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<https://mywacci.org/closing-chapter-in-afghanistan/>

Monday May 2, 2022 7:00 pm via Zoom

“Closing Chapter in Afghanistan”

Speaker:
Ambassador Ross Wilson

Ross Wilson is an American diplomat who served five times as a US chief of mission abroad – as ambassador to Azerbaijan (2000-03) and to Turkey (2005-08) and as chargé d'affaires in Turkey (2014), Georgia (2018-19), and Afghanistan (January 2020 until the embassy's suspension of operations on August 30, 2021). A career Foreign Service officer, Ambassador Wilson also had postings at the US embassies in Moscow (twice) and Prague and as consul general in Melbourne, Australia. Among Washington assignments, he was deputy executive secretary of the State Department; principal deputy to the ambassador-at-large and special advisor to the Secretary of State for the new independent states of the former Soviet Union; chief US negotiator for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and chief of staff to Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick.

From 2010 to 2014, Ambassador Wilson was director of the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center, where he led Council work on Turkey, the former Soviet states, and regional energy and economic issues. He has held positions as a visiting lecturer in international affairs at George Washington University, Bigelow teacher-in-residence Carleton College, chair of the Board of Directors of Global Minnesota (a World Affairs Council affiliate based in Minneapolis), chair of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Turkish Studies, and on advisory councils for the Eurasia Foundation and American Voices.

Ambassador Wilson earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota

and two Masters' degrees from Columbia University and the US National War College. He has been recognized with the president's Meritorious Service Award and numerous State Department awards and honors. He holds memberships in the American Academy of Diplomacy, the American Foreign Service Association, Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired, and the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs. The descendant of Choctaw Indians, Ambassador Wilson is an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Ambassador Wilson is married to Margo Squire, also an American Foreign Service officer, and lives near Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota.

On February 29, 2020, the United States and representatives of the Taliban signed an Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan. On August 15, the Afghan government that the United States helped create after 2001 collapsed, and Taliban forces took control of Kabul and the country as a whole. A messy evacuation of US embassy staff, American citizens, representatives of other countries, and Afghans of interest to the United States and Coalition member countries followed. What was the context for these developments, what were the key issues for US policymakers, how and why did things turn out as they did, and what might be ways going forward for protecting American interests in Afghanistan and South Asia? These are some of the topics that Ambassador Wilson will explore on this program.