



Dear Readers,

This month, we commemorated Nowruz, a holiday that marks the beginning of the New Year and the First Day of Spring. Nowruz is a unique cultural & spiritual occasion celebrated mainly in our wider region. But the message of Nowruz, built on the principles of optimism, gratitude & appreciation of common values resonate even greater this year, given the situation in which the world finds itself. This year's Nowruz comes amidst new efforts for ending the four-decades conflict & enabling our people to achieve the most fundamental human right from which they have been deprived over a consistent period of forty years. We stand confident that the shared efforts of the people & government of Afghanistan and our int. partners will lead to a dignified & lasting peace, which meets expectations of our people, under a sovereign, united, democratic Afghanistan. When speaking of the prospect of peace, let us all recall the countless sacrifices that were made, by the people of Afghanistan, the Afghan national & defense & security forces as well as all international military & civilian personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Afghanistan for peace. This month, our Embassy & many others around the world commemorated the National Day of the Armed Forces of Afghanistan. The event was an opportunity for us to commemorate the occasion with our colleagues from the government of Norway, our close and strategic partner, and Ambassadors & other representatives based in Oslo. The event was also an opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of all Norwegian forces & security and civilian personnel of other NATO-partner nations. Consistent with the vision of Nowruz, we look forward to a New Year of peace, tranquility & prosperity for all!

Yousof Ghafoorzai
Ambassador

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Discusses Start of Collaboration Between the Oslo Center and Embassy



On Wednesday the 10th of January, the Embassy held a first virtual meeting with the Oslo Center, a Norwegian peace, democracy and human rights institution, to identify possible areas of collaboration between the Center and youth and civil society groups. The virtual meeting was attended by the Executive Chair of the Center and former Norwegian Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, Ambassador Ghafoorzai, Executive Director of the Center, Finn Jarle Rode and Senior Advisor Bjarte Tørå. The Oslo Center was founded in 2006 by former PM Kjell Bondevik and former Cabinet Minister Einar Steensnæs as an "independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organisation, strength and stability of institutions. Ambassador Ghafoorzai, Mr. Rode, Mr. Bondevik and Mr. Tørå discussed possible areas of collaboration that focus on initiatives aimed at the further empowerment of woman and youth groups in Afghanistan.



Ambassador Ghafoorzai thanked the respective representatives of the institution for their insights and underscored what a great opportunity a collaboration with the Oslo Center was for Afghanistan. He emphasized further, that Norway's contributions to Afghanistan are highly appreciated across the country and that the Center's focus was very relevant for a population that consists of close to 70% youth, including exceptionally talented women, who have become proactive agents of positive change in Afghanistan. Lastly, all participants agreed to identify specific areas of collaboration between the Embassy, the Oslo Center, and women and youth groups in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Met Newly Appointed Director of South Asia and Afghanistan Division at Norwegian Foreign Ministry

On March 17th 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met virtually with the Director of the South Asia and Afghanistan Division of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Mattis Rausstol and Norway's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Per Albert Ilsaas. They discussed the latest developments in the Afghan peace process, including ongoing efforts to further strengthen and consolidating national consensus on the peace imperative, the Afghan peace conference in Moscow, the proposed peace conference set to take place next month in Turkey, and the finalization of the Afghanistan-Norway Strategic Partnership Agreement.



Ambassador Ghafoorzai also appreciated and emphasized the importance of Norway's support to peace efforts in Afghanistan, including its role as co-penholder on Afghanistan at the UN Security Council in New York. In that respect, he hailed the important recent press statement of the UN Security Council, which condemned targeted attacks on civilians, including civil servants, the judiciary, the media, healthcare and humanitarian workers, among other groups, and called for an immediate end to such attacks. He also emphasized the importance of confidence building measures in the form of a ceasefire, constructive engagement in the process and achieving an outcome that leads to a lasting and dignified peace, consistent with the demand and expectations of the people. Ambassador Ghafoorzai, Director Mattis Rausstol and Special Representative Per Ilsaas would maintain close contact, collaboration and cooperation in the way forward.

Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo Celebrated 8th of March Women's Day

On 8th March 2021, the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo celebrated the International Women's Day. At the event, Ambassador Ghafoorzai granted women colleagues at the Embassy with a gift of flowers as a token of appreciation for their efforts, commitment, which was a key pillar of the Embassy's activities.



Ambassador Ghafoorzai highlighted that women in Afghanistan are playing a central role from peace talks to improving our communities and in enhancing the lives of our people. Ambassador Ghafoorzai emphasized, it is important to recognize the role of mentorship of women's success and progress can benefit and continue with the next generation of women and girls. The women working at our embassy remind us of the important progress Afghan women have made. The empowerment of women in Afghanistan remain was a key factor for the important gains made in Afghanistan across various fields and sectors in the past many years.



