

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SPEAKERS

Mohammad Najib Amiri

Adviser in Deputy Office for MRRD Programs in Afghanistan

Türker Ari

Head of the Turkish PRT in Wardak Province since 2009, Mr Ari joined the Turkish Foreign Service in 1994. His other overseas posts include: The Netherlands, Bulgaria, Morocco and Italy. Home postings include the Far East Directorate (covers Afghanistan) and the International Security Affairs Directorate. Mr Ari is a graduate of NATO Defense College (Rome).

Akbar Ayazi

Director of Radio Azadi, RFE/RL's Afghan service. Before immigrating to the United States during the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, Mr Ayazi was a broadcaster for Afghan National Radio and TV. In the U.S. he worked as a broadcaster and later as executive producer of the West and South Asia division for the Voice of America (VOA). Mr Ayazi was born in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He graduated from Kabul University in 1976 with a degree in Economics and Industrial Management. His analysis has been featured on CNN, Al-Jazeera, and in news outlets across Europe and Asia.

Helena Bambasová

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic. In her career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms Bambasová served as Director General, Bilateral Relations and Development Cooperation (2004–2006), Director General, Management and Human Resources Section (2003–2004), Executive Director, NATO Summit Czech Task Force (2001–2002), Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1997–2001), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1994–1997), and Director General, Administrative Section (1992–1994). Helena Bambasová graduated from the Faculty of Administration of the University of Economics, Prague.

Martin Barták

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. Previously, Mr Barták served as First Deputy Minister of Defense (2006–2009), as Security and Defense Adviser to ODS Vice-President Petr Nečas (2000–2006), and Adviser to the Chairman of the Defense and Security Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament (2002–2006). He is a trained neurosurgeon and worked at Na Homolce Hospital in Prague from 1992–2006.

Paul van den Berg

He has been working for Dutch NGO's on Afghanistan for the last 7 years. Mr Van den Berg is currently employed as political adviser and program officer with the Dutch NGO Cordaid, which supports approximately twenty local NGO's in Afghanistan. He has been engaged in civil-military interaction with the Dutch military since 2005, when the Dutch were responsible for the PRT in the province of Baghlan. Mr Van den Berg has been a member of the Steering Group of ENNA, the European Network of NGO's in Afghanistan since 2005.

Martine van Bijlert

Co-director of the Afghanistan Analysts Network, Martine has spent over 10 years working in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. She visited Quetta twice in the early 1990's to study the situation of Afghan refugees. She has since then worked in Kabul for an international NGO under the Taliban (1997–98), as Political Secretary for the Netherlands Embassy in Tehran (2001–2004), and as Political Advisor to the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan in Kabul (2004–2008). She has travelled extensively in Afghanistan, most frequently to Uruzgan and speaks Dari.

Klaus von der Brelie

Chief Political Affairs Editor at the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung. Following his studies (politics, English studies and history) at Hanover University and his qualification as secondary modern school teacher, von der Brelie's journalistic career began in 1975 when at first he worked as a trainee and subsequently as an editor at the "Cellesche Zeitung." In 2001, he joined the editorial staff of the "Lower Saxony" section of the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, becoming its chief editor in 1983. In 2001, Mr von der Brelie is the 27th winner of the Karl-Winnacker Prize, awarded by the German Atomic Forum.

Oldřich Černý

Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Prague Security Studies Institute and Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation. Previously, he served as Director General of the Czech Foreign Intelligence Service (1993–1998) and National Security Advisor to President Václav Havel (1990–1993). He is a lecturer at New York University in Prague.

Carsten Damsgaard

Danish Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and nominee Danish Ambassador to Afghanistan (pending approval from the Afghan Authorities). Before his appointment as Special Representative, Mr Damsgaard was Political Director in the Danish Foreign Ministry. He served as Danish Ambassador to Israel from 2003–2008. Other postings include Head of Foreign and Security Policy at the Danish Foreign Ministry and Deputy Permanent Representative to NATO and the WEU.

