. This has been a heavy burden on Iran given the fact that, contrary to other refugee host nations, the country has received little or no assistance from the international community.

With the recent developments in Afghanistan, an

influx of new refugees from that country, expected to reach half a million, is already taking place, and Iran, with its ability to help new arrivals hampered by the heaviest sanctions under the U.S. maximum pressure campaign, is doing all it can to help its Afghan brethren, while cooperating with the UN agencies to help address the problems facing the people of Afghanistan.

In one important move, the Supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, with due regard to the importance of providing education for Afghan refugee children, called on the Iranian authorities to register, free of charge, Afghan children at Iranian schools alongside their Iranian brothers and sisters.

Finally, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the active involvement of all Afghanistan's neighbors paramount in any moves towards addressing these issues and is willing to continue to play a positive role in the efforts to achieve goals desired and shared by all Afghans.

Selections from the Discussion Session

This is an edited transcript of the discussion session at the seminar co-sponsored by the Schiller Institute and the Copenhagen bureau of EIR, "Afghanistan: What Now? Peace Through Economic Development," held in Copenhagen, Denmark on October 11, 2021. The seminar was moderated by Tom Gillesberg.

Real Economic Development Can Defeat Terrorism

Q 1: Regarding terrorism and stability, many would say that you need stability first in order to start economic development, but you say that you have to start building in order to fight terrorism. How can economic development be a tool to fight terrorism?

Hussein Askary: The ability of terrorists and the separatist groups to be active and recruit people is dependent on the fact that there are frustrated people in that community. It's not that they're only frustrated because of political repression; they're frustrated because their government is not offering them anything. Therefore, the so-called war on terrorism has been a failure because it does not address the real needs of those societies by, for example, building infrastructure, providing health care, education, work for people.

We have now the whole sub-Saharan Africa region. NATO, France, the United Nations have hundreds of military operations in sub-Saharan Africa. The problem is that the regular armies of these nations—like in Mali, Niger—in those countries, first of all they were devastated by what happened in Libya. Because there were massive amounts of weapons and militants moved from Libya into their countries. But the other thing is, those nations are not capable of paying their own security forces and soldiers, because the economies are in such bad shape. So, Boko Haram, for example, has more resources than the government to finance fighters and recruit young people who are angry and frustrated. They get lots of resources from the smuggling of cocaine to Europe, or they have sponsors in certain countries.

The ability of a nation to fight terrorism is actually very much dependent on its ability to sustain its economy and build a strong military and security response. But you cannot—in some cases, it's not the military and security forces who will defeat the terrorists. It is, if the population is on your side, which can help you defeat it. If the population is against you, then everything you do in terms of military or security will not work. We have many cases, like Iraq and other countries where the population starts supporting these groups instead of the

government, because they are so frustrated with the government and the government is destroying their livelihood.

That should be a lesson from now on that in order to be able to solve the problem with terrorism, if you have a legitimate government in that country, you have to support that government with economic aid, not only military and security aid.

Pino Arlacchi: Sometimes, they ask me, what is your recipe to fight terrorism? I played some role in fighting the Mafia in my country. “Well, what is your recipe to fight terrorism?” Simply, don’t bomb countries! Stop bombing, and you will see how terrorism is decreased.

Tom Gilleberg: I just want to say on that note, that Denmark has been the subject of terrorist attacks, for the very specific reason that Denmark since 2001 has been under Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Before he went to be head of NATO, he was Prime Minister of Denmark, and he started it by having as the state policy this militaristic foreign policy, that if there is a war where bombs are being thrown, then, especially in the Middle East, Denmark, of course, should be in there throwing bombs. So, we have been bombing in Libya, we have been bombing in Syria, we have been bombing away. So, Denmark is the exception to this peaceful policy.

Denmark is a very homogeneous country, so there’s been a point of view that there’s been some successful attacks, and some that have been stopped for this reason. And therefore, that could just be saying what you said. It should be obvious. In Denmark, there is now this process of trying to discuss what should be the policy forward for Denmark. The first thing I think everybody should agree on is this militaristic foreign policy, this idea of intervention with military means has to stop. Peacekeeping troops like Denmark, like other Scandinavian countries used to do in Cyprus and many different places, that’s very good. Peacekeeping troops. But that’s a totally different matter. That is to prevent war.

