

The United Nations Security Council and Post-2014 Afghanistan

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Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which the issue of Afghanistan has been discussed by the permanent members at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), based on an analysis of statements and speeches by each permanent member's representative during Security Council meetings between 2011 and 2013. The future of Afghanistan is highly dependent on the strategic and economic interests of the permanent members of UNSC. This paper will discuss and compare the views of each permanent member; specifically in relation to: the progress on, and prospects for, peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan; the handover of security responsibility to the ANSF; the current security situation in the country; future engagement of the UN and international cooperation in Afghanistan. The author concludes that the divergence of priorities and concerns, especially between Russia, and to a lesser degree China, and the other permanent members of the UNSC on vital issues in Afghanistan stands as one of the main challenges to an effective and unified UN policy towards Afghanistan in the post-2014 period.

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Afghanistan is approaching the critical year of 2014, when presidential elections will be held, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will withdraw, and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will assume responsibility for maintaining security in the country. The current situation in Afghanistan raises certain concerns with regard to the future of the country and the region as a whole. The decisions of the permanent members at the UNSC in relation to Afghanistan play a significant role for the country's future.

This paper examines the discussions on Afghanistan among the permanent members of the UNSC, based on statements and speeches by each permanent member's representative during Security Council meetings between 2011 and 2013. The paper reviews each permanent member's position on the progress on, and prospects for, peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan; the handover of security responsibility to ANSF; the security situation in Afghanistan; and the UN's future engagement and international cooperation in Afghanistan.

The future of Afghanistan is highly dependent on the strategic and economic interests of the permanent members of the UNSC in Afghanistan. The U.S. has focused mainly on eliminating Al-Qaeda and preventing Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorists.¹ Russia, on the

other hand, has been concerned about the strengthened U.S. presence in the region, along with the risk that terrorism and drug trafficking will affect its own interests and those of its near neighborhood in Central Asia.² China also has sought to limit U.S. influence in Afghanistan, to secure its economic interest in the country, and to contain potential threats targeting Xinjiang.³ The foreign policy decisions of France and the UK towards Afghanistan have been motivated mainly by their solidarity with the U.S. and the importance of a multilateral approach to the conflict.⁴ The priorities of the permanent members of the UNSC have been manifested during official discussions on Afghanistan. The UNSC has been instrumentalized by the interests of its permanent members and has become a forum whereby permanent members have advanced their own interests.⁵ Despite the consensus among all permanent members that the UN should play the central role in coordinating the international efforts in Afghanistan in the post-2014 period, there are divergent priorities

vival: *Global Politics and Strategy* 55, No. 1 (2013), p. 87.

2 See Vishal Chandra, "Russia's Growing Afghan Re-Engagement," *Strategic Analysis* 35, No. 4 (2011), pp. 552-558.

3 Christian Le Mièrè, Gary Li and Nigel Inkster, "Chapter Ten: China," *Adelphi Series* 51, No. 425-426 (2011), pp. 222-223.

4 Eva Gross, *The Europeanization of National Foreign Policy: Continuity and Change in European Crisis Management* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 64, 103.

5 Gilles Dorronsoro, "The Security Council and the Afghan Conflict," in *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice since 1945*, ed. Vaughan Lowe, A. Roberts, J. Welsh, D. Zaum (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 453.

1 Paul D. Miller, "The US and Afghanistan after 2014," *Sur-*

Despite the consensus among all permanent members that the UN should play the central role in coordinating the international efforts in Afghanistan in the post-2014 period, there are divergent priorities and concerns regarding vital issues in Afghanistan, especially between Russia, and to a lesser degree China, and the other permanent members of the UNSC.

and concerns regarding vital issues in Afghanistan, especially between Russia, and to a lesser degree China, and the other permanent members of the UNSC. This divergence among permanent members at the UNSC represents one of the main challenges to an effective UN policy and cooperation towards Afghanistan in the post-2014 period.

