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**Research Report**

## State-building in Afghanistan? Taking stock of the international presence in the Hindu Kush

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# SWP Research Paper

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik  
German Institute for International  
and Security Affairs

*Boris Wilke*

## State-Building in Afghanistan?

Taking Stock of the International Presence  
in the Hindu Kush

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**State-Building in Afghanistan?  
Taking Stock of the International Presence  
in the Hindu Kush**

This study focuses on two questions: To what extent has the international community's involvement succeeded in resolving the causal complex of civil war, disintegration of the state, and the spread of violent non-state actors in Afghanistan and the wider region? And to what extent has international intervention helped to put a democratically legitimized Afghan government in a position to take on more responsibility in stabilizing the country and the region in future?

After impressive initial successes in dealing with the humanitarian crisis and toppling the Taliban, the dual strategy of building peace while fighting terrorism is facing failure:

- ▶ For the foreseeable future Afghanistan's government will not possess the *capacity to control violence* that is the precondition for establishing a legitimate monopoly on the use of force. There is an immediate danger that the voluntary disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the approximately 50,000 Afghan mujahedin will fail. The country is on the brink of becoming a "narco-state."
- ▶ Consequently the government will be unable to develop its own *extractive capacity* for levying the taxes and duties required to provide at least a minimum of welfare services independent of external funding. Individual and community-based welfare continues to be tied to the illegal economy as the primary motor of development.
- ▶ Nor is a *law-making capacity* that would put the state in a position to guarantee a legitimate and democratic legal system in sight either. Multiple state, community, and religious legal systems currently exist side by side in Afghanistan. The new Afghan constitution is unlikely to bring about any significant statification or homogenization of the legal systems.
- ▶ The failure to meaningfully include the neighboring states in the Bonn process and the lack so far of initiatives to develop a regional security regime have left Afghanistan without effective *external relations capacity*, leaving the country exposed to continuing destabilizing influences that undermine the consolidation of its statehood.

This sobering overall assessment does not, however, in itself establish any necessity significantly to expand international involvement or increase aid. On the contrary, overambitious interventionism could easily exacerbate the situation. This study argues instead for concentrating international intervention on a few achievable goals:

1. The structure of the international intervention should be reconsidered and more closely tailored to the *strategic* interests of Germany, Europe, and the international community. The United Nations has repeatedly defined the fight against international terrorism as a central strategic goal. Short-term action to destroy the military structures of prominent violent non-state actors such as Al Qaeda, however, is not enough; additional measures are required to get to the root of the problem. At the top of the list should be the creation and long-term reinforcement of state structures (*state-building*). Longer-term *nation-building* goals should be left to the actors in the region.
2. Despite the minimization of the United Nations' involvement in Afghanistan (the "light footprint" approach), there are now parallel lines of authority at the local, national, and international levels. In the medium term at least they weaken the central state and contradict the goal of state-building, so they must be dismantled wherever possible. The most obvious case is the parallel mandating of the anti-terror forces of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the national reconstruction support provided through the International Security Assistance Force ISAF, where a positive example could be set by placing all international forces under ISAF/NATO command. Further small steps to dismantle parallel structures should follow. These could include revising or abolishing the "lead nations" principle.
3. The international community will need staying power. For decades, the shape and structure of the Afghan buffer state has been determined by the interests of its neighbors and the international system, while most Afghans managed without a state. There is no reason to assume that this historical rule will cease to apply precisely at a time when statehood is coming under pressure everywhere. Establishing functioning statehood in Afghanistan means assuming a significant portion of the responsibility and costs involved. In the short to medium term, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) could make a major contribution over and above their important symbolic presence by getting in-

volved locally in laying the groundwork for institutions and state structures, for example by assisting in the historic tasks of disarming society and stamping out opium cultivation.

4. Existing instruments do not take sufficient account of the transnational character of the causes, which cannot be effectively counteracted through a country-specific approach to security and development. In the case under discussion, the immediate problem is neither Afghanistan nor the leadership circle of Al Qaeda, but a transnational order of violence competing with the system of nation-states and extending from Kashmir to the Gulf states. Afghanistan's traditionally weak statehood is perpetuated by a regional power constellation where regional and global powers project their power and development ambitions into Afghanistan. That some of these states have themselves been drawn into the maelstrom of transnational violence underlines the urgency of setting up at least rudimentary regional security structures. Forming a regional security community would also fit in with the limited nature of the international community's political, financial, and military involvement. The key to internal, regional, and international security lies in the triangular relationship of a sovereign and democratically legitimized Afghan government with, on the one side, an international presence that will be reduced step by step, and on the other, the neighboring states and major and regional powers.