Burkhard Ducoffre

German Federal Foreign Office Counsellor in the German PRT in Kunduz in Afghanistan.

Beth Dunford

Foreign Service Officer with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), currently serving as Senior Development Advisor to the Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Previous to her assignment at the State Department, she was on the USAID Administrator's policy staff, focusing on Afghanistan and strategic planning. Ms Dunford has served as Director for Alternative Livelihoods at USAID/Afghanistan and Director of the Assets and Livelihoods Transition Office at USAID/Ethiopia. She holds a PhD in Sociology from Michigan State University.

Bay Fang

Senior advisor to the US government representative in southern Afghanistan. She focuses on strategic communications, working closely with the military command, and on information strategy for the region. She was the diplomatic correspondent for the Chicago Tribune (2007–2008) and for News and World Report magazine as well as an adjunct professor of journalism at Georgetown University (2007–2008). Ms Fang is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and was awarded its International Affairs Fellowship in 2009.

Mohammad Kacem Fazelly

He has been Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Afghanistan to the Czech Republic since 2007. With a long career of lawyer and University professor, Mr Fazelly participated in many governmental commissions for the reform in administrative and judicial systems in Afghanistan. He is the author of many books in Dari and French on law and politics related to Afghanistan. Active at the Peace process in Roma and Bonn Conference, he served as Minister Counsellor and legal adviser to the President Karzai's office (2002–2006).

Amy Frumin

International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (2007–2008). Ms Frumin was recently based in Panjshir, Afghanistan, where she was the USAID representative to the Provincial Reconstruction Team. She works as an independent consultant.

Jeffrey Gedmin

President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague. He has been the director of the Aspen Institute Berlin from 2001 until 2007. From 1996 to 2001, Dr Gedmin was Executive Director of The New Atlantic Initiative.

Nick Grono

Deputy President at the International Crisis Group with responsibility for Operations. He leads Crisis Group's work on international justice and has written extensively on justice, Afghanistan, and other conflict-related issues. A lawyer by background, he was previously Chief of Staff and National Security Advisor to the Australian Attorney-General.

Esmatullah Haidary

Managing Director/Deputy Managing Director at the Afghan Development Association (ADA) since 2005. He assumed this post after serving as a senior consultant with ADA's regional office in Peshawar, Pakistan (2002–2004). Mr Haidary has been with ADA since 1992 as a planning director. Prior to joining the agency, he was the Irrigation and Technical Services Senior Manager at the Agriculture Development Bank of Afghanistan (1977–1992). Mr Haidary is the Board member and Head of Board Audit Committee of Afghanistan Rural Finance Company. He holds a degree from the Institute of Polytechnique in Kabul. Mr Haidary also completed training in Development Studies, Micro-Finance, Report Writing, Conducting Feasibility Studies and other relevant topics.

Dereck Hogan

A career U.S. Foreign Service Officer, Mr. Hogan is Senior Advisor to President Obama's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Prior to his current role, he served as the Department of State Representative in Afghanistan's Uruzgan and Kunar Provinces where he was responsible for co-ordinating U.S. efforts to improve local governance (Kunar Province), articulating U.S. foreign policy interests to the Dutch-led PRT (Uruzgan Province) and advising the U.S. Ambassador and Department of State on both provinces' needs and the opportunities for U.S. engagement. His other overseas assignments have included Russia, Belarus, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

Tomáš Kocián

Mr Kocián is currently a regional co-ordinator for Afghanistan and Pakistan at People in Need's headquarters in Prague. Previously, he worked for over three years as an aid worker in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Jan Kohout

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. Mr Kohout served as the Czech Republic's Permanent Representative to the EU (2004–2008) and previously as Deputy Head of the Permanent Mission to the UN and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Since 2000, he held several positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including European Correspondent, Deputy Director of the EU and Western Europe Department, and Political Director.