Peace and Reconciliation in Afghanistan

During the UNSC meetings between 2011 and 2013, discussions on peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan have focused mainly on the ‘ideal’ type and process of reconciliation, the 2014 elections and the necessary steps to achieve a long-lasting peace and stability. All permanent members agree that the peace process should be led and owned by the Afghans. However, there remain differences among permanent members of the UNSC

with regard to priorities, and means for supporting the peace process.

The conduct and results of the 2014 presidential elections in Afghanistan bear significant importance for peace and stability in Afghanistan.⁶ While representatives from China, France, the UK and the U.S. have focused on the upcoming elections during the UNSC meetings, the Russian delegation has not addressed the issue as such. Russia’s ‘insufficient’ focus on the coming elections in Afghanistan is discouraging for cooperation on the success and conduct of the elections. The Taliban office in Doha is a point of disagreement at the UNSC meetings on Afghanistan. While representatives from France, the U.S. and the UK welcome the opening of the Taliban office for the establishment of inter-Afghan political dialogue,⁷ Russia’s representative Vitaly Churkin has concerns with regard to the office:

It merely introduced additional complications and exposed the true intentions of the Taliban, who have no interest in talks with Kabul but are seeking political legitimacy for using force to take power after the international forces’ withdrawal. We have to learn the lessons of this undertak-

⁶ Ali A. Jalali, “Afghanistan: Challenges of the Transition to Peace,” *Emirates Lecture Series*, No. 91 (2012): 11.

⁷ UN Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6983rd Meeting held on 20 June 2013 (S/PV.6983)* available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6983

ing, rid ourselves of illusions about the Taliban's true goals and take a more responsible approach to the issue in the future.⁸

Consensus and cooperation among permanent members of the UNSC on the possible contributions of the Taliban office in Doha to a reconciliation process would ease the way for dialogue with Taliban. Russia's concerns about the office will have significant influence, not necessarily positive, on cooperation and the formation of an effective UN role in the Afghan peace process.

Differences remain among permanent members of the UNSC on the proper means for supporting the peace process. The Russian delegation gives particular attention to the UN sanctions regime during the UNSC meetings on Afghanistan, in comparison with other permanent members. Churkin, representing Russia, emphasized that 'the Security Council sanctions regime must remain the most important counter-terrorism tool ... in building peace, stability and security in Afghanistan.'⁹ Churkin opposed including individuals and entities on the Security Council's sanctions lists in

the peace dialogue.¹⁰ Churkin's emphasis on ensuring the effectiveness of the sanctions and strict compliance by states may challenge cooperation among permanent UNSC members on the efforts to include the Taliban in the inter-Afghan political dialogue.

Representatives from China, the UK and the U.S., on the other hand, have emphasized the importance of economic factors for lasting security and stability in Afghanistan.¹¹ China's representative Wang Min declared China's support for the Afghan Government's efforts to build the economy, increase employment and improve living standards.¹² China's motivation is mainly based on the perceived threats to its investments in Afghanistan's mineral resources and the sustainability of trans-Afghan infrastructure, including oil and gas pipelines, key to China's influence in the region.¹³ The UK representative Mark Lyall Grant argued that 'irreversible transition and progress on the political track must be supported by governance and development progress.'¹⁴

¹⁰ UN Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6896th Meeting held on 19 December 2012 (S/PV.6896)*, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6896

¹¹ For analysis of Afghan economy and budget, see Nicholas Redman, "Chapter Four: The economy, the budget and narcotics," *Adelphi Series* 51, No. 425/426 (2011), pp. 97-120.

¹² UN Security Council, *S/PV.6896*, 19 December 2012

¹³ Michael Clarke, "China's Strategy in 'Greater Central Asia': Is Afghanistan the Missing Link?" *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 40, No.1 (2013), p.14.

