The Future of Afghanistan—and of Many Other Developing Countries—Can Only Be Shaped Together

by Daud Azimi

The following is an edited transcript of the address by Daud Azimi to Panel Three of the May 30-31 Schiller Institute Berlin conference, "The End of 500 Years of Colonialism: For a Dialogue of Civilizations—The Urgency of a New Global Security and Development Architecture." Mr. Azimi is a board member of the Afghan National Peace Front (PNF). Subheads have been added. The video is available here.

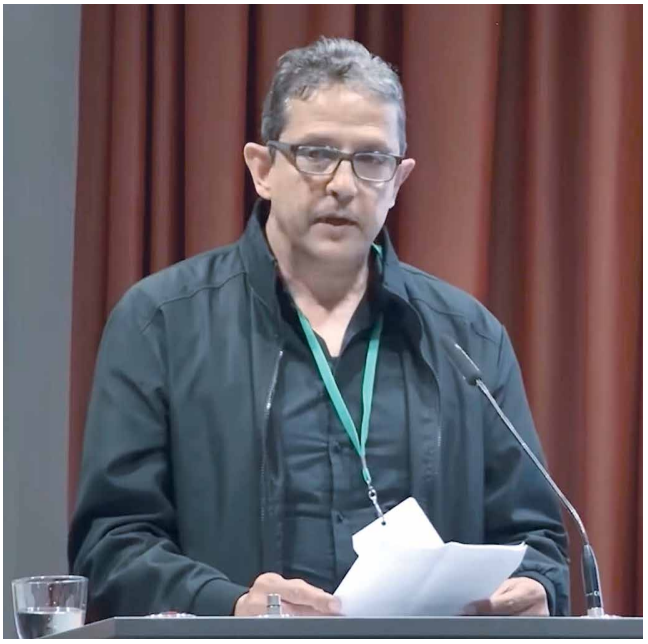
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here today. First of all, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Schiller Institute, and in particular to Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, for giving us the opportunity to speak here today and present our work.

We greatly appreciate this important conference and its focus on the urgent need for a new international security and development architecture. We are convinced that this discussion is taking place at the right time and is of great significance for the future of many developing and crisis-stricken countries, including Afghanistan.

My name is Daud Azimi, and I am speaking today on behalf of the Ibn Sina Research and Development Organization (ISRAND), an independent, non-political, and non-profit Afghan organization dedicated to knowledge, development, and future planning. It is a great honor for us to be here today. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Schiller Institute for its special commitment to Afghanistan.

Following the political changes in 2021, many Afghans felt that their country was increasingly being forgotten by the international community. With the "Operation Ibn Sina" initiative, the Schiller Institute sent an important signal regarding reconstruction, infrastructure development, and the creation of long-term prospects for Afghanistan. Together with partners in Kabul, we were able to present and discuss these ideas at a conference. The response was very positive.



Schiller Institute

Daud Azimi, board member of the Afghan National Peace Front.

Approximately 600 men and 200 women attended the conference. For this, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the Schiller Institute.

Security and Development Can Not Be Separated

Ladies and gentlemen, the world today faces numerous challenges simultaneously: wars, instability, economic uncertainty, energy problems, climate risks, migration, and growing poverty. In many developing countries, people suffer not only from a lack of security but also from a lack of prospects, weak institutions, and limited access to education and healthcare. That is why we are convinced that security and development cannot be separated. Lasting stability does not arise solely through political or military measures. It requires economic opportunities, functioning institu-

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tions, infrastructure, education, and the opportunity for people to help shape their own future.

Afghanistan illustrates this reality particularly clearly. For decades, our country has suffered from war, poverty, destroyed infrastructure, and the loss of many skilled professionals. Despite these difficulties, Afghanistan continues to possess enormous potential: a young population, significant natural resources, a strategic geographic location, and many people who want to learn, work, and contribute to building their country. What Afghanistan needs today is more than humanitarian aid. It needs long-term development, strong institutions, strategic planning, and reliable partnerships. ISRAND was founded on this conviction.

Many of us have recognized that Afghanistan needs more space for long-term thinking, knowledge exchange, and future planning. Especially in countries affected by conflict, there is often little capacity to engage with long-term strategies and sustainable development processes. Yet it is precisely these factors that are crucial if a country is to achieve lasting stability and prosperity. We believe that the reconstruction of Afghanistan involves more than just roads, bridges, or buildings. It also encompasses the development of knowledge, expertise, trust, and effective institutions. That is why we bring together Afghan professionals from different regions, ethnic groups, and professional fields. We are convinced that Afghanistan's diversity can be a strength and that the country's future can only be shaped through collaboration.

Our organization is neutral and apolitical. Our focus is on development, cooperation, and serving the people. Regardless of political changes, projects that promote education, health, infrastructure, and economic development should continue.

We are currently working on several initiatives, including an energy master plan for Afghanistan. Energy is one of the most important foundations for economic development, industry, agriculture, education, healthcare, and social stability. In addition, we address issues such as health, agriculture, water management, vocational training, digital knowledge systems, and long-term development strategies. We are also preparing an economic and investment conference for Afghanistan. It is intended to serve as a platform for dialogue, investment, cooperation, and reconstruction, bringing together various stakeholders. We are convinced that the reconstruction of Afghanistan requires the cooperation of many partners: government institutions, international organizations, research institutions, investors, companies, and local communities.

Cooperation for the Future of Afghanistan

Dear friends, Afghanistan cannot walk this path alone. It needs cooperation, knowledge exchange, technical support, and long-term partnerships. Above all, it needs people and institutions that continue to believe that positive change is possible. Afghanistan is often perceived solely through the lens of war and crises. Yet behind these headlines are millions of people who long for peace, dignity, education, work, and a better future for their families.

There are numerous Afghan professionals both within and outside the country who are ready to take on responsibility and contribute to reconstruction if the necessary opportunities are created. Sustainable peace cannot be brought about from the outside alone. It arises through education, trust, economic development, functioning institutions, and the active participation of the people themselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are still a young organization. We do not claim to have all the answers. But we pursue our mission with sincerity, professionalism, and a firm desire to make a constructive contribution to Afghanistan's future. Today, we are not merely presenting our work. We want to build bridges—between Afghanistan and the international community, between knowledge and practical implementation, and between challenges and shared solutions. We hope that today can mark the beginning of new collaborations, stronger dialogue, and long-term partnerships. For the future of Afghanistan—and of many other developing countries—can only be shaped together.

Thank you very much for your attention.