



Looking towards Peace in Afghanistan after the US-NATO Withdrawal

Conference Agenda & Panel Overviews
Monday June 21, Tuesday June 22, and Wednesday June 23, 2021

Conference Agenda (speakers are listed in the order of their presentations)

Day 1: Monday, 21 June	
Please register at this link for Day 1.	
9.00 AM Washington, DC 4.00 PM Doha 5.30 PM Kabul	<p>Welcoming Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sultan Barakat, Founding Director, Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies Khalil Jahshan, Executive Director, Arab Center Washington DC
9.20 AM Washington, DC 4.20 PM Doha 5.50 PM Kabul	<p>Opening Speech by H.E. Dr. Mutlaq bin Majed Al-Qahtani</p> <p>Special Envoy of the State of Qatar for Counterterrorism and Mediation of Conflict Resolution</p> <p>Remarks (20 minutes) + Q&A (10 minutes)</p>
9.50 AM Washington, DC 4.50 PM Doha 6.20 PM Kabul	<p>Panel 1: Complexities of the Formal Peace Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faiz Zaland, Professor, Kabul University Barnett Rubin, Senior Fellow, Center on International Cooperation, New York University Meredith Preston McGhie, Secretary General, Global Centre for Pluralism Alex Thier, Chief Executive Officer, Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) <p>Speaker Remarks (60 minutes) + Q&A (30 minutes)</p>
Break: 10 Minutes	
11.30 AM - 1:00 PM Washington 6.30 - 8.00 PM Doha 8:00 - 9:30 PM Kabul	<p>Panel 2: Regional Policies towards Afghan Peace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nilofar Sakhi, Director of Policy and Diplomacy at McColm & Company Malaiz Daud, Project Director at the Peace Training and Research Organization (PTRO) Amina Khan, Director, Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa, Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) Amb. Janan Mosazai, Executive Committee Member, Heart of Asia Society <p>Speaker Remarks (60 minutes) + Q&A (30 minutes)</p>



Day 2: Tuesday, 22 June

Please register at this [link](#) for Day 2.

8.30 AM Washington, DC 3.30 PM Doha 5.00 PM Kabul	Distinguished Keynote Address by H.E. Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Address (30 minutes) + Q&A (30 minutes)
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9.30 AM Washington, DC 4.30 PM Doha 6.00 PM Kabul	Panel 3: The End-state and Post-conflict Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amin Saikal, Adjunct Professor of Social Sciences at University of Western Australia Co-authors: Astri Suhrke, Senior Researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) Susanne Schmeidl, Researcher, University of New South Wales Antonio Giustozzi, Visiting Professor, Kings College London Mazar Rahim Saleh, Independent researcher Dipali Mukhopadhyay, Associate Professor, University of Minnesota Speaker Remarks (60 minutes) + Q&A (30 minutes)
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Break: 10 Minutes

11.10 - 12.40 PM Washington, D.C. 6.10 - 7.40 PM Doha 7.40 - 9.10 PM Kabul	Panel 4: Aid for Sustainable Peacebuilding Speakers (each 20 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> William Byrd, Senior Expert (Afghanistan), The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Jennifer Murtazashvili, Associate Professor, University of Pittsburgh Hogai Aryoubi, Peace Education Research Group, University of Cambridge Speaker Remarks (60 minutes) + Q&A (30 minutes)
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Day 3: Wednesday, 23 June

Please register at this [link](#) for Day 3.

9.00 AM Washington, DC 4.00 PM Doha 5.30 PM Kabul	Opening Speech by H.E. Fatima Gailani Negotiator for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Remarks (20 minutes) + Q&A (10 minutes)
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9.30 AM Washington, DC 4.30 PM Doha 6.00 PM Kabul	Panel 5: Women and Inclusivity in the Peace Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masooma Rahmaty, Policy Analyst, International Peace Institute (IPI)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orzala Ashraf Nemat, Research Associate, SOAS, University of London • Huma Saeed, Affiliated Researcher, Leuven Institute of Criminology (KU Leuven) <p>Speaker Remarks (60 minutes) + Q&A (30 minutes)</p>
	Break: 10 Minutes
<p>11.10 - 12.40 PM Washington, D.C. 6.10 - 7.40 PM Doha 7.40 - 9.10 PM Kabul</p>	<p>Panel 6: Rehabilitation, Refugee Repatriation and Global Migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-authors: Ali Wardak, Professor, University of South Wales Kate Williams, Professor, University of South Wales Palash Kamruzzaman, Senior Lecturer of Social Policy, University of South Wales Yaseen Ayobi, Doctoral Researcher, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership, Deakin University • Hameed Hakimi, Research Associate, Asia-Pacific Programme and Europe Programme, Chatham House • Antonio Donini, Visiting Fellow, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University <p>Speaker Remarks (50 minutes) + Q&A (30 minutes) + Closing Remarks (10 minutes)</p>

Panel Overviews

Panel 1: Complexities of the Formal Peace Process

The intra-Afghan talks in Doha have been impacted by the complications of the formal negotiation process, both through the structure of the 2020 US-Taliban Agreement and the limitations of the facilitation arrangements.