¹⁴ U.N. Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6574th Meeting held on 6 July 2011 (S/PV. 6574)*, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6574

⁸ UN Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the 7035th Meeting held on 19 September 2013 (S/PV.7035)*, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.7035

⁹ UN Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6935th Meeting held on 19 March 2013 (S/PV.6935)*, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6935

In a similar vein, Susan E. Rice, on behalf of the U.S., stated that ‘Afghanistan’s security depends not only on strong capable security forces, but also on the Afghan people’s access to economic opportunity and their belief that their Government is effectively serving their needs.’¹⁵ The lack of a unified emphasis on the economic issues, especially on the part of Russia, inhibits the development of comprehensive UN role in Afghanistan, given the importance of economic factors for peace and stability in any state.

Nor has the issue of human rights in Afghanistan been prioritized by all of the permanent members during meetings between 2011 and 2013 on Afghanistan. At the UNSC, while the French, UK and U.S. delegations have focused on the need to protect and promote human rights, especially the rights of women, for a successful transition in Afghanistan, representatives from China and Russia did not address the problem. Grant, representing the UK, urged the Government of Afghanistan to ensure the full implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women.¹⁶ The U.S. representative Rosemary DiCarlo argued that the protection of the rights of Afghan women is essential for sustainable peace, reconciliation, stability and economic growth in

15 UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6840th Meeting held on 20 September 2012 (S/PV.6840), available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6840

16 UN Security Council, S/PV.6896, 19 December 2012

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Afghanistan.¹⁷ Rice, on behalf of the U.S., condemned all violence against women:

The United States continues to work with the Afghan Government, civil society and the international community to increase awareness of women’s rights, prevent the abuse and detention of women and girls and hold the perpetrators of such violence accountable. We support the United Nations and Afghanistan’s continuing efforts to establish and to expand the protection and shelter services for victimized women.¹⁸

China and Russia’s failure to acknowledge human rights issues in Afghanistan, especially the rights of women, at the UNSC meetings remains a concern with regard to developing comprehensive UN policies for Afghanistan, taking into account the importance of women’s role in eco-

17 UN Security Council, S/PV.6983, 20 June 2013

18 UN Security Council, S/PV.6840, 20 September 2012

conomic development and stability in the country.¹⁹

These differences between Russia/China and other permanent members with regard to priorities and means for implementing out the peace process have been influential in the lack of a breakthrough in Afghanistan.²⁰ Aside from the issue of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, the other issue discussed at the UNSC meetings between 2011 and 2013 has been the transition of security responsibility to ANSF and the current security situation in the country. The following section of the paper focuses on the views of the representatives of UNSC permanent members on these issues, discussing points of divergence.

Transition of Security Responsibility to ANSF and Security in Afghanistan

During the UNSC meetings on Afghanistan, discussions on transition of security responsibility to the ANSF and security in Afghanistan have focused mainly on the timing of the transition, capabilities of the ANSF and the necessary means for achieving security in Afghanistan. Permanent members of the UNSC have emphasized various concerns and priorities concerning the transfer of security responsibility and Afghanistan's secu-

rity. This divergence complicates the formulation of effective UN policies and achieving cooperation among permanent members of the UNSC for Afghanistan after 2014.

Representatives from China and especially Russia have concerns about the security situation in Afghanistan and the transfer of security responsibilities to ANSF. NATO's complete military withdrawal from Central Asia will contribute to regional instability and terrorism. Over the last decade, international forces have helped suppress the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and some fundamentalist movements targeting China's control over Xinjiang.²¹ China's representative Li Baodong noted that the protection of Afghanistan's security and stability should be a priority during the withdrawal of forces.²² On the transfer of security responsibilities, Wang Min, representing China, stated

All parties should comply with international humanitarian law and other relevant international law and carry out their responsibilities for the protection of civilians. When handing over responsibility for security, the parties concerned should adopt a responsible, prudent and progressive approach and give priority to

19 See Carol J. Riphenburg, "Gender Relations and Development in a Weak State: The Rebuilding of Afghanistan," *Central Asian Survey* 22, No. 2/3 (2003), pp.187-207.

