

The Embassy of Afghanistan
WASHINGTON DC



President of Ariana Afghan Airlines Advances Major Investment Opportunities for Improvement of Air Service to Afghanistan



Washington, D.C. – August 20th, 2006 - President of Ariana Afghan Airlines, Dr. Mohammed Nadir Atash, announced this month two major investment proposals by U.S. and European companies. Ariana, Afghanistan’s national carrier, has provided air passenger and cargo service to Afghanistan for over five decades and has vastly expanded its operations and service since the fall of the Taliban. The special presentation took place at the Embassy of Afghanistan and included officials from numerous companies seeking to invest in Afghanistan, as well as U.S. government, industry, and media representatives.

Dr. Atash stated, “These investments will create further improvements to air service for Afghanistan, including domestic, international and cargo services. I am pleased to have made this opportunity possible, which assures a very positive and bright future for Ariana.”

One proposal includes a major capital commitment in the amount of \$400-700 million USD, marking one of the largest scale wholly private financed foreign direct investments in Afghanistan. The investment proposal entails new mechanisms to finance and implement the full upgrade of Ariana, which includes: upgrade and operation of aircraft fleets for international and domestic routes, ground handling equipment, computers and communication equipment, reservations and security systems, passenger and cargo handling systems, provision of management expertise, and training for pilots, engineers

and crew. These steps will help to improve Ariana's operations in accordance with current worldwide standards and help Ariana to regain its former reputation as one of the best air carriers in Asia.

The other proposal is from a U.S. company establishing much-needed direct air cargo service between the U.S. and Afghanistan. As part of Dr. Atash's commitment to promote the export of Afghan products, Ariana would receive at-cost air cargo space for use by Afghan companies to export their products to the United States and other countries.

Dr. Atash further stated, "During my service as President of Ariana, the airline has achieved significant goals. This includes improvement of aircraft fleet, financial systems, reservation processes, maintenance and operations standards, training, and most importantly, bringing transparency and accountability to an important Afghan institution."

Ambassador Said T. Jawad expressed support to the President of Ariana at the historic signing ceremony and stated, "We look forward to turning Ariana into a world class airline. The infusion of raw capital and expansion of cargo services will help materialize the goals set by the capable leadership of Ariana."

Both agreements will be presented to the Government of Afghanistan for review and approval.