

# AFGHAN LINKS

ISSUE – 12 – 9th April 2005 (TOTAL NO. 21)

*Afghan Links is a free newsletter for readers who have a keen interest in Afghanistan, its history, people and culture. It invites news and articles from anyone who wishes to create and maintain constructive links between Afghanistan and other countries by sharing their expertise, information and ideas in any field.*

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## **AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENT FORUM**

### **Statement by Jean Arnault - Special Representative of the Secretary-General United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan**

(4-6 April 2005 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kabul) - Opening session, April 4, 2005

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

The organizers of this year's Forum have requested us to stay away – and I quote - from the "recitation of past accomplishments and contributions by donors" and to engage in serious policy dialogue around future strategic priorities. I am pleased to heed their call, not out of disregard for the remarkable achievements of the past three years but because the magnitude of the challenges to come does deserve our undivided attention; and also because of a concern that too strong an emphasis on past and current successes may bring with it a feeling of complacency – a very inappropriate frame of mind in which to approach the dialogue on the future of the Afghan peace process.

Certainly, there is every reason to believe that progress made last year in strengthening domestic security agencies will soon translate in enhance stability; yes there is every reason to hope that, if all goes well, the upcoming parliamentary election will further entrench democratic practices in Afghanistan's political system. Yes, progress has been achieved on many other fronts. But we must remain keenly aware of the great fragility of these gains. A number of key tasks of post-conflict peace building have yet to be completed, among which the extension of genuine security across the country; demilitarization of local power structures; the full resettlement of refugees and IDPs; the rehabilitation of key social and economic infrastructure; the gradual eradication of the narcotics economy; and the establishment of minimally functional government institutions. In addition, a number of essential peace building tasks have hardly begun, including the settlement of land claims - a pervasive source of violence; the restoration of property rights, and more broadly that of the rule of law; the rebuilding of trust among those whose lives were shattered by the war; and the rebuilding of unity between the groups that have been involved in the conflict of the past decades.

In recent years, much has been said in international circles about the frequent failure of the world community, in dealing with conflicts, to address the gap between short-term post-conflict recovery and the longer-term development of state capacity to perform effectively and responsibly. Because of the thorough destruction to which Afghan institutions were subjected during the war and the destitution prevailing in much of the country, this gap is particularly daunting in Afghanistan. We must not, therefore, take progress for granted. Perhaps nowhere in the world today is the consolidation of peace so tightly dependent on sustained institutional and economic reconstruction. Let us be aware of this circumstance and let us remember that while the establishment in a few months' time of fully representative political institutions will facilitate the process of state building and recovery, it will not be a substitute for it, particularly against the backdrop of the dismal social and economic indicators described in the recent Human Development Report.

It is in this context that we warmly welcome the government's invitation to dialogue around strategic priorities beyond the political transition; and we can endorse the list of key themes proposed to the attention of the Forum. They very largely reflect the concerns that the international community itself has identified, ranging from the need for fiscal sustainability to an emphasis on regional cooperation; from the need to balance social spending and investing in economic infrastructure, to strengthening the protection of the human rights of ordinary Afghan women and men. Taken together, they outline a broad agenda on which an understanding between Afghanistan and the international community must be achieved as early as possible notwithstanding the complexity of the issues involved. Strategic consensus on security and the political transition was achieved fairly quickly at Bonn under pressure of the tragic events of the fall of 2001. In contrast, issues relating to the pace and scope of state reform, the most appropriate strategy for economic development, and the potential and constraints of regional cooperation will lend themselves to diverse views, and, as the organizers rightly pointed out, may raise more questions than answers and reveal differences of opinion that will not be settled right away. One more compelling reason to engage in this debate without further delay in order to reach as soon as possible the common vision that will guide our joint efforts for years to come.

**Please see attachment 2.12 for the full statement.**

**Source:** Ariane Quentier, Snr. Public Information Officer – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2005.

## **COUNTER NARCOTICS**

### **CARE and Center on International Cooperation – New Policy Brief on Counter-Narcotics Policy in Afghanistan**

The brief analyzes the evolving situation on the ground (including the recent drop in poppy cultivation), and offers specific recommendations vis-a-vis alternative livelihoods, law enforcement and eradication.

Overall, the three main policy recommendations are:

- 1) To be successful, counter-narcotics initiatives -- especially alternative livelihoods programs -- must be adequately funded over the long-term;
- 2) Do not mistake short term gains for long-term success -- though a reduction in poppy cultivation is expected this year, this trend will not be sustainable unless sustainable alternative livelihoods and law enforcement actions are implemented as quickly as possible
- 3) It is imperative to introduce alternative livelihoods programs and law enforcement against major traffickers, warlords and corrupt officials before phasing-in widespread eradication. Aerial eradication would prove at best counter-productive and at worst widely destabilizing. **Please see attachment 1.12.**

**Source:** Sent to Afghanlinks Newsletter by Michael Kleinman, Advocacy Coordinator, CARE Afghanistan. Tel.: 070 276 716 Email: [michael.kleinman@care.org.af](mailto:michael.kleinman@care.org.af)

**If you want further information on any of the above subjects please email Jeanne Bryer at [Afghanlinks@aol.com](mailto:Afghanlinks@aol.com)**

**NB.** All information contained here identifies the source and is shared with readers in good faith. If you find any incorrect details please let me know and they will be rectified immediately. *Afghan Links* is produced by Jeanne Bryer who formerly worked for the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group and who currently works for Khorasan Orphanage in Kabul and the Kathy Evans Afghan Education Trust. If you no longer wish to receive the Afghan Links Newsletter please send an email to Jeanne [Afghanlinks@aol.com](mailto:Afghanlinks@aol.com) and your address will be removed.