A Role for the UN?

Q 2: There is no family in Afghanistan which has not had a member attacked or killed in a bombing. Why do we not see the UN playing a role in establishing peace?

Arlacchi: The UN is unfortunately out of the picture. That was the decision Kofi Annan took. When Af-

ghanistan was invaded, there was a big discussion at the top of the UN of what to do. Kofi and a group of others decided that we should stay away. The argument was: they invaded the country; they will take care of the country. They should not drop to us the issue, like they used to do. When they have difficulties, they drop it to the UN. We should not play this game. They take care of the country.

My position: I did not agree. The UN should be on the ground to avoid the occupation that at that time was very popular. At the first moment of the Afghanistan invasion, there was a very large consensus all over the world on that. But we were afraid that as any occupation of a foreign country ends up the same way—badly, so, just to prevent what really happened afterwards, we had to *be* on the ground with a *big* force. We also planned to strengthen our presence in Afghanistan with a special UN force. At that time, we could also get the support of the member states. But Kofi and the others insisted on us playing a minimal role, staying away. They prevailed—the Secretary-General prevails all the time—and nothing happened.

Now would be the moment, could be the moment for the UN to step in. This is a question that we should raise with the Secretary-General. The UN could play a big role in reconstructing Afghanistan and talking to the Taliban, who were always in contact with us. We never lost contact with the Taliban. Why not be at the forefront of that?

H.E. Ambassador Ahmad Farooq: As you had mentioned in your comments, the UN is also like an association of states. So, its policies, its agenda is state-driven, and within those states, there are certain states that have to take the lead, which includes the U.S., the permanent members of the Security Council. Also, when it comes to the development side, the European Union. Unless they take the lead, because they’re the ones who are going to foot the bill; the money has to come from somewhere. Unless they take the lead, the UN on its own cannot move. It doesn’t have the resources.

Askary: There was a shift in the 1990s to replace the United Nations with what we have now. It has evolved to what people in the West call “rules-based order” that has nothing to do with the United Nations Charter or international law. These are rules created by powerful institutions and military-industrial complexes and think tanks in the West.

Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1997 started that process with his speech at the University of Chicago where he said the era of the peace of Westphalia, which established the fact that nations are sovereign and independent, is over. He said, that's an obsolete principle, because we, the civilized world, the democratic free world, should have the right to determine if a dictator is legitimate or not. If he's oppressing his people, we should have the right to intervene with military means to change that leader or that government.

Then we had the whole series of the post 9/11 wars, Afghanistan, and then the worst case was Iraq, because the United Nations was against it. But then the Americans and the British said, well, we will go our own way, then. So, in that sense, they wanted to demolish the United Nations Charter, the role of the United Nations not as a world government, but as a forum where nations can meet and agree on very important issues as independent sovereign nations, and prevent war and establish peace.

Now, there is a move by China and Russia, I think it's called the Friends of United Nations Charter. They say we should go back to the United Nations Charter, which has actually its roots in the Peace of Westphalia Treaty—that nations are independent and sovereign; that nations should work together to establish peace and prosperity everywhere.

So, you don't need to re-invent the wheel; we just need to go back to the UN Charter and international law established on that basis. This is what these people who have launched all these wars and the economic and financial interests behind them—they want perpetual war; just like the perpetual revolution, where there are no rules, except the rules they set according to their interests and desires. And that is very, very dangerous. And therefore, going back to the UN, not as a world government, but the UN Charter and the principles which were established after World War II; that would guarantee [peace].

Even the question our friends [from Iran] raised, the question of sanctions—indiscriminate economic sanctions should be forbidden internationally, because in *every single case*, they both created massive suffering for the population, and they did not force these governments to change their policies. I come from Iraq; in the 1990s, we had criminal sanctions where we lost 500,000 children. And Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said well, that's a reasonable price to control Saddam Hussein.

Well, you didn't change Saddam Hussein's behav-

ior. He was changed with a military invasion which removed him by force. But the sanctions did not make the Iraqi government change its policy; it's the people who suffered. We have a generation of young people whose development is stunted; who are easily manipulated. They can very easily join terrorist groups and militias and so on. So, using economic sanctions against nations should also stop, not only launching wars on a fake basis.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

Q 3 [To H.E. Ambassador Farooq]: How do you see the role of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (part of the Belt and Road Initiative) being extended into Afghanistan, and what would that mean?