Ester Lauferová

Special Envoy for Provincial Reconstruction Team, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Dawn Liberi

Senior Civilian Representative for the Combined Joint Task-Force 82 (CJTF-82) at ISAF's Regional Command-East at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. She serves as the US Government's lead proponent for sub-national governance, stabilization and civil-military integration at regional level. Ms Liberi is a member of the U.S. Senior Foreign Service. She has worked at USAID for more than 25 years including as Mission Director in Iraq (2005–06), Nigeria (2002–05) and Uganda (1998–2002). She is the recipient of two Distinguished Honor Awards and also holds Superior Honor, Unit Citation and Meritorious Honor Awards from the US Department of State.

Milen Lyutskanov

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. His diplomatic postings included Berlin (1988–1991), Lisbon (1992–1994) and London (1997–2000). In 2003–2006, Mr Lyutskanov served as the Deputy Ambassador of Bulgaria's mission to NATO, a post he assumed after directing the NATO and International Security Department at the Ministry (2000–2003). Prior to his appointment as the Special National Coordinator of the Regional Cooperation Council in 2008, Mr Lyutskanov headed the International Legal Department at the Bulgarian MFA (2006–2008). Mr Lyutskanov majored in international law at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

Jean MacKenzie

Based in Kabul, Ms MacKenzie is Correspondent for Global Post and Program Director for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). In this role, she created a network of Afghan reporters who lend a critical local perspective to coverage of the conflict. She is a respected analyst and commentator and contributes frequently to projects for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, CNN and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Prior to Afghanistan, Ms MacKenzie spent over a decade as a journalist in Moscow.

Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor

Mohammad Mustafa Mastoor is the Deputy Minister of Finance of Afghanistan. Since 2000, he worked extensively in the fields of financial management, public health, procurement, general management, aid management, policy & strategy development and public finance in different international and national agencies within the country. Dr Mastoor worked as Director General (DG) Budget in the Ministry of Finance (2005–2009). He also served as Director of Grant and Contract Management in the Ministry of Public Health (2003–2005). In 2000–2003, he managed the Comprehensive Disabled Afghan's Program (CDAP) and in 2003 also worked in the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. Dr Mastoor has been an active member of several regional and international economic & development organizations. He has an MD Diploma from Medical Faculty of Kabul University (1992); EMBA in Management from Preston Educational Institute in Peshawar, Pakistan (2002); and will receive his M.Sc. in Health System Management (Distance Learning) from the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

Zsolt Mikusi

Deputy Director Development at the Stability Division with the ISAF Headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Mikusi also served as a course director and instructor within the Joint Operations Department at the NATO School.

Ole Moesby

Danish Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Mr Moesby is a career diplomat who has previously served in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Egypt. After a post as Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, Mr Moesby was appointed Head of Multilateral Development Co-operation at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During this time, he acted as Governor for the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Amin Madaqiq

Kabul Bureau Chief for RFE/RL's Afghan Service, Radio Azadi–Afghanistan's most listened to radio station. Prior to joining RFE/RL, Mr Madaqiq served as a media specialist for the Afghan section of the US Embassy in Pakistan.

Rohullah Niazi

Senior Advisor at the Independent Directorate of the Local Governance in Afghanistan.

John O’Sullivan

Executive Editor of RFE/RL. He is also Editor-at-Large of National Review where he served as Editor-in-Chief for nine years. He was editor of the National Interest (2003–2005) and Editor-in-Chief of United Press International (2000–2003). His previous posts included special adviser to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, associate editor of the London Times, editor of Policy Review, and parliamentary sketchwriter for the Daily Telegraph (1972–1979).

Šimon Pánek

Executive Director of the humanitarian organization People in Need, which he co-founded in 1992. He was one of the student leaders during the Velvet Revolution of 1989. In 1992 he founded the news agency Epicentrum, specializing in conflict reporting. He worked in the Office of the Czech President Vaclav Havel (1992–97) as a policy analyst and specialist for the Balkan region and human rights issues.

Tomáš Pojar

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Previously, Mr Pojar served as Deputy Minister with responsibility for Bilateral Relations (2005–2006). From 1997–2005, he was Director of People in Need and, previously, its co-ordinator in the former Soviet Union.

