

Press Release

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Afghanistan – A Challenging Energy Frontier

International Security and Risk Mitigation Company AKE advises that security fears should not deter from the opportunities presented by the opening of Afghanistan's energy industry to foreign investors. It won't be easy and there are certainly plentiful challenges to interested companies, most obviously, the security and political situations. However, there are ways and means to mitigate risk and provided the correct advice is sought and measures implemented, companies will be able to achieve operational success.

The Afghan Ministry of Mines hosted the Houston leg of its First Hydrocarbon Bidding Round Roadshow today, 7 May 2009. The Afghan government recently announced the initial stages of discussions that will lead to the bidding round for the award of Exploration and Production Sharing contracts relating to three separate blocks in the north of the country.

While Afghanistan does not harbour the reserves of, for example, Iraq and raises plentiful concerns in terms of security risk, this frontier environment is already attracting considerable attention as demonstrated by the interest generated in the recent roadshow events in Dubai and London.

It will perhaps come as a surprise to some that Afghanistan has sustained production since 1967 from its Angoat field (heating and crude oil) and that it was Soviet-era prospecting that uncovered the blocks relative to the forthcoming bidding round: Jangalikalan (gas), Jum-Bashikurd (gas) and Kashkari (oil). There are eight further delineated blocks in the north of the country, which are likely to be put to tender in due course, demonstrating yet further future potential.

Investment in beleaguered and war-ravaged countries like Afghanistan and Iraq may induce fear in many; however, the development and reconstruction of industry, particularly the lucrative energy sector, is essential to their wider reconstruction.

Nadina Bernecker, AKE's Head of Risk Consultancy and Intelligence comments:

"The security situation in the north-west of Afghanistan is currently considerably better than in other parts of the country; however, this could certainly change and this necessitates the requirement for comprehensive planning and security provision. Traditional security challenges remain prevalent but there are additional considerations, including political risk, the tribal situation and even hostile climatic conditions.

This said, as an industry, the energy sector has historically and continues to operate in some of the world's most dangerous working environments and has tackled all these threat groups."

Ends

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Notes to editors

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Founded in 1991 by Andrew Kain, AKE Ltd provides security and risk management to international businesses, NGOs and the Media.

AKE is a leading international security risk mitigation company providing a variety of fully integrated services. AKE distinguishes itself from other security services companies by taking a proactive, intelligence-led approach to assessing, monitoring and training for and protecting against risk.