## Peace-Building in Difficult Terrain

The international intervention in the Hindu Kush is at a turning point in the run-up to the presidential elections on October 9, 2004, and the parliamentary elections planned for spring 2005. Almost all the central goals of the Bonn process, which was initiated in December 2001 at the Petersberg Conference, could be achieved by 2005: forming a transitional government; setting up constitutional, judicial, civil service, and human rights reform commissions; holding an emergency *loya jirga* (grand council) and a constitutional *loya jirga*; adopting a new constitution; and conducting presidential and parliamentary elections.

However, in the Berlin Declaration of April 1, 2004, the donor states and the Afghan transitional government clearly stated that the formal conclusion of the Bonn process would in no way end the international community's involvement in Afghanistan's security and development. Instead, the document demonstrates a realization that the Afghan transformation process will require international financial and military support for many years to come. The increase in violence prior to the elections and the cumulative deterioration of the security situation over the past eighteen months mean that it will actually be necessary to expand and strengthen the military commitment in the short to medium term. This has already been announced in the form of the decision to expand the NATO mission in Afghanistan made at President Hamid Karzai's urging at the Istanbul summit (June 28–29, 2004). In this context, however, the failure to achieve one of the central goals of the Petersberg Agreement—namely, disbanding the warring parties' armed units and demilitarizing Kabul—represents a very negative factor.

The current critical security situation represents a good point, almost three years after the fall of the Taliban, to take stock of the ambitious undertaking of reconstruction and peace-building in Afghanistan.

The operation in Afghanistan is the most difficult peace-building task yet taken on by Germany's foreign and security policymakers.<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan differs from

other cases not only in the duration and intensity of the foregoing conflict and the size, topography, and remoteness of the country involved, but above all in the political situation and military balance of forces on the ground. Unlike the classic post-conflict scenario, the precarious state of affairs after the fall of the Taliban is not the outcome of a military victory, a cease-fire, or the gradual tailing off of a war; instead the balance was tipped decisively by the intervention of a third force, which curiously helped the militarily weaker party (the Northern Alliance) to victory, while the Taliban, until then militarily dominant, ended up as the loser. The way the war was ended or interrupted determines the military and power-political situation on the ground to this day. The Taliban may have lacked legitimacy in the eyes of world public opinion, but their rule did actually correspond in a cynical way to the social conditions and the logic of war. This is reflected in the fact that together with their allies on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border they controlled 90 percent of Afghan territory and were able to establish at least rudimentary state structures.

The coalition of the US-led invading forces with the Northern Alliance arose primarily out of military planning considerations designed to minimize the use of international forces as far as possible. If there was a political strategy at all at that point, it was marked by a deep skepticism with respect to multilateral processes of peace-building and state-building, rooted both in certain fundamental convictions and in a specific interpretation of Afghan history.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile,

for preventing conflict from re-escalating in countries emerging from armed conflict or civil war (*post-conflict societies*). The term is applied here because the instruments used by the United Nations, other international agencies, and states are taken from the peace-building "toolbox," even though post-Taliban Afghanistan has not yet reached the post-conflict phase. For a critical treatment of this classification, see Bernt Glatzer's study for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, *Konfliktanalyse Afghanistan* (Berlin, Eschborn, and Bonn, 2003), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> This is the argumentation in: "An Interview with Olivier Roy," *Terrorism Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 6 (November 20, 2003), p. 1, and in Roy, "Pakistan Braces for the American Storm," *The Stratfor Weekly*, February 13, 2004.

<sup>1</sup> The term *post-conflict peace-building* has been used by the United Nations since Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace (1992) to describe lasting measures

the powers operating in Afghanistan openly pursue the goal of peace-building,<sup>3</sup> but the initial strategy continues to force them into a counterproductive simultaneity of reconstruction efforts and terrorist-hunting. This is reflected legally in the separate mandates of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) for the war on terror and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and has led to much-bemoaned conflicts of goals in day-to-day political life.<sup>4</sup>

The ideas of restricting military presence and minimizing political commitment are also reflected at the level of the UN-coordinated reconstruction efforts. Here, experience in other conflicts led to the stipulation that international presence be as inconspicuous as possible (*light footprint*) and that national sovereignty and responsibility for the political and social reconstruction of the country (*conflict ownership*) be transferred to the Afghan people as early and fully as possible.<sup>5</sup> The country's history, deeply marked by foreign intervention through to recent times, moreover made it expedient to exclude direct neighbors and regional powers from the political control and military implementation of the international reconstruction efforts.

