

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

Afghan Dialogue

17 November 2016, revised from a June 2016 version

After 37 years of war (and foreign invasions), the people of Afghanistan are strongly looking for the restoration of peace. Everybody is tired of war. The continuing military confrontation between the forces of the Government and of the Taliban will not give any meaningful “victory” to either side. So there is an urgent need of a compromise and an agreement in order for weapons to be finally laid down over the entire territory of Afghanistan. Below are some preliminary points that could be considered in defining such an agreement.

Pugwash 19-points Afghan Peace Proposal

1. At the signing of the agreement, a ceasefire should enter into force on the entire Afghan territory. The Taliban forces in place at the time of the agreement should be allowed to stay where they are, until an arrangement for reintegration as described below. Concerning the control of the territory, the two main parties (the present Afghan Government and the Taliban movement) agree on a coordinated management of the territory of Afghanistan. The proposal for an interim government between the current Government and the Taliban movement is to be properly understood.ⁱ In any case the unity of the territory of Afghanistan should be preserved at all costs. The establishment of a ceasefire at the earliest possible time is a common wish of all the Afghan people.
2. A proper mechanism for the verification of the ceasefire should be established. A specific role in the verification of the ceasefire could be assigned to special national committees, to provincial committees and possibly to the UN or the OIC.
3. Both parties to the agreement will work together in order to guarantee the absolute and immediate freedom of movement of people and goods over the entire territory of Afghanistan.
4. Blacklists that limit the movement of people associated with the Taliban movement or any other political movement should be terminated.ⁱⁱ
5. The presence of foreign military forces should end by the end of the third year after the signature of the agreement, provided that the provisions of the agreement have been implemented in good faith. An exception will be made for the forces that protect the diplomatic missions of the various foreign governments in Afghanistan.
6. Afghanistan will never host people whose aim is to promote a global confrontation with any other country, and particularly with countries with different political, religious, and economic structures. All the parties are fully committed to cooperating on this point.
7. The militants of the Taliban movement [or other insurgent movements] who are now prisoners should be freed, possibly according to the present amnesty law [and agreed amendments]. The amnesty will not cover, in any case, crimes related to the intentional murder of private citizens, rape, and other forms of private violence.

ⁱ The relevant division of power is obviously a delicate matter to be understood. The composition of the interim government, its duration, and exact role, should be properly defined.

ⁱⁱ The elimination of blacklists decided by the UN needs a decision of the UNSC. The parties to the agreement agree to do their best to have the blacklists eliminated as soon as possible.

Pugwash 19-points Afghan Peace Proposal

8. All people who are in the custody of the Taliban movement should be freed, or handed over for trial to the Government of Afghanistan in the case of the intentional murder of private citizens, rape, and other forms of private violence.
9. Freedom of opinion and freedom of expression should be guaranteed by both parties to the agreement. Every citizen will have the right to say whatever he likes, while respecting the law. More generally, human rights and, in particular, women's rights, should be fully respected, and this respect should be guaranteed by the law.
10. Afghanistan is an Islamic country, and the laws of Afghanistan respect this character. Nevertheless, nobody should be discriminated against or punished for having a different religion or a specific political opinion. The denigration of Islam, or of any other religion, should not be allowed, and will be punished by the law, as is the case now.
11. The constitution could [should] be revised, with the new constitution subject to the approval of the Afghan people. The revision could include all the items necessary for the implementation of the agreement, and other items possibly suggested by the political groups, parties and movements of Afghanistan. The electoral body should in particular approve or disapprove specific proposals made by the Taliban and the present Government of Afghanistan.
12. The constitution should in any case underline the right of all Afghans, independently of their sex, ethnic origin, or religious and political beliefs, to access the educational system up to the very top levels, to develop (legal) economic activities, to vote for and be elected to all government positions, to have the same rights with regard to private property, and the same access as far as justice, natural resources, and health are concerned.
13. The parties agree that Afghanistan will welcome international cooperation for economic development, the management of natural resources, the preservation of the environment, and culture. Afghanistan will have in particular a

Once the agreement is finally defined, all countries that have special interests in Afghanistan will be requested to respect the terms of the agreement, and to contribute in good faith and to the best of their capabilities to its successful implementation.

Recent Pugwash Consultations

- 13 December 2016, Kabul
- 22 November 2016, Islamabad
- 5 September 2016, Kabul
- 23–24 January 2016, Doha
- 2–3 May 2015, Doha

In addition to these structured consultations there were also a variety of smaller meetings and conversations.

cooperative, amicable relation with all countries in both its immediate and distant neighborhoods. The presence of foreigners who will help with the reconstruction and the development of Afghanistan will be most welcome.

14. Afghanistan should be put in conditions to provide services to its citizens (including transportation, education, health services, etc.), hopefully with the help of the international community.
15. A process for the reintegration of the militants of the Taliban movement should be defined. And with respect to reintegration, we are referring in particular to the integration of former combatants into the armed forces and the provincial and national police on a voluntary basis.
16. The cultivation and the selling of illegal drugs should be prohibited.
17. General elections (both at the national and the provincial level) will be called at a proper time after the signing of the agreement. The electoral process should be properly monitored. Following the elections, the control of the territory should be assigned exclusively to the newly elected Government. The winning party, or coalition of parties, will run the country for the period defined by the constitution.
18. The laws of the country should be compatible with sharia. A body of selected and impartial ulema could be created in order to facilitate the enforcement of this principle.
19. The possibility of a devolution process should be considered, giving the possibility of electing governors and provincial assemblies with the power of establishing provincial laws, of course compatible with the national laws.