The 2020 Agreement's internal logic of sequencing mutual obligations between the US and the Taliban, including obligations the US accepted on behalf of the Islamic Republic, has fallen apart over the past year. The announcement of complete US-NATO troop withdrawal in the coming months raises questions of what the potential looks like to capitalise on the time remaining to secure an intra-Afghan settlement. While criticisms have been expressed against Biden's accelerated diplomacy track to overcome the intra-Afghan deadlock, productive roles may yet be played by other third-parties.

In particular, the lack of a formal mediator role in the Doha process out of a literal commitment to "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" negotiations is also coming under increasing debate. The entry in recent months of formal third-party actors in the intra-Afghan negotiations - Turkey,



the United Nations, and Russia - in addition to Qatar, which facilitated the 2020 Agreement, raises questions for how the external actors might offer productive contributions to the facilitation process and coordinate their efforts. Specifically, what is the character of third-party cooperation in the Afghan peace process? Does the multiplication of formal channels offer potential for wider facilitation support, or do competing tracks present greater challenges in streamlining the peace effort?

Panel 2: Regional Policies Towards Afghan Peace

The Afghan sides and the US have continually emphasised the importance of regional support from Afghanistan's neighbours for a successful outcome to the intra-Afghan negotiations. While all of its neighbours affirmed their support for Afghan peace at the Heart of Asia Conference held in Tajikistan this March, Afghan sides contest that the foreign policies of some states continue to adversely affect the peace process. Regional rivalries between Pakistan and India, on one hand, and the US, China, and Iran, on the other, have at various points over the past two decades of the Afghan peace process threatened to subsume the small window of opportunity for Afghan peace beneath other geopolitical tensions.

How may the Biden administration and third parties have impacted the necessary conditions for the buy-in of key regional states, such as Pakistan, for the Afghan peace process? - particularly in light of other developments in the region, including the recent Pakistan-India mediation on the Kashmir conflict. How has the approach of regional powers, such as India and China, changed towards Afghan peace in recent years? How have these regional approaches reinforced or undermined the mediation arrangements of the intra-Afghan negotiations?

Panel 3: The End-state and Post-conflict Governance

There remains a great lack of clarity on the possible forms for an end-state of representative, inclusive, and accountable government that would be viewed as mutually agreeable to the Afghan sides in a political settlement. The Taliban present the Islamic Emirate as a conceptually distinct alternative political system to the Islamic Republic, but the basis for this juxtaposition has long remained unclear.

Identifying the possibilities for reconciling the divergent proposals for political systems presented by the Afghan parties touches on several sets of questions. Some of these include debates regarding the existing Constitution of Afghanistan and a proposed alternative from the Taliban, the balance between decentralisation versus centralisation in the political system, and how proposed changes to the official political system would negotiate with de facto reality of informal governance arrangements across Afghanistan. Importantly, what are the views of the Afghan people on these issues of political system change and their priorities for post-conflict governance?



Panel 4: Aid for Sustainable Peacebuilding

International efforts for supporting sustainable peacebuilding in Afghanistan, such as through peace education and rule of law programs, have had a mixed record. This is partly due to the difficulties donors have faced in contending with the de facto nature of informal governance in most of the country, as well as problematic linkages constructed by some international donors between stabilisation and counter-insurgency objectives with peacebuilding programs.

What lessons have been learned from the performance of international aid programs in Afghanistan, and how may donors draw on these lessons to formulate enhanced project design of future programming? What considerations should future aid assistance take into account as it expands further to under-served areas under Taliban control? What are the special challenges faced by development and relief actors to ensure women and girls' access to aid services?

Panel 5: Women and Inclusivity in the Peace Process

The importance of women's rights for the Afghan negotiations is distinctive among comparative peace processes. While the Afghan negotiating teams have expressed a commitment to upholding the rights of women, the representation of women negotiators across both sides is low (four out of a total forty-two delegates). The Taliban's broad statement that rights would be guaranteed within Islamic sharia is open for interpretation and requires further clarification.

How would the differentiated experiences of women in the Afghan conflict, who have borne the burden of caring for families and domestic work while family and community networks have suffered, require gender-sensitive responses to recovery? What is the potential for inclusivity as an entry point in formal and informal channels for the Afghan peace process, possibly through civil society participation?

Panel 6: Rehabilitation, Refugee Repatriation and Global Migration

The Afghan negotiating teams have stressed the importance of responding to the needs of rehabilitating former combatants and forcibly displaced populations in a comprehensive recovery approach. Developing a shared understanding on these issues will be essential to streamline national strategies for post-conflict issues of demobilisation and rehabilitation and refugee repatriation, including to previously inaccessible or under-served areas, particularly with the prospect of further large-scale prisoner releases.

How should former Taliban combatants be reintegrated in society - through return to their old villages or engagement with new forms of livelihoods? How should the repatriation of Afghan refugees from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran be approached in consideration of the three generations of displacement that may separate returnees from their old villages? And how do the connections between the local considerations of Afghanistan's flows of displaced



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populations and the global refugee crisis in Europe and North America shape international responsibilities towards Afghan refugees?