H.E. Amb. Farooq: I think as far as China and Pakistan are concerned, once there is peace in Afghanistan, the corridor could be expanded to Afghanistan. It would have significant peace dividends for the regional countries. But the primary issue here is that you need a government in Afghanistan that is recognized internationally. Unless that happens, you cannot expect international investment to start pouring into that country.

As I mentioned in my comments, for us and China, China is obviously the country that has launched this Belt and Road Initiative, so they see the future of their economic progress in regional integration. We also, as I highlighted, our Prime Minister has come up with this vision of geo-economics. That is based on regional connectivity. Within that, Afghanistan is in the middle of everything. As Hussein [Askary] mentioned, this gas pipeline that was planned from Turkmenistan and then on to India, cannot be built if there is no peace in Afghanistan.

So, similarly, the prospects are there, but we need to have a set of conditions on the ground that allow that to happen. Pakistan sees it as part of our future growth that we integrate regionally through Afghanistan with countries in Central Asia.

Arlacchi: Really Winning the Peace

Q 4 [to Prof. Arlacchi]: Exactly which UN organizations should get funded for the drug eradication program and also addict rehabilitation?

Arlacchi: It's very simple. You have the UN program for drug control, which has 40 years' experience in alternative development and drug eradication. We accumulated this experience in all parts of the world, so we know what works and what does not work.

In the case of Afghanistan, a comprehensive program today cannot be done like 30 years ago. Full involvement of the government is absolutely indispensable. My proposal is to create a special national agency, an Afghanistan national agency, that uses experts coming from the UN, coming from the donor countries, in order that ownership of the eradication program and alternative development is belonging to the government. We cannot work like 20-30 years ago, when we did everything. We just told the government what to do; not only in Afghanistan, but other governments. In many cases, we abused our credibility. We had to have still huge credibility outside the West. But we used to—sometimes—abuse it.

In this case, I see no contraindication in creating a special agency—not diluting the issue of narcotics into a general program of agricultural development. Having always a particular pocket in order to not lose the target, which is basically a Western target. People believe that when you land in Afghanistan, you see poppies here, poppies there, with this brilliant color everywhere, and so on. Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is very difficult to see in a map. I had always a problem for that. It's so small, it's 0.5% of arable land. It is so small, you cannot see it in a map.

It's not like we believe that all countries plant poppies and so on; it's not that way. It is cultivated in particular areas, very frequently not easily accessible. More and more remote areas. Even in areas like Helmand province, where you have almost 50% of the production, it's not easy to see poppy cultivation. It's very small *vis-à-vis* the rest of the agriculture.

The main interest on narcotics is *our* interest, because the drugs come from there. So, if you want to close it up on drugs, natural drugs in Europe, you have to be there and do what is necessary to do, with the goal of elimination.

Because there are also other proposals, sometimes quite bizarre. There was a proposal years ago to permit opium cultivation and use all opium cultivation in Afghanistan for legal medical purposes. Which sounds fine. The problem is that all the legal demand for opium is always satisfied by three countries which are authorized by the UN, heavily controlled by the UN, and have enough to supply all the codeine that is necessary for the medical needs all over the world. There's no shortage. You have already Australia, India, and Turkey, who produce—under UN authorization—all legal opium derivatives that are necessary.

Every year, the countries send a questionnaire to the International Narcotics Control Board, which is a special narcotics board of the UN, quoting their demands for their hospitals, for treatment of terminal patients, and so on. This body elaborates all this demand and assigns to these countries a certain quantity of legal codeine, the main derivative. And that is it. If there is an increase, they immediately authorize areas in the Tasmania area in Australia, where most of it is produced, Turkey, other countries, to increase production, which is done in a way that works perfectly. There is no diversion to the illegal market. Today also, opium technology improved a lot, it is extracted directly from the plant. So, the system works.

So, first, why transform the drug cultivation of Afghanistan into a supply of unnecessary drugs to bodies that do not require them? Second, how do you control that? A production of a couple hundred thousand hectares scattered as I told you in little pieces. Controlling it would cost ten times the production of opium poppy. So, this is an idea that was floated for a while, because some prominent intellectuals advanced it a couple of years ago, then it died.

