

Is it time for India to talk to the Taliban?

A Session with

Ajai Shukla

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM, August 17, 2011

WWF Auditorium

“Afghanistan in the next few years will influence India’s security environment”, these were the opening remarks made by C. Raja Mohan, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research and Consulting Editor, Indian Express, moderating a policy dialogue session with Mr. Ajai Shukla, Consulting Editor (Strategic Affairs), Business Standard, organized by Aspen Institute India on August 17, 2011 at the WWF Auditorium.



Mr. Ajai Shukla, a renowned Strategic Affairs Expert, gave his insights and in-depth analysis on why India now, has to amend its strategy in Afghanistan and how that strategy must also include, speaking to the Taliban. Mr. Shukla in this interactive session presented his arguments based on various historical and verifiable facts, analysis and perspective that he gathered from his personal interaction with the common people on the streets and from some of the important figures inside Afghanistan.

Mr. Shukla told the audience that Taliban’s rise to power is inevitable since it represents the real Afghanistan- religiously conservative, fundamental, anti-communist, and anti-western outlook. He explained the difference between Quetta Shura network and Haqqani network and this division creates opportunity for India. Mr. Shukla recommended that New Delhi should explore this opportunity to start a dialogue with Quetta Shura. He also added that since Pashtuns comprise of the single largest group in Afghanistan, what they do in the next 10 years is going to affect Afghanistan vis-à-vis Pakistan.

Speaking on his personal experience in Afghanistan, he said 'never felt threatened in Afghanistan. The minute they get to know that you are an Indian, the whole dynamic changes.'

The session was concluded with a Q&A round with Mr. Shukla and C. Raja Mohan. This video can be watched here:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/aspeninstituteindia#p/u/36/89EijnVml-4>