Susan Jane Pond

Senior Officer in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division at NATO HQ. She has more than twenty five years experience at NATO and in the Canadian Public Service advising on policy, assessing risks, and developing practical tools to manage change/transformation. In her current appointment in the Defense and Security Economics Directorate, she leads a project assessing the economic footprint of ISAF. Ms Pond studied at College St. Anne (Nova Scotia); she has a BA from College St. Boniface (Manitoba) and a Graduate Diploma in International Relations from the University of Lancaster (UK).

Ghulam Jelani Popal

Director General at the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). Prior to assuming this post in 2007, he served as the Deputy Minister for Revenue and Custom at the Afghan Ministry of Finance (2003–2005). Mr Popal was the Senior Social Worker at the San Joaquin Country in California (2000–2003) and a Representative of the Afghan Civil Society to UN summits (1995–1999). He managed the Afghan Development Association (1990–2000) and was the program officer in the Salvation Army Refugee Assistance Program (1982–1989). Mr Popal received a degree in political science at the Kabul University in 1978. He is fluent in Pashto, Dari, Urdu and English.

Hugh Powell

Former Head of the British PRT in Helmand.

Bohumila Ranglová

Head of Civilian Team of the Czech PRT in Logar Province, Afghanistan. Ms Ranglova leads a team of ten civilian experts who are assisting the government of Afghanistan in providing basic services to the population while building governmental capacity at both district and provincial levels. Her background is as a non-governmental programme manager with experience of building and managing projects requiring financial management, fundraising, human resources & logistics. Her geographical areas of specialisation are the Middle East and Southeast Asia and she is experienced in disaster assessment and relief management. She holds a Masters Degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Charles University in Prague and speaks English and Arabic.

Syed Qotbuddin Roydar

General Director of Coordination and Council of Provincials Relations at the Independent Directorate for Local Governance in Afghanistan.

Ahmadshah Salehi

Acting Economics Director at the Ministry of Health of Afghanistan.

Matthew T. Sherman

Department of State Senior Regional Representative for Logar and Wardak provinces in Afghanistan. Prior to this appointment, he was a principal with SCI Consulting and an adjunct with the RAND Corporation. Mr Sherman advised both senior Iraqi and Coalition personnel on non-military security matters relating to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (2003–2006). From 2006 until 2007, Mr Sherman worked as the political adviser to the First Cavalry Division, the military unit in charge of the “surge” operations throughout Baghdad. Prior to his appointments to Afghanistan and Iraq, he had other foreign assignments with the State Department and the OSCE to the Balkans, Ukraine and Moldova. Mr Sherman received his B.A and J.D. from the University of North Carolina, and an M.Phil. in International Relations from Cambridge University.

Bruce Sherman

As a Director at the Office of Strategic Planning & Performance Measurement, Bruce Sherman is responsible for global strategy and research for the US Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an independent federal agency and the parent organization for all government-supported, non-military broadcasting overseas. He joined the BBG in 1996 after twelve years at Radio Marti, the broadcasting service for Cuba, including five years as the station's Deputy Director in charge of all daily operations. Mr Sherman has played a central role in launching new strategic broadcasting initiatives for the Muslim world, including Radio Sawa, Alhurra TV and Radio Farda for Iran. Mr Sherman directs the BBG's global media research program, coordinating research directors at each of the partner broadcasters and a 60-person team at the BBG's principal contractor, InterMedia. In 2005, he took temporary leave from the BBG to design and implement the first-ever US-European, Muslim-to-Muslim dialogue in Brussels. Mr Sherman holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Florida and a master's degree in liberal arts from St. John's College.

Jiří Schneider

Program Director of the Prague Security Studies Institute. He was Head of the Policy Planning Department of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1993–1994, 1999–2001, 2003) and Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Israel (1995–1998). Mr Schneider served as an International Policy Fellow at the Open Society Institute in Budapest (2002) and as an MP of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly (1990–1992). He serves as a part-time lecturer at the Charles University, at the New York University in Prague, and to the PSSI's Robinson-Martin Security Scholars Programme.

