

GCSP Public Discussion with Ambassador Rakesh Sood

“Afghanistan in 2017 and Beyond” A view from India

Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Thursday, 27 March 2017 from 13:15 to 14:30

7th floor Library Room



We are pleased to invite you to a Public Discussion on **“Afghanistan in 2017 and beyond” – A view from India** organised jointly by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Permanent Mission of India to the Conference on Disarmament.



#GCSPDiscussion

Afghanistan has often been described as 'the graveyard of empires'. Like all myths, this contains an element of truth but is also an exaggeration. When king Zahir Shah was overthrown in a coup in 1973, the country became the theatre where the super-powers' rivalry began to be played out and Pakistan became a major player.

With the end of the Cold War, Afghanistan had to deal both with the internal forces that had been unleashed and the action of regional players. Al Qaeda found a hospitable host in the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan but 9/11 saw the return of the US to the country with the support of the international community.

Yet, after 16 years, Afghanistan remains unstable. Violent extremism has risen, donor fatigue has set in, attempts at reconciliation remain inconclusive, regional players are again active, and the recent modest gains are at risk. What went wrong? What is the way forward? Can the regional players and the international community support an Afghan vision of the future? HE Mr Rakesh Sood, a prominent Indian diplomat and former Ambassador to Kabul, will share his experience and views on those questions.

Speakers

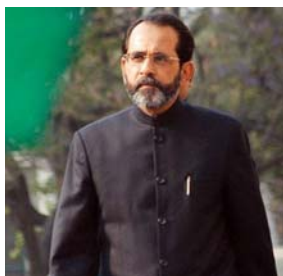
Ambassador Rakesh Sood, Indian diplomat and former Ambassador to Kabul

Mr Marc Finaud, Senior Programme Advisor, Emerging Security Challenges Programme; Arms Proliferation Cluster Responsible



Speakers Biographies

Ambassador Rakesh Sood



Ambassador **Rakesh Sood** is a Post Graduate in Physics and additionally in Economics and Defence studies. He has over 38 years of experience in the field of foreign affairs, economic diplomacy and international security issues.

Before joining the Indian Foreign Service in 1976, Ambassador Sood worked for a couple of years in the private sector. Ambassador Sood initially served in the Indian missions at Brussels, Dakar, Geneva and Islamabad in different capacities and as Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington, later in his career. He set up the Disarmament and International Security Affairs Division in the Foreign Ministry, which he led for eight years till the end of 2000.

During this period, Ambassador Sood was in charge for multilateral disarmament negotiations, bilateral dialogues with Pakistan, strategic dialogues with other countries including US, UK, France and Israel (especially after the nuclear tests in 1998), and dealt with India's role in the ASEAN Regional Forum, as part of the 'look East' policy.

He then served as India's first Ambassador – Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament at the United Nations in Geneva. He also chaired a number of international Working Groups including those relating to negotiations on landmines and cluster munitions and was a member of UN Secretary General's Disarmament Advisory Board (2002-03).

Subsequently, he was India's Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2005 to early 2008, Ambassador to Nepal from 2008 to 2011 and to France from 2011 to March 2013.

In September 2013, Ambassador Sood was appointed Special Envoy of the Prime Minister for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues; a position he held till May 2014.

Since his retirement he has been writing and commenting regularly in both print and audio visual media on India's foreign policy, its economic dimensions and regional & international security issues. He is a frequent speaker/contributor at various policy planning groups and reputed think-tanks in India and overseas. He currently holds the position of Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation.



Mr Marc Finaud

Marc Finaud is a former French diplomat who was seconded to the GCSP from 2004 to 2013 and is now a staff member.



He finished Secondary School in Marseille in 1970 and in Independence, Iowa (USA) in 1971. He holds the Certificate of Proficiency in English (With Merits) of the University of Cambridge, Great Britain (1974), as well as a Master's Degree in International Law of the University of Aix-en-Provence, France (1975) and he is a Graduate of the Paris Institute of Political Studies (1977).

He joined the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1977, first at the Military Cooperation Division. In 1977-1978, he was Vice-Consul at the French Consulate-General in Leningrad (USSR). Back in Paris, he worked at the Directorate for Europe (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe -CSCE-) from 1979 to 1982. He was a member of the French Delegation to the CSCE Meeting in Madrid (1980-1982). In 1982-1983 he served as Chief of Staff of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before being appointed First Secretary at the French Embassy in Warsaw. In 1987-1988, he was the Secretary-General of the French Delegation to the CSCE Meeting in Vienna.

In 1989-1993 he served as Second Counsellor at the French Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and a member of the French Delegation to the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. From 1993 to 1996 he was the Head of the Information Department (and alternate spokesman) of the Foreign Ministry in Paris. In 1995-1996, he was a lecturer on arms control and disarmament for a post-graduate course at the Marne-la-Vallée University. In 1996 was appointed Deputy Head of Mission at the French Embassy in Tel Aviv (Israel) where he joined the Team of Negotiators of the EU Special Envoy to the Middle East. He was transferred to Sydney as Consul-General for France in January, 2001, with jurisdiction over the whole of Australia.

Apart from French, he speaks English, Russian and Polish. He has published many articles, chapters and books on arms control and disarmament as well as on the Middle East and international humanitarian law.

In addition, from August 2013 to May 2015, Marc Finaud was Senior Resident Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