The courage of women who have made sacrifices in the past four decades, to make Afghanistan a safer, prosperous, and peaceful place was a source of inspiration for all Afghans as they strive to achieve a lasting peace and prosperity in the country. Moreover, protecting and sustaining the political, social and economic gains of the last 20 years of which Afghan women were an important part of would remain a priority.

Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo Hosts Virtual ANDSF Commemoration Day Ceremony



On March 5th 2021, the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo held a virtual event commemorating the National Day of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). The event was attended by senior representatives of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, the European Union delegation to Norway, as well as other esteemed Ambassadors of the diplomatic community in Oslo, including Ambassadors of NATO,

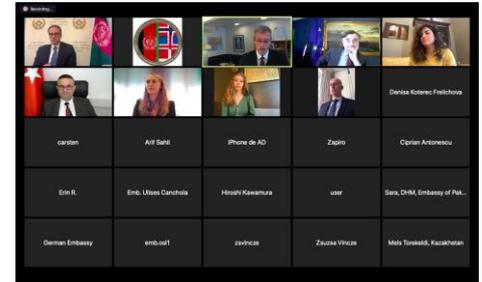


European and regional countries. Opening the event, Ambassador Ghafoorzai paid tribute to the "dedication, service and sacrifice of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, who bear immense responsibility in standing frontline in the global fight against terrorism. He emphasized the development of the ANDSF as "among the proudest and most important achievements made in the country over the past twenty years. "The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces were further a "strong symbol of national unity, pride and national strength," heroes of the country, who "still stood at the very Center of the continuing effort by all nations to defeat a threat confronting all of humanity." At the same time, he stated that their heroism came with "a Price seen in the eyes of mothers, fathers, wives, husbands and children

who have suffered the pain and anguish of losing loves ones in defense of one's country. He went on to say that the service and sacrifice of Afghan Security personnel is deeply valued and appreciated by all segments of society, and that "nothing reflects this appreciation better, than last week's images of young children of fallen soldiers approaching security forces, greeting them with flowers and thanking them for their service," and doing so in tribute of the memory of their parents, who lost their lives in the line of service.



Ambassador Ghafoorzai then went on to point out the significant contributions of Norway and other partner countries, which helped building the operational capacity of Afghan Security Forces within the former NATO-led ISAF and current RSM Mission, in training, equipping and other support for the ANDSF. Such assistance not only helped empower operational capacity of the ANDSF but also helped the achievement of "real and foundational gains" in different sectors of society.



Norway's support for the Afghan Security and Defense Forces was an important part of the international support and security assistance to Afghanistan. In that regard, Norway helped establish and implement various initiatives. One such initiative included the "Crisis Response Unit" or CRU-222 contingent, which was now "one of the most effective contingents responding to sophisticated terrorist attacks."

Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar met with his Danish Counterpart FM Jeppe Kofod



The two sides discussed the finalization of the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the two countries, advancing the Afghan peace process, good governance, and the continuation of Denmark's valuable assistance to Afghanistan. Calling Denmark a valued partner, Foreign Minister Atmar paid tribute to the sacrifices of Danish soldiers and also expressed gratitude for Denmark's humanitarian and development assistance to Afghanistan over the past 20 years. Discussing good governance, Minister Atmar assured Danish Foreign Minister that Kabul was committed to combating corruption and utilizing international aid in the most transparent and efficient manner. Referring to the end-state of the Afghan peace process, Foreign Minister Atmar stated that the Government of Afghanistan was committed to achieving a political settlement supported by the Afghan nation and international community, and which leads to lasting and sustainable peace. Expressing his government's strong support for the peace process, Foreign Minister Kofod said that Afghanistan must not become a terrorist haven again.



Emphasizing the preservation of Afghanistan's democratic and human rights achievements, Mr. Kofod added that we must "avoid putting progress and sacrifices at risk." He also assured the Afghan Foreign Minister of Denmark's continued commitment to the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Conveyed Nowruz Greetings

On the occasion of the International Day of Nowruz, commemorated on the 21st of March and marking the onset of Spring, Ambassador Ghafoorzai delivered a greetings message to all fellow Afghans and others celebrating the auspicious occasion around the world. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that Nowruz was a unique cultural and also spiritual occasion, which is mainly celebrated in countries of South and Central Asia but "the values embedded in the festive occasion apply to all of humanity. These values included the sentiments of optimism, mutual respect, solidarity and peace and prosperity."



