

## **PADDY ASHDOWN**

HE Mr Ban Ki-moon  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York

26<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Dear Mr Secretary-General

I appreciated the chance to meet you earlier this month in Madrid and am grateful for the confidence you placed in me in asking me to be your Special Representative for Afghanistan. I was especially pleased to hear from you that President Karzai also wished me to take up this post, subject to his consent on the final Terms of Reference, which I understand have now been agreed by all.

As I explained when we met, I was not seeking this job and only considered it when asked to by the United States, who have been generous enough to propose my candidature and provide me with assurances that the job envisaged – that of co-ordinating the international community in support of the Government of Afghanistan – could be done.

However, since our meeting there have been many reports, both diplomatic and in the media, including in Afghan Government-controlled newspapers, that President Karzai and members of his Government are opposed to my appointment, partially based on my nationality and Britain's role in Afghanistan.

I have always been of the view that this job only stands a chance of being successfully carried out if it enjoys consensus within the international community and the whole hearted agreement of the Government of Afghanistan.

I accepted the job you kindly asked me to do on that basis, and in the hope that I may be able to contribute to the cause of stability and peace in Afghanistan, in the best interests of its people. I should certainly not wish my appointment to become an impediment to that. The task involved is difficult enough in any case. I just do not believe it is feasible in the face of opposition from the elected Government of Afghanistan.

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It is with regret that I have therefore concluded that it would now be impossible for me to do the job you asked me to do in Afghanistan and that it would be best for me to withdraw my name from this process.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your confidence and to wish you and your colleagues well with your work in Afghanistan.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paddy Ashdown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

~~PADDY ASHDOWN~~