20 For the domestic reasons leading to failure in reconciliation, see Amin Saikal, "The UN and Afghanistan: Contentions in Democratization and State building," *International Peacekeeping* 19, No. 2 (2012), pp. 228-229.

21 Younkyoo Kim and Fabio Indeo, "The New Great Game in Central Asia post 2014: The US "New Silk Road" Strategy and Sino-Russian rivalry," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 46, No. 2 (2013), p.280.

22 UN Security Council, S/PV.6840, 20 September 2012

the capacity-building of the Afghan security sector.²³

The withdrawal of the international coalition from Afghanistan could facilitate the expansion of the Taliban and create serious security problems for Russia and Central Asian countries.²⁴ Russia is particularly con-

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cerned about the terrorist activity and drug-related problems spreading from northern Afghanistan to the countries of Central Asia.²⁵ Accordingly, Russia's representative Alexander Pankin expressed opposition to a fast-tracked transfer of security responsibilities:

We remain convinced that there can be no justification for an accelerated transfer of security responsibilities of ISAF in favor of the Afghan army and police without due consideration of the reality of the situation and the military capacity of the ANSF, without which ISAF's withdrawal will surely aggravate the general situation in the country.²⁶

23 UN Security Council, S/PV.6983, 20 June 2013

24 Kim and Indeo, 280.

25 Oksana Antonenko, "Chapter Nine: The Central Asian states and Russia," *Adelphi Series* 51, No. 425-426 (2011), p. 201.

26 UN Security Council, S/PV.6983, 20 June 2013

The withdrawal of the international coalition from Afghanistan could facilitate the expansion of the Taliban and create serious security problems for Russia and Central Asian countries.

ISAF's withdrawal decision has raised concerns in Moscow about regional stability and led Russian high-level officials to suggest that Moscow needs to offer a greater level of support to the mandate.²⁷ Nevertheless, Russia's representative Churkin continued to express concerns about the uncertainty concerning the format, objectives and legal basis of the remaining military presence in Afghanistan. Churkin requested full clarity on objectives and size of a future NATO operation in Afghanistan, which, in Russia's view, can be established only after ISAF reports on the completion of its mandate to the Security Council. Churkin warned that turning ISAF into a new international mission without a UN mandate could create important legal problems in relation to any logistical support.²⁸ Russia's reservations about remaining international forces and a future NATO operation in Afghanistan underline the challenges of finding a common

27 Antonenko, p.206.

28 UN Security Council, S/PV.7035, 19 September 2013; For discussions on the significance of the UN for Russian foreign policy, see Ritsa A. Panagiotou, "The Centrality of the United Nations in Russian Foreign Policy," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 27, No. 2, (2011), pp.195-216.

position among all permanent members of the UNSC on security issues in Afghanistan.

Representatives from France, the UK and the U.S., in contrast, have commended ANSF on taking the lead in Afghanistan's security and its continued capacity building. Gérard Araud, representing France, praised the Afghan authorities for assuming the responsibility for security:

That was an important step forward and demonstrated that Afghanistan is on the path to reassuming full sovereignty. The Afghan National Security Forces are now able independently to defend the entire Afghan population against attacks by armed terrorist groups. The international coalition will now play only a support role in those efforts.²⁹

The UK's representative, Grant, is also convinced that the ANSF will be 'ready, willing and able to effectively manage Afghanistan's security after 2014 and to tackle any residual insurgent threat.'³⁰ DiCarlo, on behalf of the U.S., also noted that the ANSF has successfully taken the lead in Afghanistan's security and is becoming stronger and more capable, with the ISAF moving into a supporting role,³¹ in accordance with the current

²⁹ UN Security Council, S/PV.6983, 20 June 2013

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

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U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, which is aimed at building up the Afghan national army.³² The divergence regarding the transfer of security responsibility and the capabilities of ANSF exists mainly between Russia and the U.S., France, and the U.K., and complicates prospects of cooperation among permanent members of the UNSC on the necessary steps to be taken for stability in Afghanistan in the post-2014 period.