Other wrong ideas? To buy the product from the peasants. The Americans tried to do it in Southeast Asia 30 years ago. It simply encouraged cultivation. If you pay the peasant to cultivate, the following year, there will be two peasants cultivating. Because, they start from the evaluation that it is very cheap to buy opium cultivation at the source. The original idea is not wrong. It's so cheap that instead of paying billions of dollars against organized crime, in paying for treatment of addicts in the countries of destination, it's of course \$200-\$300 million at the source, and pop! You finish it. It never worked, because it was never seriously applied, because it was not possible to apply.

Today for me, it is possible with a very modest investment. But avoiding the mistakes of the past. We learned a lot, because sometimes we supported the wrong ideas, like also to fund the peasants, not controlling the diversion to legal crops. There were many errors. Now we develop this idea of integral development. We are not obliged to do crop substitution. If you have a good industry that can transport other materials, why don't you? Afghanistan, for example, has plenty of opportunities in this area. If there is an area where there is a mineral, why insist on funding alternative development crops? Why crops? You can also have many other alternatives to crop substitution.

Michelle Rasmussen: The second question was, what should the role of the Western countries be now?

Arlacchi: Look, talk with the Taliban, treating them as winners, as they are. They are *winners*. Well, you read, “Ah, yes, today they have to come here and then....” No, it is not that way. You cannot treat them as losers; they won an independence war against the biggest army in the world with nothing in their hands. And they know that.

They have to be treated as winners. Then, with humility and with respect, first, which is, in my opinion, the most important of all. If you treat them with the respect they deserve, you will get from them whatever is necessary to get; starting with women. But if we treat them as primitive, as sewage, that they just are there because who knows what, as bloodthirsty primitive people, you will get nothing from them. They will immediately close and say “Who you are to tell us how to treat our women, how to treat our country? Who you are?”

This is the reaction you will get. This is the most important thing to deal with the Taliban. They won, and they are legitimate winners. So, start to treat them this way. Why do you have to tell them how they should do their government? “The government should be inclusive.” What does it mean, “inclusive”? What does it mean? You should establish how many Azeris, how many Tajik, and minorities should be in the government? This is difficult to do even in the West. You should start from really respecting the ethnic composition of countries; it’s very difficult.

No! The Taliban shouldered it since the beginning. It must irritate them a lot. They will, because they won also the cooperation of the northern Pashtun. There are also many Azeris and others who are in the coalition with the Taliban. But it is up to them; it is an internal issue that you cannot establish from outside how much inclusion should there be in the new government.

When we won the Second World War, we had big problems in establishing governments all over Europe. And the Taliban showed a degree of responsibility that is absolutely admirable. They did not do vengeance killings all over Afghanistan, which I expected to see. After the Second World War, Nazi collaborators, Fascist collaborators in Europe got killed 10-15 years after the war. In Italy, we had an extension of vengeance killings related to the war that ended in the 1950s; hundreds of killings. Things were also complicated during the war; innocent people were also killed, and so on. But the immediate accusation that you were a collabo-

rator of the Nazis or the Fascists, condemned you to death. And we still have cases, after 70 years, about it.

So, a civil war with that ferocity has consequences that can last very long. They did an amnesty; they did not do vengeance against anybody. They did not punish state employees who were working with the former government. There was no blood around. They gave amnesty for all of them. These are things that show a degree of responsibility.

Then, I told you, they are not normal people. They are radical extremists with a very strange mentality that you have to understand and respect. But they are also flexible, they are not stupid at all. They are flexible. If you put on the table the right thing, with the right attitude—this is the first thing, the right attitude—you can get from them whatever you think is necessary, starting with the women. They were always very flexible. That newspaper you see, that girl, or that school in that part of Afghanistan is closed to women, and so on. This is not fair.

They were raised with the problem to control their movement and also their country. When I was there, we had almost everyday problems with the Taliban extremists crazy destroying TV sets and so on. But this was not absolutely a widespread phenomenon. There were phenomena of intolerance of women, and so on. But you cannot really generalize from one or two cases, make a big fuss.

