



ICRD Monthly Update

December 19, 2013

Informing U.S. Foreign Policy on Afghanistan



A few weeks ago, ICRD conducted a **Policy Forum on the current and future strategy relating to Afghanistan** for key Congressional and Executive Branch staff and leading members of the American Muslim community.

The discussion was enriched by an impressive lineup of outside experts, including former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan **Ronald Neumann**, who currently serves as President of the American Academy of Diplomacy; Ambassador **Omar Samad**, former Afghan Ambassador to France and Canada, and **Lisa Curtis**, a leading specialist on South and Central Asia for the Heritage Foundation. The spirited participation of representatives from the State Department, the Congress, the National Counterterrorism Center, the Embassy of Afghanistan, the Alliance in Support of the Afghan People and other relevant organizations also contributed to a particularly meaningful dialogue.



Police help Taliban fighter as part of reintegration effort.

Each of these off-the-record, non-attribution policy forums produces new insights for those involved, which are captured



in the post-forum reports that appear on our website at www.icrd.org. After this particular forum, I personally came away feeling more encouraged about the future prospects for Afghanistan than I did going in. Despite the generally negative picture portrayed in the media, today's Afghan youth, who have lived the greater portion of their lives in a post-Taliban environment, see a brighter future ahead that builds upon the notable progress the country has made over the past 12 years. This, coupled with the widespread enthusiasm surrounding the upcoming elections, should cause us to **renew our resolve in concluding the pending security agreement** with the Afghan government and to encourage the positive forces for change that already exist, including the helpful influence of a number of religious leaders.

Speaking of religion, have a blessed Christmas season, and thanks once again for your encouragement and support over the past year. As they say, it takes a village!

With Best Wishes,

Doug Johnston
President, ICRD