At UNSC meetings on Afghanistan, representatives from Russia have addressed drug-related crimes much more frequently than representatives of other permanent members. One of Russia's priorities for strengthening regional and international security is eliminating or reducing illicit drug

³² Dmitri Trenin and Alexey Malashenko, *Afghanistan: A View from Moscow* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010), 11; for factors behind Obama's Afghanistan policy, see Dana Allin, "Chapter Two: US policy and Afghanistan," *Adelphi Series 51*, No. 425-426 (2011), pp. 47-68.

production and trafficking.³³ According to the Federal Drug Control service of the Russian Federation, every year 800 tons of heroin is produced in Afghanistan, 35 percent of which is consumed in Russia.³⁴ The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) forecasts an increase of areas under opium poppy in the south and west of Afghanistan and then expansion of poppy plantations in the north of Afghanistan.³⁵ Accordingly, Churkin, the representative from Russia, expressed the urgency and significance of the drug problem at the UNSC:

It is also important to resolve the issue of drugs in Afghanistan in order to ensure long-term stability there, given that the 2014 factor could undermine advances achieved in the security sector and risk Afghanistan's becoming a breeding ground for terrorism and organized crime. All of the factors of the Afghan drug threat can be considered to constitute threats to international peace and security.³⁶

³³ See *Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, 12 February 2013. An English language version of the text is available at http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D

³⁴ Alexander Lukin, "Central Asia and Afghanistan in Russia's Strategy," *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations* 57, No. 5 (2011): 59.

³⁵ Mikhail Konarovsky, "The NATO Operation in Afghanistan: Results and Possible Scenarios for Russia," *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations* 59, No. 5 (2013), pp. 44-45.

³⁶ UN Security Council, S/PV.6935, 19 March 2013

Stability in and around Afghanistan is highly dependent on the solution of the drug problem. Afghanistan is still the main producer and cultivator of opium globally.³⁷ It is very hard, if even possible, to overcome such a significant problem without full cooperation and determined efforts on the part of all the parties involved. This unified approach, however, seems to be missing among permanent members at UNSC.

Pakistan can play a key role for Afghanistan's stability, as it is the only actor capable of persuading the Taliban to enter peace talks and of influencing the Taliban's position during the negotiations.³⁸ At the UNSC meetings, representatives of China and the UK in particular have emphasized Pakistan's role in Afghanistan's security, stability and prosperity. Liu Jieyi, on behalf of China, welcomed arrangements for additional support by Pakistan for national reconciliation in Afghanistan.³⁹ China's focus on Pakistan is based on its strategy to counterbalance U.S. and Indian ambitions and interests in the region.⁴⁰ China does not want the Afghan problem to become the rationale for continued U.S. political, economic and military presence near its borders.⁴¹ China

³⁷ UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2013*, available at http://www.unodc.org/unodc/secured/wdr/wdr2013/World_Drug_Report_2013.pdf

³⁸ James Sperling and Mark Webber, "NATO's Intervention in the Afghan Civil War," *Civil Wars* 14, No. 3 (2012), p.364.

³⁹ UN Security Council, S/PV.7035, 19 September 2013

⁴⁰ Clarke, 7.

⁴¹ Raghav Sharma, "China's Afghanistan Policy: Slow

China supports a strong and stable Pakistan to counter India's growing influence in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

supports a strong and stable Pakistan to counter India's growing influence in Central Asia and Afghanistan.⁴² The UK's representative Philip Parham also welcomed the efforts of Afghanistan and Pakistan to strengthen their bilateral relationship and common understanding in regard to the Afghan peace and reconciliation process.⁴³ Grant, representing the UK, encouraged Afghanistan and Pakistan to 'renew their focus on the benefits of a more trusting and mutually supportive relationship'.⁴⁴ Despite the importance of Pakistan for political settlement with the Taliban,⁴⁵ there is no shared interest and effort among permanent members at the UNSC meetings for prioritizing Pakistan's role for solutions to Afghanistan. This attitude adds to the challenge of formulating common policies and cooperation on Afghanistan.