You have to measure the underground with a different attitude, and you will get results. Their main interest is to survive, and to govern the country. There is no state structure; they have no money; there is no tax-collecting, they don’t know how to order taxes. [That] they don’t know [these things], is their main problem. They have a humanitarian emergency and so on. In my opinion, if you go with them, talking to them as human beings, and also winners of a long war and respect them; then you can get from them what is necessary. Why not? They should be crazy to not accept a serious proposal. But no one does it! The EU started in a good way: [Josep] Borrell and the others saying that we are to talk to them, and so on. Then, they stopped. You have to talk to them, but with a proposal in mind; with the right attitude, treating them as they deserve, and you will get what you want from them. They are the heirs of the Mujahideen. They are not Communist, they are nothing, they are just nationalist, religious people, with a degree also of internal tolerance and contradiction, like us Catholics and so on, that is remarkable. Go and do this!

Public opinion in my country was paralyzed for

three months: talking or not talking to the Taliban. It's the most stupid thing. You must talk with them.

Gillesberg: The idea of doing politics through military means has clearly failed. That means that diplomacy has to take over, and the key idea of diplomacy has always been to put yourself in the place of the other; see things from the way they see it. If you do that, and you simply talk together, history has shown that there is hardly anything that cannot be solved.

But it also means that exactly doing this is not something that in a certain sense is decided on the ground in Afghanistan. This is especially the question of shifting this paradigm, this way of thinking, in the Western world. In countries like here in Denmark, which has been part of the problem for quite some time. Despite its tradition, it suddenly jumped into this: "Yes, we'll do this militaristic foreign policy, and we're doing humanity a great favor." That has been totally disproven.

The question is exactly having the shift in the Western world, and saying "That failed; now, let's be responsible; let's do the other thing." I think this call that

Helga [Zepp-LaRouche] set for a day of action on Thursday, is exactly this. How do you show that you now will respect Taliban as a country, not as subjects, not as some subjects you can tell what to do? But say, "OK, you have your country. You run your country. We collaborate with you."

The first thing of course is to recognize it as a country, and give them the rights to actually deal with their deposits and whatever; even a country like Denmark. The problem is war, the problem is food. Is there something we can do to help in these things? The cost is enormous. Europe has enormous skills. The U.S. Army, of course, has enormous skills, but I don't know if that's the best thing to go into that.

Arlacchi: Recognizing the government, first of all, recognition. They won; they control the country. Europe was first to recognize Mr. [Juan] Guaidó in Venezuela, who had not the support even of his wife; but was recognized by 50 countries, like this. A person who controls nothing. We should be more coherent and serious in what we do in foreign policy. Respect basic rules; who controls the population must be recognized, period.

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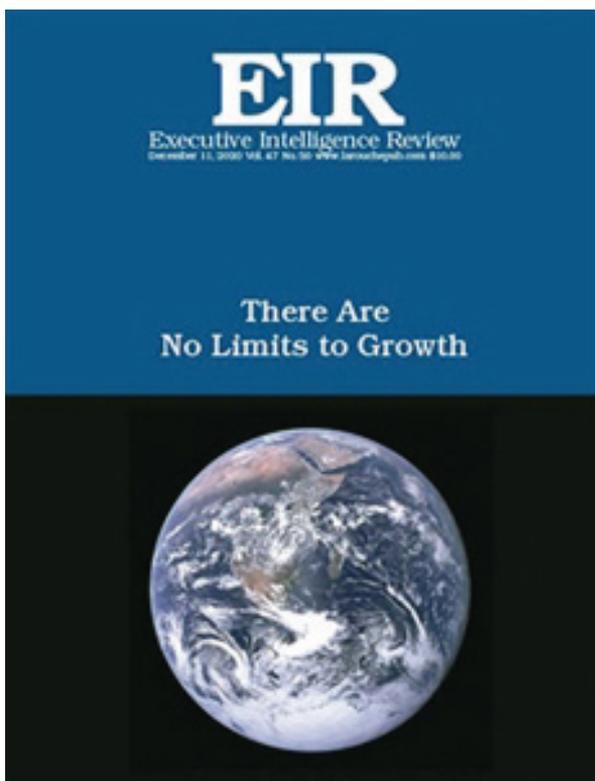
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