

Lecture on The European Union's Role in Supporting Afghan Peace Process

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Lecture Session on
“The European Union’s Role in Supporting Afghan Peace Process”

Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS)

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The Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) organized a lecture session under the title of **“The European Union’s Role in Supporting Afghan Peace Process”** on April 18, 2019. H.E. Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon, Head of European Union Delegation to Afghanistan was speaker of the event. Ms. Metra Mehran, Researcher at Journal of Afghanistan Affair moderated the event. Distinguished current and former Afghan Government Officials, academics, military experts, civil society members and media representatives, ambassadors and diplomats participated in the event. The purpose of this programme was review of the EU’s role in establishing a long-lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Ms. Mehran, began by stating “we are in important moment of peace negotiations. Recently many meetings have been held in Qatar and we have witnessed talking between Afghan representatives and the Taliban in the near future. Now we came to get to know about role of EU in Afghanistan peace process”.

First of all, Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon, thanked AISS for organizing the round table. He said that Afghanistan has always been a significant partner for the European Union. He briefly talked about EU role in Afghanistan in different aspects. He continued that people of Afghanistan deserve to live at peace atmosphere like any other nation. The EU has been trying to facilitate peace negotiation between all stakeholders. “The EU will do all possible contributions to current peace dialogue. We are at very sensitive moment of peace process and we will have many challenges on peace talks”, he said. The EU and its partners like UN and NATO completely support peace talks. He mentioned about EU high representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini’s five points proposals at Geneva conference on November 28th 2018. She visited Kabul on March 26th 2019 and televised EU messages and our last meeting was on April 8th 2019 on peace talks in Afghanistan. We have the role of acceleration to peace process.



Mr. Ambassador talked about EU and Afghanistan's key elements of engagement and mentioned that Afghanistan is EU's world largest destination for diplomatic assistance. The Afghanistan government receives 1.6 billion direct financial support throughout the 2014-2020. It shows our special commitment to Afghanistan and on the other hand approximately all EU members cooperate civilians in Afghanistan through different donor agencies. Mr. Ambassador added that EU has also focus on different features in Afghanistan including security, higher education, health, women's rights, freedom of speech and immigrants. We dedicated many programs to assisting the returnees mostly from Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and other countries including Europe. We have signed four agreement with the government of Afghanistan in regards to immigrants, so there is a legal framework between EU and Afghanistan. EU has provided higher education support for the Afghan youth in Europe. He added EU can play global diplomatic role to talk about Afghanistan security crisis with regional stakeholders, such as, Pakistan and Iran and other partners of Afghanistan.

Mr. Mayaudon expressed that EU recently committed to a new assistance package for Afghanistan with focus on public sector reforms, particularly on investing in basic service delivery and the country's macro-economic stability and finance policies.

The first important moment on afghan peace process was on November 28th in Geneva conference and on that time the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy explained EU strategy on afghan peace talks and mentioned five points;

1) Helping the government to make the peace process more inclusive;

- 2) Supporting reforms, including security sector reform;
- 3) Providing incentives for the reintegration of ex-combatants;
- 4) Having the EU as a guarantor of the peace process;
- 5) Supporting cross-border trade and infrastructure, as well as regional connectivity.

The five-point plan carries prospects for a large investment agenda, both in Afghanistan and its neighboring countries.



“The EU has clear plans for sustainable peace building to strengthening governance in Afghanistan.” Mr. Ambassador expressed EU’s full support for an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process, emphasizing the Afghans must have the right to decide their future. He expressed, many afghan politicians recently met with Taliban in Moscow but this is not the peace process. Peace negotiation will happen between the Afghan government and the Taliban. “This is what we call the real peace process.”

He continued “as I already mentioned the EU strongly supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process to preserve the achievements of Afghanistan attained in past eighteen years. He emphasized that “there should be no flexibility in negotiating the gains of the past 18 years”.

He emphasized, The EU was committed to "maintaining and strengthening the political, economic and social achievements of the last 18 years, including the rights of women, children and minorities. Mr. Ambassador reiterated that the EU stresses on the importance of an inclusive peace process, with special attention to youth and women. He added that the EU has contributed to an inclusive peace process by providing training to youth and women in negotiations.

Mr. Mayaudon emphasized that the peace process must not sacrifice three important elements of the Afghan state:

- 1) The constitutional order for something unknown – EU does not support the logic of an interim government. There should be no postponement to the elections.
- 2) Human Rights gains
- 3) Afghanistan's territorial integrity - The question - which area be controlled by Afghan Government and which by area by Taliban - only reminds us of painful history. Afghanistan is ONE and should remain ONE.

Mr. Pierre Mayaudon added on 8 April 2019, the European Union members held a meeting on Afghanistan peace agenda with presence of twenty eight foreign ministers which was chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs. In this meeting few issues were concluded; the EU hereby reaffirms its political commitment and long-term support to the people of Afghanistan on their path towards peace, security and prosperity. He added that EU encourages the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban to intensify their efforts towards a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict. The EU supports all efforts to catalyze such a process, which has created a political opportunity that should be seized. Mr. Ambassador mentioned that EU support direct negotiations between Afghans, with the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban at their core, should begin as soon as possible, ensuring an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan owned peace and reconciliation process. The EU strongly supports a process that respects the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan and the dignity of its people. The EU stands ready to support the peace process, including its implementation, with the aim of preserving and building upon the political, economic and social achievements of

the people of Afghanistan since 2001, which should be irreversible. Any future peace agreement must be to the benefit of all parties.



Noting that the EU's approach to Afghanistan peace process is not condition-based but value-based, Mr. Mayaudon concluded with this point: The Afghan peace process requires the full support and constructive involvement of the entire international community, in particular key regional and international stakeholders. The EU must be associated from the outset to all stages of the peace process. The EU confirms that it stands ready to support the following aspects of the process: to help make the peace process inclusive; to assist with reforms, including security sector reform; to act as a guarantor of a peace process, if requested by the parties.

The event was concluded with Q/A session.