

## DROPS Representative attended the Afghanistan-China Think Tank Dialogue in Beijing

The Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DORPS) Researcher Aziz Koshan attended a roundtable discussion on Afghanistan-China Relations. The Discussion was conducted on 22 October 2019, organized by the China Institute of International Studies in Beijing, China.

In addition to Aziz Koshan, the Afghan delegates included the former Deputy Minister of Defense Tamim Asey, Former Agriculture Minister Assad Zamir, Director of 8 AM Daily Newspaper Firdaws Kawish, member of the Afghanistan-China Friendship Association Wais Ahmad Baheen and Head of the Political Section of the Afghanistan Embassy in China Sayed Mahdi Munadi. The delegates from China included Mr. Yang Yi Secretary General of the of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), and other researchers of the institute including Lan Jianxue, Li Qingyan, Zhang Jian and Ning Shengnan.



Delegates from both sides, discussed the opportunities and challenges for better economic cooperation and counter terrorism in the region. During the discussions, Mr. Koshan highlighted the importance of Afghanistan-China relations, and China's role as a major power in the region to support an "Afghan led and Afghan owned peace process." Mr. Koshan also presented the key findings of DROPS recent research on "[Integrating Afghanistan into the Belt and Road Initiative.](#)"



**Organization for Policy Research  
and Development Studies  
(DROPS)**

*The Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies (DROPS) has been working to strengthen democratic ideas and values by conducting research that provide policy-makers with sound solutions to national issues. Research, capacity building, and advocacy are the three pillars of DROPS activities.*

*To empower women and enable their political participation, DROPS created the 'Women and Public Policy Journal' (WPPJ) that enables women to use the medium of in-depth policy research to influence decision-making on national issues. WPPJ is also a unique platform for women to articulate their concerns regarding national issues, learn research skills, critical thinking and publish peer-reviewed journal papers that are disseminated to national, regional and international policymakers.*

Based on the findings of the research, Mr. Koshan said that “the BRI initially bypassed Afghanistan both from its north and south. It was only three years later, in May 2016, when Afghanistan and China signed an MoU to boost cooperation under the BRI.” He also said that Afghanistan can be linked to the BRI both on its south to the CEPEC via four possible connecting points, and its North via the SREB, the Central Corridor of the BRI that goes through Central Asia and connects China to the Eurasian landmass and Europe.



Mr. Koshan summed up Afghanistan’s comparative advantage under the BRI is its geographic location making it conducive for the movement of data, energy and goods between Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia, West Asia and ultimately to Europe. Over the past decade an interest to revive Afghanistan’s crossroad status has come in the forefront.

Despite Afghanistan’s comparative advantage described in the study, Mr. Koshan said the study identifies several challenges that stands in its way to becoming self-reliant through regional economic connectivity projects. Foremost, the study finds insecurity, political instability, infrastructure deficit, low trade volume between Afghanistan and China among other issues as key obstacles in incorporating Afghanistan in to the BRI.

On October 24, 2019, the Afghan delegates participated in an event on “China-Afghanistan Think-Tank Dialogue” which was organized by the Shanghai Academy of Social \Sciences and Area Studies in Shanghai. The two sides discussed the importance of knowledge sharing, people to people relations, exchange programs for researchers both in Afghanistan and China to boost relations between the countries. During the Discussion, Mr. Koshan stressed that more than anything else China as historical country which has experienced similar hardships during the Chinese civil war can contribute in the reconstruction of Afghanistan is to share ideas on various issues ranging from state building to national building. He also proposed to Chinese scholars to jointly conduct studies and research programs on various issues effecting the two countries and threats threatening the two countries.