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Forum for the 21st century

International Assistance to Afghanistan

Statement to the 2nd DRAFT

On April 22, 2012, after more than a year and a half of negotiations, Afghanistan and the United States finalized the draft text for the US Afghan strategic partnership, which will be reviewed by both countries' governments before it becomes final after the Afghan and American president sign it.

The agreement named "Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between Afghanistan and the United States" has a duration of at least 10 years, lays out the framework for a future U.S. role in Afghanistan, including aid assistance and governance advice, and covers the areas of social and economic development, institution building, regional cooperation and security. U.S. help to support Afghan economic development, health care programs, education and social initiatives are part of the agreement. The status of U.S. troops and the details of their operations after the 2014 withdrawal of NATO forces is not included in the partnership, but shall be covered in a separate status of forces agreement. Long-term US access to military bases in Afghanistan as well as the size or location of US bases in Afghanistan are also not part of the strategic partnership.

Bilateral Security Agreement

Under the strategic partnership agreement signed by the U.S. and Afghanistan in May 2012 both countries are obliged to negotiate a bilateral security agreement within one year. These negotiations were scheduled to begin on November 15, 2012. The talks will attempt to set conditions for U.S. forces in Afghanistan after 2014 as part of a "train, advise and assist" mission (U.S. President Obama and his national security team will determine the number of troops to be proposed) and are aimed at building a security framework, not a detailed agreement. Besides immunity from Afghan prosecution for U.S. soldiers accused of crimes and the Afghanistan demand that the U.S. guarantee that it will respond to any cross-border incursion or artillery attack on Afghanistan territory negotiators will attempt to set broad outlines for air rights over Afghanistan and the use and disposition of hundreds of U.S.-built bases — especially the huge air bases in Bagram and Kandahar. They may also discuss potential roles for U.S. Special Operations troops and unmanned drone aircraft, as well as the future of existing U.S. drone ground control stations in Afghanistan — subject to a



final White House position on these issues. The details of these and other issues will be hammered out in "implementing documents" to be negotiated after any security agreement is signed.⁴

The Governments of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America officially launched their negotiations on a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) on November 15, 2012 in Kabul. H.E. Eklil Hakimi, Ambassador of Afghanistan in Washington, was leading the Afghan negotiating team while Ambassador James Warlick, Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was leading the United States negotiating team. Both sides affirmed that the key guiding principles in these important negotiations was full respect for Afghan sovereignty and Afghan national interests, including advancing the cause of peace and security across Afghanistan, strengthening the capacity and capabilities of Afghan national security forces so that they can independently provide security for the Afghan people and defend the country against external threats, and pursuing both countries' shared goal of eliminating trans-national terrorism. Both sides clarified that these negotiations are premised on the understanding that the United States does not seek permanent military bases in Afghanistan, or a presence that was perceived as a threat to Afghanistan's neighbors

Economic Development

Senior officials from the United States and Afghanistan met last year to continue their trade dialogue and evaluate progress under the United States-Afghanistan Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

The officials discussed a wide range of investment climate issues including supporting Afghanistan's transition to a sustainable economy, market access, the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), trade promotion efforts, intellectual property rights, sector-specific investment challenges, and the New Silk Road vision. The New Silk Road envisions an international network of economic and transit connections. The New Silk Road will link and integrate Afghanistan with its neighbors and regional and global economies.

The TIFA process has been the focal point of a sustained and multi-faceted high-level engagement between the United States and Afghanistan on trade and investment issues, including addressing impediments to greater trade and investment flows between the Parties. U.S.-Afghanistan trade flows have witnessed significant increases since 2004. Exports from the U.S. to Afghanistan increased 1,333% from \$150 million in 2004 to \$2.2 billion in 2010. Imports from Afghanistan to the U.S. increased 243% from \$25 million in 2004 to \$85 million in 2010.

Education programs

2013-2014 Fulbright Graduate Fellowship Program



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The U.S. Embassy is pleased to announce the 2013-2014 Fulbright Graduate Fellowship Program for citizens of Afghanistan to pursue a master's degree in the United States.

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. Government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

Participants will be recruited through a merit-based, open competition and chosen based upon their leadership potential, academic excellence, maturity, ability to adjust successfully to life in the U.S., strong interest in engaging Americans, and potential to promote mutual understanding between the United States and Afghanistan.

Applicants must be citizens of Afghanistan and have completed their undergraduate education and hold a degree equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree by the start of the grant period.

Applicants should have a sufficient level of English to enable them to successfully complete full-time graduate study in the U.S. Many successful applicants earn a score of 600 or higher on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Long-term language training may be available for some applicants who fail to obtain the required TOEFL score; however, all applicants must demonstrate sufficient English language skills during the interview portion of the selection process. Semi-finalists will also be required to take the GRE (Graduate Record Examination).

Strong preference will be given to applicants who have not had extensive recent experience in the U.S. Applicants currently living in the U.S. are ineligible for the program.

All grantees are expected to return to Afghanistan for at least two years at the conclusion of their grant in compliance with the J-visa requirements and to promote mutual understanding.

All grantees receive tuition, monthly stipend, supplemental health and accident insurance, book and supplies allowance, travel support and the opportunity to attend Fulbright enrichment activities.

The Fulbright Graduate Program enables Afghans to pursue graduate-level study in the United States, build leadership skills and exchange cultural understanding with Americans.

The Fulbright Graduate Fellowship pays for up to two years of graduate study in the United States to earn an MA, MS, MBA/MPA, LLM or similar graduate degree. For the 2013-2014 program, as many as 60 graduate fellowships may be available. Fellows receive a tuition scholarship for their coursework and a monthly stipend to cover living expenses at their host institution. Fellows also receive roundtrip



transportation and health insurance. In addition, Fellows may also attend special enrichment activities throughout their program.