

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

1995 Nobel Peace Prize

www.pugwash.org

Rome Office

c/o Accademia dei Lincei
Via della Lungara 10
I-00165 Rome, Italy
T: (+39) 06 687-8376
M: (+39) 333-456 6661
Email: claudia@pugwash.org

Geneva Office

7bis Avenue de la Paix, 2nd floor
1202 Geneva, Switzerland
T: (+41-22) 9073667
F: (+41-22) 9073669
M: (+41-79) 659-8186
E-mail: sergey@pugwash.org

London Office

Ground Floor Flat
63A Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3BJ, UK
M: (+44) 7920-747560
E: sandra@pugwash.org

Washington D.C. Office

1211 Connecticut Ave., NW, Rm. 828
Washington, DC 20036
T (+1-202) 478-3440
E: pugwashdc@aol.com

Please reply to: **Rome Office** [X] Geneva Office [] London Office [] Washington DC Office []

Report of a 2-day Pugwash meeting on Security in Afghanistan Qatar, 2-3 May 2015 (prepared by P. Cotta-Ramusino, Secretary General of Pugwash)

The meeting was clearly characterized from the start as a non-official meeting where all participants were free to express their personal opinions on a non-attributive basis. It was repeatedly clarified that the meeting was *not* supposed to be any sort of negotiation.

There were several presentations and interventions by people linked to the various parties and groups of Afghanistan, to civil society people (including a few women), and to people from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Thus, the discussion represented a wide range of opinions, always keeping in mind the non-official character described above. Let us stress again that everybody in this meeting represented only him/herself and not any Institution or group. Despite the differences of opinions, the climate of the meeting was cooperative, constructive and friendly.

Some important common points emerged and are reported below:

1. There was a general appreciation of the positive value of the meeting, and a widely shared sense of gratitude towards the State of Qatar for the hospitality and the assistance given to the participants in the meeting.
2. The idea of bringing about peace in Afghanistan and ending the conflict was wholeheartedly supported by all the participants.
3. The civilian casualties of the Afghan conflict have been lamented by everybody, even though differences may exist on who bears the main responsibility of these casualties. Protection of civilians is, as it should be, a priority for everybody.
4. The role of foreign forces that are or have been present in Afghanistan were evaluated in different ways (also in relation to the civilian casualties

mentioned above). Everybody agreed that foreign forces have to leave Afghanistan soon. Some expressed concern that there should be an agreement among Afghan political forces before the departure of the foreign forces.

5. Any political discrimination against any Afghan political party or group would be an obstacle to the peace process. In particular, the delisting of black-listed Taliban would facilitate the peace process. Political prisoners should be released.
6. Corruption and the production/selling of drugs are among the most serious problems of Afghanistan.
7. The value of education for both men and women was underlined by everybody. Economic development in Afghanistan will heavily depend on peace.
8. The structure of the political system (and the constitution of Afghanistan) should be discussed in detail, and, while different opinions may arise in this respect, there is a general agreement that no party should have a monopoly on power.
9. In any case, the government of Afghanistan will be an Islamic one. This does not mean that minorities of any sort should be discriminated against.
10. The model of the so-called Islamic State (Daesh) is alien to the tradition and the desires of the Afghan people. This point was agreed upon by everybody.
11. The relation with neighboring countries should be kept amicable, and cooperation with such countries should be strengthened. This does not mean that neighboring countries are welcome to interfere with Afghan internal affairs.
12. The meeting of 2-3 May 2015 should be followed up by other meetings in order that the peace process be sustained. It is vital that communication among different Afghan parties and groups be kept alive, even at an unofficial level. In general, the peace process should be speeded up! Some would welcome the possibility of talks between the Taliban and the Government.
13. The Taliban in Doha played an important role in the organization of this meeting. The Taliban's office should be opened to facilitate meetings and talks.
14. Qatar, UN and non-governmental international organizations such as Pugwash should hopefully continue to support the Afghan peace process.
15. The public interest and the well-being of the Afghan people will be at the center of the attention of the participants in this meeting and in the forthcoming ones.

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