Přemysl Sobotka

President of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and Senator for the Liberec constituency (elected in 1996, re-elected in 1998 and 2004), he previously served as Councillor of the City of Liberec (1990–1998). A graduate of the School of General Medicine of Charles University in Prague, Dr Sobotka worked as a surgeon and radiologist at the Liberec Hospital, where, from 1991, he was the Head of the Radiology Department.

Barbara Stapleton

Deputy to the EU Special Representative in Afghanistan, Ms Stapleton's role as senior political advisor covers security sector reform processes and support for the development of an independent media and civil society. She works closely with NATO and ISAF commands. Previously, she was Advocacy and Policy Co-ordinator for ACBAR, the main NGO co-ordination body for relief to Afghanistan. During the 1990's, Ms Stapleton was a researcher and co-writer for the BBC's human rights programmes and her research on the Shias of Iraq was published by the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group. She holds a post-graduate degree in Middle East History from the School of Oriental & African Studies at London University and completed her LLM in the International Law of Human Rights at the University of Essex.

Gary Thatcher

Journalist and editor. He has been with the Broadcasting Board of Governors—the umbrella agency which funds all US non-military broadcasting—since 2000. Currently he serves as Director of External Liaison for the International Broadcasting Bureau where he focuses on delivery of programs to high-priority countries, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mr Thatcher has handled a number of major assignments for the Board, including creation and launch of Radio Sawa, the Board's popular Arabic-language service. He served in Baghdad as Director of Strategic Communications for the Coalition Provisional Authority (2003–2004). Prior to joining the US Government, he was National Editor of the Chicago Tribune.

Mary Thompson-Jones

Senior Foreign Service Officer at the US Embassy in Prague since 2007, Ms Thompson-Jones has also served in Spain, Bosnia, Guatemala and Canada and has received three Meritorious Honor Awards for her overseas work. Her Washington D.C. assignments include as Deputy Staff Director for the Public Diplomacy Advisory Commission; Senior Press Officer in the Bureau of European Affairs; Deputy Policy Co-ordinator for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs; and Branch Chief for International Educational Advising in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ms Thompson-Jones was a journalist.

Mark Ward

Based in Kabul, Mr Ward is Special Advisor on Development to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for the UN's Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). He is responsible for the implementation of UNAMA's mandate to improve donor co-ordination and aid effectiveness. Prior to this, he was Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Asia at the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Mr Ward was responsible for USAID programs in South and East Asia and was Chair of the Agency's tsunami task force, the South Asia earthquake task force and the Lebanon Reconstruction task force. In 2006, he was awarded the Service to America Medal for International Affairs.

Nicholas Williams

Recently appointed Head of Operations Section within the Operations Division of NATO International Staff. In November 2009, Mr. Williams completed a 2½ year post in Afghanistan with ISAF, first as Political Advisor to ISAF forces in southern Afghanistan, and latterly as Deputy NATO Senior Representative in Kabul. Mr Williams has worked extensively in other conflict and post-conflict countries, including Iraq and the Balkans. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 2005 for having negotiated the first post-Saddam provincial Council in Basra and, in 2007, received the Queen's Medal for distinguished service in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Zaidullah Zaid

NATO Deck Responsible-ASIF at the United-Nations and International Conferences Directorate of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Idrees Zaman

Researcher at the Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU). With a vast study of the history and political dynamics of Afghanistan and the region, he has been part of major research activities, including: Mid-term Evaluation of National Solidarity Program NSP (2005–6), Religious Civil Society (2006), Transformation of War Economies (2006), NGOs, PRTs, Government and Communities in Afghanistan (2007), Analysis of Asia Foundation survey "Afghanistan in 2007" (2007–8). His major publications include, among others, series of Conflict Analysis on provinces and districts in Afghanistan. Mr Zaman is currently involved in a project on Pilot Human Security Monitoring Indicators 2010, a report of which will be published this year.