Despite difficult circumstances, the Afghan transitional government and the international presence have made considerable achievements. Together with their Afghan allies, the forces of the anti-terror coalition toppled the Taliban regime within weeks, destroyed the most important military structures of Al Qaeda and other violent Islamist organizations, and pushed the remnants back to where they came from—the Afghan-Pakistan border region. It is certainly no mean achievement that today two thirds of Afghan territory are free of forces hostile to the Bonn process that began with the Petersberg Conference of

December 2001. The ISAF presence, in turn, has played its part in ensuring that the fragmentation of power that inevitably followed the fall of the regime in Kabul was not—as occurred in 1992—accompanied by military escalation, but that on the contrary the military cease-fire turned into a political truce. Progress has also been made in guaranteeing security and developing infrastructure and the education system. But even more important is the political support given by almost all political forces to the Bonn process and thus also to the transitional government. The consensual delaying of the new Afghan constitution by the constitutional *loya jirga* shows that political leaders and warlords have come to the conclusion that cooperation is worthwhile in the long term.

However, the visible deterioration of the security situation since early 2003 has brought the Bonn process to the brink of a serious crisis. Afghanistan is by no means over the worst yet. So the central question is whether the preconditions for internal stability for Afghanistan and the region as a whole have been created over the past three years. Has the causal complex of civil war, disintegration of the state, and the proliferation of violent non-state actors been adequately dealt with? The underlying causes and the functional logic of the war economy that determines conditions in Afghanistan extend beyond the country's borders. This transnational constellation runs counter to the conventional map-based thinking of political actors and observers alike,<sup>6</sup> which is why we begin here by briefly outlining its contours.

Two decades of international attempts to end the war in the Hindu Kush amply illustrate the significance of the regional dimension. Immediately after the outbreak of the civil war in 1978, and again after the Soviet invasion of 1979, intervention was restricted to humanitarian aid, but efforts to contain and resolve the conflict were soon set in motion under the leadership of the two superpowers.<sup>7</sup> These attempts were thwarted primarily by the irreconcilable interests of the two blocs, but were also impeded by neighboring states, regional powers, and violent non-state actors, all pursuing their own interests. Even more than in other violent conflicts, the diffusion of violence was accompanied by a multiplication of the number of participants, giving ever greater weight to

3 The Berlin Declaration of April 1, 2004, also recognizes "achievements in the state and institution building process" and pledges support for peace-building.

4 For a long time the United States resisted extending the ISAF mandate beyond Kabul, fearing conflicts of goals between ISAF and OEF; see Kimberly Marten Zisk, "Defending against Anarchy: From War to Peacekeeping in Afghanistan," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 35–52 (37).

5 For a critical treatment of the "minimalist" UN approach, see *Establishing the Rule of Law in Afghanistan*, USIP Special Report 117 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace [USIP], March 2004), p. 4, and for conceivable alternative approaches: Astri Suhrke et al., *Peacebuilding: Lessons for Afghanistan*, Chr. Michelsen Institute Report, R 2002:9 (Bergen, 2002), p. 57.

6 Niklas Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), p. 150.

7 Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State* (New Haven and London, 1995).

violent non-state actors and Islamic networks for mutual aid and solidarity. This is the reason why, contrary to many expectations, the end of the Cold War brought Afghanistan not peace, but an unprecedented escalation of violent conflict driven by non-state groups, which is a cause of great concern to the international community to this day.

## Causes of War: A Buffer State Implodes

The transnational dimension of the Afghanistan conflict goes right back to the country's place in the international system that grew up in connection with British and Russian expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The formation and integration of the Afghan state progressed differently to those states, in particular, that belonged to the British Empire, such as India and Pakistan. Whereas on the Indian subcontinent the political order was thoroughly reformed and at least rudiments of modern statehood were established, Afghanistan was created as a buffer state, whose function involved little more than separating the British and Russian spheres of influence and preventing the "Great Game" of political power and economic influence from ending prematurely. The outcome was not only two different post-colonial trajectories, but also a geopolitical imbalance between, on the one side, the strong Indian and Pakistani regional powers and on the other the "black hole" of Afghanistan, which became first a playground for regional power games and then a haven for violent non-state actors. In the twentieth century Russia, Iran, and Pakistan, as well as India, Saudi Arabia, and the United States discovered Afghanistan as the arena for a "new Great Game" whose circle of players expanded—in keeping with the times—to include private economic and violent actors.<sup>8</sup>