The lack of consensus among the per-

Recalibration," China Report 46, No.3 (2010), p. 209.

⁴² Elizabeth Wishnick, "There Goes the Neighborhood: Afghanistan's Challenges to China's Regional Security Goals," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 19, No.1 (Fall/Winter 2012), p.92; For India's interests in Afghanistan, see Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, "Chapter Eleven: India," *Adelphi Series* 51, No. 425-426 (2011), pp. 231-246.

⁴³ UN Security Council, S/PV.6935, 19 March 2013

⁴⁴ UN Security Council, S/PV.6983, 20 June 2013

⁴⁵ See Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 51, No. 1(2009): 33-34, 52-55; Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, "Chapter Seven: Pakistan," *Adelphi Series* 51, No. 425-426 (2011), pp. 167-186.

manent members of the UNSC on the capabilities of the ANSF, the timing of the transition of security responsibility to Afghans, and priorities for achieving security in Afghanistan remains a challenge to comprehensive common action on Afghanistan among the permanent members of the UNSC. The UN's future engagement and international cooperation in Afghanistan also has been one of the key issues on the agenda.

UN's Future Engagement and International Cooperation in Afghanistan

During the UNSC discussions on future UN engagement and international cooperation in Afghanistan, all permanent members are agreed upon the need for the UN to play the central role in coordinating the international efforts in Afghanistan now and after 2014. Despite this consensus, priorities with respect to UN's future involvement in and international cooperation for Afghanistan do vary, especially between Russia/China and other permanent members. This divergence underlines not only the absence of a common vision among permanent members for UN's future role in Afghanistan and the challenges of cooperation in relation to Afghanistan in the post-2014 period, but also the shortcomings of the UN's current role in Afghanistan.

Concerning the UN's role in Afghanistan, the UK representative emphasized that UNAMA has a vital role in supporting the Afghan Government

for fulfilling its commitments.⁴⁶ Grant underlined the importance of ‘One UN’ approach in Afghanistan:

UNAMA must retain the right presence throughout the country. It must provide the right level of support for the international community to deliver on agreed commitments, in particular on the human and women’s rights agenda. [T]o achieve that it is vital for UNAMA and United Nations agencies to adopt a “One UN” approach and better coordinate activities on the ground.⁴⁷

The UN has been successful in launching foreign aid programs for Afghanistan. However, there have been problems concerning the gap between commitment and spending, and the ways in which aid has been allocated.⁴⁸ Martin Briens, representing France, underlined that the international community needs to better coordinate its civil assistance and recognize Afghanistan’s budget priorities. The Afghan government, on the other hand, must use funds properly based on local needs. It must establish the necessary infrastructure for developing and exporting Afghan resources and opening the country to the world.⁴⁹

46 UN Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6793rd Meeting held on 27 June 2012 (S/PV.6793)*, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6793

47 UN Security Council, *S/PV.7035*, 19 September 2013

48 Saikal, p.227.

49 UN Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the*

The UN has been successful in launching foreign aid programs for Afghanistan. However, there have been problems concerning the gap between commitment and spending, and the ways in which aid has been allocated.

Representatives of the UK emphasized the importance of progress in governance and development for political transition and progress in Afghanistan. In this respect, Grant, representing the UK, stated that the international community must arrange continued and long-term commitments for supporting economic growth and basic social services in Afghanistan.⁵⁰ Rice, on behalf of the U.S, stated that Afghanistan’s development and the integration of the region will bring greater prosperity for Afghans and their neighbors.⁵¹ Economic development in Afghanistan can motivate neighboring states to work constructively with the Afghan government.⁵² In this respect, Rice emphasized the New Silk Road initiative, and argued that the international community has an important role in making this vision a reality:

6497th Meeting held on 17 March 2011 (S/PV.6497), available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6497

50 UN Security Council, *Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6735th Meeting held on 20 March 2012 (S/PV.6735)*, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6735

51 UN Security Council, *S/PV.6840*, 20 September 2012

52 Nicholas Redman, “Chapter Four: The Economy, the Budget and Narcotics,” *Adelphi Series 51*, No. 425-426 (2011), p.97.

