

“Perspectives on the Future of Democracy in Afghanistan”

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Abstract

1. The **democratization process in Afghanistan is in its infant stage** and there are still numerous obstacles on the road to democracy and sustainable peace. Democratic institutions have been created and now have to start functioning.
2. In the transition from a failed to a democratic state the **right timing for elections is difficult** or rather presents a dilemma. While the country needs a legislative body and the international community wants visible results, basic needs of the people (food, health, education) are not met.
3. **More focus has to be put on** the development of the **rule of law**. Without a functioning judiciary, efforts in other areas will repeatedly suffer setbacks. The Afghan constitution contains contradictions and is neither truly secular nor truly Islamic.
4. There is **no political development without security and economic growth**. The main problems are the drug economy, corruption, ongoing militant attacks, and underdevelopment. Strengthening the Afghan ownership, accountability, and establishing better monitoring mechanisms will be crucial.
5. The **International community** shows comparatively high commitment to peace keeping and peace building in Afghanistan but it does not always speak with one voice, its toolbox for democracy promotion is relatively empty and its commitment is too short. **Regional players** enhance conflict situations.

Chronology of political developments in Afghanistan

1963-1973	„Decade of democracy“
1973-1979	April (<i>Saur</i>) Revolution and closer cooperation with the Soviet Union
	Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
1979-1989	Communist regime, proxy war in Afghanistan, Western support of the <i>Mudjaheddin</i>
1989-1992	Communist puppet regime
1992-1996	Civil war between different <i>Mudjaheddin</i> -parties
1996	Islamic extremists <i>Taliban</i> come into power
After September 11, 2001	Military defeat of the <i>Taliban</i> by US-forces in cooperation with the Afghan Northern Alliance
December 2001	Petersberg Peace Agreement for Afghanistan; sets schedule for next steps towards democracy
June 2002	1. <i>Loya Jirga</i> (Grand Assembly) appoints transition government
December 2003/January 2004	International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn (Petersberg) 2. Constitutional <i>Loya Jirga</i> assembly
March/April 2004	International Afghanistan Conference in Berlin
October 2004	3a. Presidential elections Hamid Karzai is elected president in the first round of elections
September 2005	3b. Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections
January 31 – February 1, 2006	London Conference on Afghanistan

The Afghanistan Compact

(The London Conference on Afghanistan, January 31 – February 1, 2006)
51 participating countries set the benchmarks for the next 5 years

Outcomes in three critical and interdependent areas:

1. Security

- Cannot be provided by military means alone
- Requires good governance, justice, rule of law, reinforced by reconstruction and development
- Afghan government will consolidate peace by disbanding all illegal armed groups by end-2007 in all provinces
- ISAF will expand its presence in Afghanistan, including through Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) through end-2010
- By end-2010, a nationally respected, professional, ethnically balanced Afghan National Army will be established

2. Governance, Rule of Law, Human Rights

- The government will give priority to the coordinated establishment of functional institutions in all provinces: civil administration, police, prisons, judiciary, etc.
- Reforming the justice system will be a priority for the government
- A clear and transparent national appointments mechanism will be established for all senior level appointments (government, judiciary, governors, chiefs of police)
- The UN Convention against Corruption will be ratified by end-2006
- The Action Plan on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation will be implemented by end-2008

3. Economic and Social Development

- The Afghan government will promote the role and potential of the private sector, curb the narcotics industry, ensure macroeconomic stability, and restore the country's human, social, and physical capital
- Public investments will be structured around six sectors: infrastructure and natural resources; education; health; agriculture and rural development; social protection; and economic governance and private sector development

Additional agreements:

Improving the effectiveness of aid to Afghanistan

- The government will provide a detailed Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) with indicators for monitoring results, including Afghanistan's MDGs
- The government will agree with donors, international financial institutions and the UN on the benchmarks for aid channeled through the government's core budget
- The Afghan government and the international community are establishing a Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board for the implementation of this compact

Map of the region

