

- prepare for free elections
- start extensive reconstruction and increase humanitarian aid
- begin a process of national reconciliation
- improve understanding with neighbours.

There are negative consequences of a potential Northern Alliance dominated government:

1. The Northern Alliance is composed of foreign-backed factions and is fractured. Continued infighting among the various factions is guaranteed.
2. The factions are based on ethnic lines (with foreign backers fuelling these divisions). They are ethno-centric and commit crimes against other ethnic groups. Reconciliation between the perpetrators and victims is unlikely.
3. The Northern Alliance has a long history of breaking signed accords. This record puts the likelihood of a sustained peace agreement into a doubt.
4. A government controlled by the Northern Alliance would likely be opposed by Pakistan and therefore contribute to regional instability.
5. Historical experience would suggest that a Northern Alliance government would not improve the prospects for women in Afghanistan.

In order to build a legitimate, workable and sustainable governance in Afghanistan:

- Outside interference must end. (Some participants said that all military interference and foreign financing of factions should end immediately, since it is often the later that allows the struggle to continue. Outside actors, and the UN in particular, should play a “legitimising” role – verifying and monitoring. Some encouraged the entry of UN peacekeeping forces.)
- No significant role should be assigned to any one faction.
- Government must be inclusive and not ethnically based.
- Task forces should be identified to deal with issues including the repatriation of refugees.
- Any provisional government should be protected by UN peacekeeping forces.
- Any provisional government must remain friendly to surrounding countries.
- Employment opportunities must be created for soldiers as a viable alternative to armed struggle.

Concerns were raised about the so called **Rome peace process**, led by the former King Zahir Shah,⁵ including charges that the process:

- is not inclusive enough,
- takes on an anti-Pakistani position,
- over-relies on the Northern Alliance, and

⁵The Rome process has gathered a group of key Afghans including intellectuals, tribal leaders, former bureaucrats and former politicians. They are advocating the Loya Jirga (grand assembly) as a mechanism to allow people to decide on the future of Afghanistan through a constitution and election. See: [Http://www.loyajirga.com](http://www.loyajirga.com) or [Http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~mpeia/afghanistan.htm](http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~mpeia/afghanistan.htm)