Economic development in Afghanistan can motivate neighboring states to work constructively with the Afghan government.

The New Silk Road is an Afghan-led venture, a rallying point for securing Afghan, regional and international commitments to support Afghanistan's transition and develop a sustainable Afghan economy that will benefit the whole region. The creation of a New Silk Road will help Afghanistan and its neighbors maximize the value of their natural resources, build human capacity, create jobs, generate revenue to pay for needed services and capitalize on the region's economic potential.⁵³

The New Silk Road strategy is driven also by wider geopolitical considerations such as checking the influence of Russia and China in the region. This motivation has led to opposition, especially from Russia.⁵⁴ Concerns from Russia and China add to the challenges to effective cooperation on Afghanistan in the post-2014 period.

UNAMA, until now, has conducted limited negotiations and consultations with the Taliban in peace talks,

53 UN Security Council, S/PV.6625, 29 September 2011

54 Jeffrey Mankoff, *The United States and Central Asia after 2014*, (Washington, D.C.: CSIS/Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), pp. 20-21.

which had a partial impact on large-scale reconciliation in Afghanistan.⁵⁵ Sharing these concerns, Philippe Bertoux, representing France, argued that the UN should take more responsibility in Afghanistan and strengthen the political role of the UNAMA in order to ease the implementation of the political processes. Bertoux also mentioned the need 'to simplify the Mission's mandate and to strengthen its capacity to coordinate the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations'.⁵⁶ On the UN's future engagement in Afghanistan, France's representative Béatrice Le Fraper du Hellen stated

France endorses the three poles ... as being at the heart of the Mission's work beyond 2014: political good offices; human rights, particularly the rights of women; and consistency of international aid. Proper cooperation with the funds and programmes remains key in terms of electoral reform, countering drug trafficking, supporting the Afghan police, the reintegration of insurgents and aid to refugees. On all these fronts, we are pleased to continue working with the United Nations as the central actor for the future of Afghanistan.⁵⁷

55 Saikal, p. 229.

56 UN Security Council, S/PV.7035, 19 September 2013

57 UN Security Council, S/PV.6793, 27 June 2012

Rice, on behalf of the U.S., underlined that UNAMA's resources should be stabilized following significant budget reductions over the past two years, so that UNAMA can carry out its mandate based on its core functions.⁵⁸ DiCarlo, representing the U.S., mentioned that UNAMA has critical contributions to make in the run-up to the critical year of 2014:

Most critical is UNAMA's leadership in continuing to provide support to ensure that the 2014 Afghan presidential election proceeds as planned. UNAMA's support for regional diplomacy and the political process, in coordination between the Government of Afghanistan and donors, in implementing the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework will also be a key part of the preparations as Afghanistan looks towards 2014.⁵⁹

Representatives from Russia and China, on the other hand, mainly declared the need for the UN to play a central role in coordinating the international efforts in Afghanistan after 2014. They do not share the above-mentioned concerns raised by France, the U.S. and the UK.⁶⁰

On regional cooperation in Afghanistan, China is keen for the Shanghai

58 UN Security Council, S/PV.6935, 19 March 2013

59 UN Security Council, S/PV.6983, 20 June 2013

60 UN Security Council, S/PV.7035, 19 September 2013

Cooperation Organization (SCO) to take an active role in Afghanistan.⁶¹ Accordingly, China's representative Liu Jieyi noted that the SCO should be utilized to strengthen regional cooperation.⁶² Li Baodong, on behalf of China, however, also noted that 'regional cooperation initiatives should fully respect Afghanistan's sovereignty, prioritize the legitimate concerns of the countries of the region, and be conducted consistently on the basis of adequate consultations.'⁶³