He also stated that this year's Nowruz came amidst new hope for an end the four-decade conflict in the country and the ushering in of a new era of peace and tranquility for the people of Afghanistan." He expressed gratitude for the support of Afghanistan's international partners "that have supported Afghanistan's peace efforts in order help the people of Afghanistan achieve what they have do deeply deserved but what has eluded them for more than forty years." Achieving durable and lasting peace that meets the demands and expectations of the people of Afghanistan was a shared objective of Afghanistan and the international community. The government of Afghanistan stood confident in being-



-able to achieve an independent, united Afghanistan that would be a platform of international cooperation, harmony and partnership.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Met with Professional Afghan Boxer, Jamshaid Nazari



On March 19th, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Jamshaid Nazari, a professional Afghan-Norwegian boxer residing Norway. Mr. Nazary arrived in Norway in 2008 and soon after pursued his passion for boxing. After a lengthy amateur career of 103 fights, he became a professional boxer in 2017. As an amateur, he participated in the World Olympics qualifier, Baku, Azerbaijan in 2016, European Championship in 2015 in Bulgaria, European Championship in 2017 in Kharkiv, Ukraine and Hungary International Box Cap. He has won multiple gold medal championships during his amateur career. His success has continued as a professional, winning all six of his first professional matches. His record stands at an undefeated record of 6-0. Ambassador Ghafoorzai praised Mr. Nazari for his commitment and success as an Afghan athlete and stated that the determination and success of athletes from Afghanistan was a great source of pride for the Afghan people and nation.



He further stated that Afghan athletes were Ambassadors in their own right, representing Afghanistan in the world of sports. He expressed the full support of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Norway for his efforts and all other Afghan athletes residing in Norway and Denmark. Ambassador Ghafoorzai granted Mr. Nazary a gift of precious Afghan lapis lazuli as a token of appreciation on behalf of the government of Afghanistan for his efforts and achievements.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Met with Mr. Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council



On March 25th, 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met virtually with the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Mr. Jan Egeland. The Ambassador and Mr. Egeland spoke about the current situation in Afghanistan, including the current humanitarian situation, activities of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Afghanistan; Afghanistan's development priorities as presented at the international Geneva Conference on Afghanistan, ongoing peace efforts and urgent needs requiring support during the post-peace agreement phase. Ambassador Ghafoorzai hailed the NRC as an important partner, which is making important contributions in various fields ranging from education, livelihoods and food security to water and sanitation, gender protection and camp management. He also gave an overview of the humanitarian situation which still required urgent international attention. The humanitarian situation remained difficult due to various challenges, including security, the effects of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. The Ambassador further elaborated on the current peace process, citing progress in the building of regional and international consensus for peace in Afghanistan. Effort for peace continued and achieving an outcome that leads to a dignified and lasting peace, based on the will and aspirations of the people was a key objective. In that regard, he also highlighted the return of refugees, resettlement of IDP's and reintegration

of Taliban combatants into society, during a potential post-peace agreement phase as among key issues that would require enhanced support from international partners during the post-conflict period. Secretary General spoke about the NRC's activities in various provinces and reaffirmed the organizations continued support for Afghanistan. He stated the NRC was scaling up its assistance programs in the country. Ambassador Ghafoorzai and Secretary General Egeland committed to maintain close collaboration and initiatives towards enhanced coordination between the NRC and various line ministries in Afghanistan, including the Ministries of Refugees and Repatriation, Public Health and Justice.

President Ashraf Ghani officially inaugurated Kamal Khan Dam in Nimroz province



During the visit, President Ghani accompanied by First and Second Vice-Presidents, AOP General Director, members of the cabinet and other senior government officials, was welcomed by the governor, elders and influential figures of the province at Nimroz Airport. At the ceremony, President Ghani laid a wreath at the minaret to pay tribute to the martyrs of Kamal Khan Dam. President Ghani officially inaugurated the Kamal Khan Dam by pressing the button that opened the dam's gates with water flowing into the channel. President Ghani on the occasion of the inauguration of Kamal Khan Dam lauded the services and efforts of the late Musa Shafiq in the area of water management and approved a state medal after him.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs met this with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Kabul



On the 10th of March, Foreign Minister Haneef Atmar met with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Kabul, Mr. Ole Andreas Lindeman. Foreign Minister Atmar appreciated Norway's cooperation with Afghanistan over the past two decades and its support for the peace process, human rights, women's rights and the rule of law in the country. The two sides discussed the Afghan government's preparations for the renewal of the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the two countries and the continuation of cooperation within the framework of the said agreement. The Norwegian Ambassador termed the renewal of the agreement important for the-



-continuation of partnership and cooperation between the two countries. He further reaffirmed Norway's continued support for ongoing peace efforts for a lasting and dignified peace in the country.