Conditions within Afghanistan remained almost untouched by the power rivalries or by the more strictly political structures. For most of the twentieth century, politics and the state meant nothing to the great majority of Afghans, whose lifeworld was deter-

mined by clan and tribal structures.<sup>9</sup> For example, attempts by King Amanullah—whose 1928 visit to Berlin laid the foundations of the Afghan-German friendship—to set up a standing army and a modern administration and implement social reforms ended in failure. It proved impossible to enforce direct taxation of landowners' income, and the extractive capacity of the Afghan state remained largely restricted to the levying of duties. As a result, since the end of the 1950s the Afghan state has depended on external aid from a whole series of Eastern and Western donors for more than 40 percent of its spending.<sup>10</sup>

This strong external dependency and the dualism of state and society made Afghanistan especially susceptible to crises. Behind a façade of cautious modernization the forces of modernism and tradition were gradually tearing the country apart. This became obvious at the beginning of the 1970s when the later protagonists of the civil war entered the political stage in the form of Islamist and communist parties and groups: the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) with its leaders Babrak Karmal and Mohammad Taraki, and the Islamist movement around Burhanuddin Rabbani, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, from which the Jamiati Islami (under Rabbani) and the Hezb-i Islami (under Hekmatyar) were to emerge in the course of the 1970s. The prospects of these young challengers for power, most of whom were recruited from the university milieu, were astonishingly similar to those of their antagonists. They were closely tied to state services and to ideological and material support from external actors.

The Afghan crisis gained its special dynamic from the circumstance that the two opposition currents drew opposite conclusions: While the secular group, most of whom saw themselves as communist, demanded a radical modernization, the Islamist movement gathered young men who rejected the impending shifts in the traditional demarcation lines between religion and politics, society and state, and private and public.<sup>11</sup> In the end, the radical Khalq faction of the communists attempted to resolve the conflict in their favor in the Saur Revolution of 1978. They sought to

<sup>8</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London, 2000), and, critically, Matthew Edwards, "The New Great Game and the New Great Gamers: Disciples of Kipling and Mackinder," *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2003), pp. 83–102.

<sup>9</sup> Conrad Schetter, "Die Territorialisierung nationaler und ethnischer Vorstellungen in Afghanistan," *Orient*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2003), pp. 75–97 (80ff).

<sup>10</sup> Conrad Schetter, *Kleine Geschichte Afghanistans* (Munich, 2004), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 205ff.

speed up the process of social modernization using violent terrorist tactics and, with Moscow's support, to transform Afghanistan into a modern socialist nation. However, the revolution from above only exacerbated the antagonism between the communists and the rest of the population. For the rural masses, the state changed from being a distant external power into a threat to their lifeworld, which they resisted militantly in jihad. As the conflict escalated still further and became overlaid by the East-West conflict after the invasion by the Soviet Red Army, the politically organized Islamists gained strong influence in the resistance. As fighting mujahedin they were now able to mobilize the contacts and operational bases they had built up in exile in Pakistan. Thanks to support from Saudi Arabia, the "front-line" state of Pakistan, the United States, and other Western nations, the jihad transmuted from a spontaneous popular uprising into a modern guerrilla war controlled from Peshawar in Pakistan.<sup>12</sup>

### War Economy: Jihad and the Internationalization of Resistance

The import of fighters, weapons, and money from almost every part of the globe in the 1980s and 1990s formed the basis for the transformation of the guerrilla war into a transnational war economy. The internationalization of the jihad was driven by internationally networked Islamists under the influence of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>13</sup> Men like Abdul Rasul Sayyaf and Osama bin Laden ensured that the flow of economic and human capital from the Arab countries was maintained, and through the supply of funds from the United States and Saudi Arabia the Afghans' anti-Soviet jihad turned into the business of an Islamist international.<sup>14</sup>

