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## EXPERTS MEETING ON AFGHANISTAN AND REGIONAL STABILISATION

28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2009

Rome, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Piazzale Farnesina,  
*Sala Conferenze Internazionali*

### Overview

Under the auspices of the Italian G8 Presidency, **Ipalmo**, **ARGO** and **Carnegie Europe** have organised an **Experts Meeting on Afghanistan and Regional Stabilisation**, which will address core issues affecting Afghanistan and the states in its proximity: Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, India, Russia and China. The role of external stakeholders in the region such as the U.S., the ISAF, the UN and Europe will also be considered. The meeting provides an opportunity to share policy ideas, identify best practices, and suggest innovative and cooperative approaches through an open and productive exchange of views. It will be attended by leading scholars from think-tanks, research institutions, centers for strategic studies and universities from the region as well as from the U.S. and Europe. The overarching objective will be to identify concrete steps to address three critical areas to further stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan: *regional security cooperation and dialogue; border issues and illicit trafficking; and regional economic and social integration.*

## Programme Outline

### Day 1 – Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> May

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*2.30pm-3.00pm* **Registration**

*3.00pm-3.30pm* **Opening Statement:**

Gianni de Michelis, Chairman of the conference, President of Ipalmo and former Minister of Foreign Affairs

**Welcome Address:**

Attilio Massimo Iannucci, Director General for the countries of Asia, Oceania, the Pacific and Antarctica

*3.30pm-3.45pm* **Coffee Break**

*3.45pm-6:00pm* **Panel I: Regional Security – What Dialogue and Cooperation?**

The array of security actors engaged in Afghanistan and the broader region is vast, ranging from collective security umbrellas like NATO's ISAF and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and multilateral organisations like the United Nations and the European Union, to individual states in the region and abroad. However, despite facing the common threats of illicit trafficking, terrorism, and border control, regional stakeholders have seldom defined their shared interests, and regional cooperation at both the bilateral and multilateral levels has remained largely ad-hoc. Enhanced regional cooperation could be achieved by defining the terms of engagement between regional stakeholders and external actors, whilst simultaneously attempting to achieve a balance between multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

**Key Questions:**

- How might the common security threats and interests of these regional actors best be defined and met?
- What should be the key foci of a strategic dialogue between regional stakeholders?
- What possible confidence-building measures to improve regional security could be taken within and between countries from the region and external stakeholders?
- Can multilateral engagement in security matters in the region be coordinated and balanced with bilateral, ad-hoc cooperation?
- Would the engagement of regionally-based security organisations like the SCO be an effective way for external stakeholders like the EU and NATO to enhance their cooperation with the states in the region?
- Can a comprehensive strategy to enhance civil-military relations and actions be implemented at a regional, or even national, level?
- How might regional actors best combine to disrupt, dismantle and prevent the development of terrorist 'safe havens' across the region?
- Is there a concrete role for regional government and international organisations in the prevention of political and humanitarian crises in the area?
- Could an early-warning conflict prevention system be developed in the region to assist with humanitarian crises such as that currently unfolding in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP)?

*Moderator* Enrico De Maio, Ambassador, IPALMO

*Panelists:*

Saad Mohseni, Chairman, The Moby Group, Afghanistan

Rafik Sayfulin, freelance analyst, Uzbekistan

Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, Professor, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, France

Song Xinning, Professor, UNU-CRIS and Renmin University of China (RUC), China

Ashley Tellis, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Jolanda Brunetti Goetz, Ambassador, IPALMO, Italy

## **Day II – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May**

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### **9.30am-11.15am Panel II: Border Issues and Illicit Trafficking: Fostering Dialogue and Consolidating Best Practices**

Borders represent a major challenge to regional stabilisation. They are an object of dispute between countries from the region, most notably between Afghanistan and Pakistan and between Pakistan and India. Failure to adequately define and control regional borders facilitates the growth of the trafficking industry, allows terrorist networks to flourish, and threatens the statehood of individual countries. It is therefore essential to think about creating effective ways to simultaneously foster better dialogue and cooperation between regional states on specific border issues and to enhance the technical cooperation necessary to address transnational issues. Some multinational efforts have been undertaken with encouraging progress, but they need to be extended to a regional level and rendered flexible enough to adapt alongside fast-changing security threats.

**Key Questions:**

- In what ways might regional and bilateral dialogue on open border disputes be encouraged? Have the Afghanistan-Pakistan Jirgas delivered?
- What lessons have been learnt from regional border management and which, if any, of these border management initiative(s) should be extended?
- What are the lessons learnt from counter-narcotics strategies in the countries of the region?
- What local and regional law enforcement and economic actions should be taken to reduce drug-fuelled criminal activities, including smuggling and processing, the manufacturing and trade of chemical precursors, money laundering and corruption?
- How might cooperation between drug-producing states, transit states and large consumer markets be enhanced?
- How might economies in the region transition from illicit to licit economic activity?

*Moderator* Antonella Deledda, President, ARGO

*Panelists:*

Hameed Haroon, Chief Executive Officer, The Dawn Media Group, Pakistan

Masood Karokhail, Deputy Director, Tribal Liaison Office, Afghanistan

Wadir Safi, Professor of International Relations, University of Kabul, Afghanistan

Dr. Ajay Darshan Behera is Associate Professor at the Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

**11.15am-11.30am Coffee Break**

**11.30am-1.15pm Panel III: Toward Greater Regional Economic and Social Integration**

Political disputes and a lack of security hamper economic and civil society development in Afghanistan and the broader region. Greater economic integration, increased cross-border exchange of goods and shared work opportunities, would provide a means to build upon cultural and economic linkages and to encourage cooperation and trust in the region. It is important that the international community and regional stakeholders examine and devise methods to tap into the considerable economic potential of the region, which would include focusing on the management of natural resources, cross-border trade and the development of energy corridors.

**Key Questions:**

- What actions should be taken to enhance and facilitate trade within the region and with major trade blocs?
- Is it possible to adopt a regional approach to improve agriculture and water supplies across borders?
- Which national and transnational infrastructure projects would help create transport and energy corridors?
- How might the cross-border movement of people best be facilitated, in order to increase economic, cultural and social exchanges? Would a free economic exchange zone for goods and services be a valid approach?
- How can the involvement of local communities in the formulation and delivery of economic aid packages be increased?
- Could a more structured 'Track II Process' strengthen civil society engagement and cooperation across the region and lay the foundations for stronger regional economic integration?

*Moderator* Fabrice Pothier, Director, Carnegie Europe

*Panelists:*

Martha Brill Olcott, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Haroun Mir, Co-Founder and Deputy Director of Afghanistan's Center for Research & Policy Studies, Afghanistan

Syed Talat Hussain, Journalist, AAJ television, Pakistan

Mohammad Hassan Khani, Professor, Imam Sadiq University, Iran

*1.15pm- 2.15pm* **Lunch**

*2.15pm-4.30pm* **Brainstorming Session and Concluding Session**

*Rapporteur* Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh

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**Concluding Statement:**

Gianni De Michelis, President of IPALMO and former Minister of Foreign Affairs

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