

Challenges of Reconciliation in Peace-building: The Case of Afghanistan

FRIDAY APRIL 12, 2013, 12:30PM - 2:30PM
BSIA 1-23

0



Daisaku Higashi is currently Minister-Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations. Higashi is also an associate professor in Human Security Program at Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in the University of Tokyo. His main research field is post-conflict peacebuilding, legitimacy, and the United Nations.

From 1993 to 2004, he worked at NHK, the Japan Public TV Station, as a TV program director producing TV documentaries on international affairs, such as the Vietnam War, the Middle East peace negotiations, and the North Korean nuclear crisis. The documentary that he directed, "Rebuilding Iraq: Challenge of the United Nations," received the silver medal from the UN Correspondents Association in 2004, acknowledging it as the second-best report on the UN in the world.

From 2004 to 2009, he studied in both M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Political Science at the University of British Columbia in Canada, and he conducted field research in Afghanistan and East Timor. His reports based on his field research, "Challenge of Constructing Legitimacy in Peacebuilding: Case of Afghanistan" and "Case of Timor-Leste" were published by the Best Practices Section at the UN Department of Peacekeeping in 2008. He has also published numerous books, such as *Peacebuilding: Field Research in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste* (Iwanami Shinsho 2009), *Can You Hear the Voices of Victims of Violent Crimes?* (Shicho Press 2008 & Koundansha Press 2006), and *Why Did We Go to War? Dialogue of Former Enemies in the Vietnam War* (Iwanami Press 2000).

After publishing the UN report and the book *Peacebuilding*, he consulted on his Afghan policy recommendation (creating a new reconciliation program in Afghanistan) with top government officials in both Japan and the United States, such as the Japanese Foreign Minister, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the U.S. Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan; his policy recommendation was adopted as one of three key components for the Japanese government on assisting Afghan peacebuilding, which was announced in November 2009.

From December 2009 to December 2010, he worked in Kabul, Afghanistan, as a team leader for reconciliation and reintegration in the Political Affairs Division of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), directly engaged in the process of creating a new reconciliation mechanism in Afghanistan, which was launched at the Kabul International Conference in July, 2010. He started working as an associate professor in the Human Security Program at the University of Tokyo in January 2011; since then he has kept working for reconstruction projects in Fukushima prefecture. His proposal of creating "floating off-shore wind power plants" in Fukushima ocean was adopted by the Japanese government which funded 200 million USD for the experiment starting from 2012.

He was appointed as a Minister-Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN in August 2012, as a result of an exchange program between the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the University of Tokyo.

BSIA Events

Extra-curricular programming is a major feature of the BSIA experience, including the International Governance Speakers Series (IGSS), the International Human Rights Speakers Series, and professional development seminars.