

A TPF Panel discussion

Taliban's Afghanistan

South Asian Perspectives

05 January, 2022 – 6:00 PM IST



Concept Note

"As American and NATO troops made a hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan, Taliban forces swept across and took control of Kabul on August 15, 2021. The new regime, while articulating strict adherence to its version of Sharia, has attempted to build bridges with the rest of the world by indicating a possible moderate face. However, not many have confidence given the Taliban's religious fundamentalism, its medieval beliefs, and past history of human rights abuse and intolerance. That Pakistan continues to support the Taliban and influence its decisions is well established. Taliban's Afghanistan faces international isolation and economic crisis. Vast sections of the people are pushed into food and health crisis. Women's rights and gender equality have become a big question mark. Taliban seems to be getting conditional support from China and Russia. An unstable Afghanistan under the Taliban could reignite factional wars and warlordism, leading to a civil war that could spill over into Central Asia, India's Kashmir, China's Xinjiang, and Russia's Chechnya. Taliban's close links with Al Qaeda and its cooperation with ISI spells serious concerns for India and the rest of South Asia. The distinguished panellists seek to analyse these issues from a South Asian perspective."

Registration Link

<https://bit.ly/3qtUDv9>

Meeting ID: 842 2195 5669

Passcode: 143538



Program Schedule

06:00 PM - 06:05 PM IST ***Welcome Address***

06:05 PM - 06:12 PM IST ***Introductory Remarks by the Chair***

Air Marshal M Matheswaran AVSM VM PhD (Retd), President – The Peninsula Foundation

06:12 PM - 07:00 PM IST ***Panel Discussion***

Taliban's Afghanistan: South Asian Perspectives

07:00 PM - 07:20 PM IST ***Q & A***

07:20 PM - 07:28 PM IST ***Concluding Remarks***

07:28 PM - 07:30 PM IST ***Vote of Thanks***

Program Schedule

Panel Discussion

Taliban's Afghanistan: South Asian Perspectives

Distinguished Panelists:

Ambassador Mohammed Ashraf Haidari
Ambassador of Afghanistan to Sri Lanka

Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhaya
Fmr. Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan

Air Chief Marshal Gagan Bulathsinghala RWP, RSP, VSV, USP (Retd)
Fmr. Sri Lankan Ambassador to Afghanistan

Dr Bahar Jalali
Visiting Associate Professor, Loyola University, Maryland

In-Chair:

Air Marshal M Matheswaran AVSM, VM, PhD (Retd)
President, The Peninsula Foundation

About the Panelists



Ambassador Mohammed Ashraf Haidari

Ambassador of Afghanistan to Sri Lanka

Ambassador M. Ashraf Haidari is the Afghan envoy to Sri Lanka. Mr. Haidari was the Director-General of Policy and Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan from 2015-2018. From 2012-2015, Mr Haidari served as the Deputy Chief of Mission (Minister-Counselor) of Afghanistan to India where he was frequently Chargé d'Affaires A.I. From June 2011 to July 2012, he served as the Deputy Assistant National Security Advisor of Afghanistan. From 2004 to 2011, Mr. Haidari served the Embassy of Afghanistan in the United States in various capacities. From 2001 to 2004, he worked as Assistant to the Vice President for Federal Relations and Assistant Director of Development at Georgetown University in Washington-DC. He is a Senior International Security Fellow at the New American Century in Washington-DC; a Research Fellow at the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) in Kabul; a Visiting Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in New Delhi where he was also a member of the editorial board of the Diplomatist Magazine and a Senior Research Fellow at the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) during 2015-2016. Mr. Haidari is the recipient of many public and academic awards, including the Fredrick J. Urbaska Civic Service Award.

About the Panelists



Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhaya

Fmr. Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan

Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhaya has served in various capacities in Indian Embassies and Missions in Mexico, Cuba, France, and the United Nations; the Ministry of Defence of India (2002-05); and eventually as India's Ambassador to Syria (2006-08), Afghanistan (2010-13) and Myanmar (2013-16). He also re-opened the Indian Embassy in Kabul in November 2001 as Charge d'Affaires after the ouster of the Taliban in Afghanistan in November 2001. Ambassador Mukhopadhaya is currently affiliated with the NITI Aayog's 'NITI Forum for the North East as an Advisor, and Chair of a CII Task Force on economic ties with Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV countries) and has a senior visiting fellow at the Centre for Policy Research. Ambassador Mukhopadhaya's diplomatic career has been notable for the range of his professional experience covering media, culture, human rights, development, defence and security issues. He is an alumnus of the National Defence College of India (2001) and has also worked at the UN Headquarters in New York as a Consultant on Social Development (September 1999-August 2000) and as a Visiting Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC, (October 2009-March 2010).

About the Panelists



Air Chief Marshal Gagan Bulathsinghala RWP, RSP, VSV, USP (Retd)

Fmr. Sri Lankan Ambassador to Afghanistan

Air Chief Marshal Gagan Bulathsinghala RWP, RSP, VSV, USP is a retired air officer and a former Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force. He has also held the position of Chief of the Air Staff and, after his retirement on 12 September 2016, was appointed the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Afghanistan. Air Marshal Gagan is a graduate of Air Command and Staff College at Air University (the United States Air Force), Alabama, USA and the prestigious National Defence College (India), New Delhi. He also holds a Post graduate degree of Master of Philosophy in Defence and Strategic Studies from the University of Madras, India, and a Master of Science in Defence Studies Management from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka. Gagan is also a Fellow of Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Hawaii and Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies USA. He has served in various staff appointments at Air Force HQs during his career. He was appointed to the Air Force Board of Management as the Director of Operations in the year 2011 and thereafter as the Director Air Operations in the year 2012. He was subsequently appointed as the Chief of Staff in the year 2014. He was elevated to the rank of Air Marshal on 01st June 2015 and was appointed as the Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force on 16th June 2015.

About the Panelists



Dr Bahar Jalali

Visiting Associate Professor, Loyola University, Maryland

Dr. Bahar Jalali teaches the history of the Modern Middle East. Her area of expertise is Afghanistan. She focuses on modernization and women's rights in the twentieth century under the Old Regime. She is currently finishing a manuscript on the Decade of Democracy from 1963-1973 in Afghanistan when an urban educated intelligentsia spearheaded democratic reforms and a liberal Constitution. Born in Afghanistan, she fled the country as a child after the Soviet invasion. In 2009, she returned to Afghanistan to work at the newly opened American University in Kabul where she taught History of Afghanistan and founded the first Gender Studies program in the history of the country. She recently started an online protest campaign calling for the protection of women's rights and the preservation of cultural heritage in Afghanistan. This campaign has received extensive coverage in the international press. It has also triggered wide-ranging discussions on the protection of human rights and cultural heritage in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime.

About the Chair



Air Marshal M Matheswaran AVSM VM PhD (Retd)

President, The Peninsula Foundation

Air Marshal M Matheswaran is an Indian Air Force veteran with 39 years of active service. He is the founder-President of The Peninsula Foundation. He is the former Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff responsible for Policy, Plans, and Force Development. The Air Marshal is a recipient of Presidential Awards – AVSM (Ati Vishisht Seva Medal) and VM (Vayu Sena Medal) and a Commendation by the Chief of Air Staff. He has a PhD from the University of Madras, Chennai, an alumni of the National Defence College, New Delhi and is a Senior Fellow in International and National Security from the Harvard Kennedy School.

Event Details

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Date: 05 January, 2022 (Wednesday)

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM IST