Churkin, representing Russia, similarly noted the importance of strong cooperation between the UN, SCO and CSTO. Churkin welcomed UNAMA's intention to improve collaboration with these organizations but expressed concerns about NATO 'which is stubbornly ignoring the CSTO's calls for improving bilateral cooperation on Afghanistan, particularly in the area of the fight against drugs.'⁶⁴ Tactical differences between Russia and the U.S. have hindered joint action between NATO and CSTO. Russia favors the rapid destruction of the poppy fields in Afghanistan, whereas the U.S. supports a more gradual action, to avoid antag-

61 Pan Guang, "China's Policy on the Conflict in Afghanistan," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 8, No.3 (2010), p.118.

62 UN Security Council, S/PV.7035, 19 September 2013

63 UN Security Council, S/PV.6840, 20 September 2012; For China's attitude towards sovereignty, see: Chengqiu Wu, "Sovereignty, Human Rights, and Responsibility: Changes in China's Response to International Humanitarian Crises," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 15, No.1 (2010), pp. 71-97.

64 UN Security Council, S/PV.7035, 19 September 2013

Russia favors the rapid destruction of the poppy fields in Afghanistan, whereas the U.S. supports a more gradual action, to avoid antagonizing the Afghan population.

onizing the Afghan population.⁶⁵ The U.S. and its allies have not been successful at halting the supply of illicit heroin and opium from Afghanistan.⁶⁶ Representatives from Russia, accordingly, underlined the need to improve activities under existing formats, such as the SCO,⁶⁷ and urged that the experience of the CSTO in fighting drug trafficking be utilized.⁶⁸ Pankin, on behalf of Russia, requested external players to respect the decisions taken by the countries of the region in the framework of these organizations.⁶⁹ Tactical differences between Russia and the U.S. with regard to counter narcotics strategies, and Russia and China's emphasis on the importance of respect for regional countries' decisions, challenge prospects for effective cooperation on Afghanistan in the 2014-period.

⁶⁵ Kim and Indeo, p. 280.

⁶⁶ Nigel Inkster and Virginia Comolli, "Chapter Three: The Producer States," *Adelphi Series* 52, No. 428 (2012), p.83.

⁶⁷ UN Security Council, S/PV.6983, 20 June 2013

⁶⁸ UN Security Council, S/PV.6793, 27 June 2012

⁶⁹ UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record of the 6625th Meeting held 29 September 2011 (S/PV.6625), available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.6625; For divergence between Russia's approach to international intervention and the U.S., see: Samuel Charap, "Russia, Syria and the Doctrine of Intervention," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 55, No. 1 (2013), pp. 35-41.

The divergent attitudes among permanent members of the UNSC with respect to the UN's future involvement in and international cooperation for Afghanistan contribute to the challenges in reaching a unified position and in drafting an effective UN role for post-2014 Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Peace and stability in post-2014 Afghanistan is highly dependent on the strategic and economic interests of the UNSC permanent members in Afghanistan. The UNSC has not been in a position to represent interests of the whole international community. Despite the consensus among all permanent members at the UNSC that the UN should play the central role in coordinating the international efforts in Afghanistan in the post-2014 period, there are varying priorities and concerns about vital issues in Afghanistan. The main division is between Russia, and to a lesser degree China, and the other permanent members at the UNSC.

Divergence among permanent members of the UNSC mainly stems from different views on priorities and means for carrying out the peace process; the capabilities of the ANSF; the timing of the transition of security responsibility to Afghans; priorities for securing Afghanistan; the UN's future involvement; and international cooperation in Afghanistan. A common approach and understanding among

permanent members at the UNSC on these issues is vital in formulating comprehensive and successful policies towards Afghanistan. The divergence among permanent members at the UNSC on these issues presents a challenge to an effective UN role and cooperation in Afghanistan in the post-2014 period.