The economics of the war forced Afghans to extend the radius of the day-to-day activities ensuring their survival, not only through opium cultivation and trafficking and other illegal business activities, but also through the necessity to set up hard-hitting fighting units, which the Afghan fighters were unable to fund

by their own means for any length of time. So even after the Soviets withdrew, the conflict retained its regional or international dimension and the warring parties remained dependent on external assistance. This is how the Taliban came into play in 1994, as an Islamic brotherhood largely born in refugee camps in Pakistan, used by Pakistan as a private army to pursue its own interests, and supported out of healthy self-interest by private actors.<sup>15</sup> The Pakistani intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and the government in Islamabad hoped that the Taliban would give them more political and military influence, while trucking companies and traders hoped for a revival of economic relations that had been paralyzed by the war. Financial transfers from Islamic welfare organizations and the governments of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan created the basis for a transnational war-led economy. Autonomous economic systems formed, based on illegal trade controlled by powerful warlords. The warlords' profits, however, should not be overestimated: they are the by-product of an economic system whose primary purpose is to ensure the survival of the fighting units. And anyway, much of the profit, especially in the narcotics trade, is often made outside Afghanistan's borders.<sup>16</sup>

### Consequences of War: Ethnic Identity, Neofundamentalism and the Taliban

Before the war political power and legitimacy were largely local matters. This applied not only in the trivial sense that all politics is first and foremost local politics, but also absolutely literally. The range of legitimate and effective political use of force was restricted to the local level, as was the outlook, where it reached beyond the immediate private sphere, of the overwhelming majority of the population, who looked to family, clan, and village structures. Not only the idea of an Afghan nation, even the concept of collective ethnic identity was completely alien.

The way the war changed the shape of violence and the economy was also reflected on the level of identity. The war weakened the traditional local elites, with religious leaders and warlords setting up new insti-

<sup>12</sup> Barnett R Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan. State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven and London, 1995), pp. 184ff.

<sup>13</sup> Edwards, *Before Taliban* [see footnote 11], pp. 266ff.

<sup>14</sup> On the Washington-Riyadh-Islamabad "arms pipeline" see Mohammad Yousaf/Mark Adkin, *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story* (Lahore, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Boris Wilke, *Pakistan: Der fragile Frontstaat: Die Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik eines schwierigen Partners*, S 47/2003 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, December 2003), p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Olivier Roy, *Les illusions du 11 septembre: Le débat stratégique face au terrorisme* (Paris, 2002), p. 32.

tutions largely independent of local clientele networks; in so doing, they created identities that extend beyond the local *qaum* (clan, tribe, nation) and affect above all religious and ethnic consciousness. The ethnic groups of the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, etc., whose mutual relations have dominated public debate over Afghanistan's political and constitutional future since the fall of the Taliban—initially mediated through the government's policies and then amplified by the compulsions of the civil war—have become territorially defined social realities that increasingly come into conflict with one another.<sup>17</sup> Religious and ethnic identity came to play a major role in shaping all the political and military forms of organization, including the political parties. Their leaders no longer necessarily come from particular clans and dynasties; instead, much more than before, their suitability is assessed in terms of their ability to command a political and military apparatus using ideological or religious phraseology. Thus most Afghan parties are not parties in the modern sense, but ethnic or internationalized Islamist groups headed by Afghan mujahedin or religious leaders.

Ethnic and Islamist identities not only drew dividing lines between Afghans; the loose ends could be spliced with linguistically, culturally, or ideologically related groups in neighboring countries. So the Pashtuns in the south and southeast developed their links to related tribes in Pakistan and to the political and military institutions they dominate (such as the intelligence agency ISI), as well as to the Islamist parties there, while Tajiks and Uzbeks intensified their relations to the north.<sup>18</sup>

For the fighters who were brought to the Afghan theater of war by stateless international Islamist networks such as Al Qaeda, it was not ethnicity or political Islamism, but an ideology known as neofundamentalism that became the medium of mobilization and cohesion.<sup>19</sup> Neofundamentalism is a network ideology of nomadic fighters for whom local networks

and a fictitious global ummah (Islamic community) take the place of family, clan, and nation. Concrete political projects are pushed aside by a re-Islamization from below that develops puritanical traits. This network socialization functions via stereotypes of the "other" and the enemy that are no longer concrete and territorial but possess diffuse global points of reference in a supposed conflict between righteous mujahedin and "unbelievers."

Elements of this world view can also be found among the Taliban. Neofundamentalism suits nobody better than a group of psychologically or physically war-damaged self-taught Koran students who have been shaped by the war and life in camps.<sup>20</sup> Their bizarre political program of a return to the original Islamic community, totalitarian intervention in the private sphere, and misogyny also fits the picture of a network of socially rootless fighters. In fact, however, one cannot say that the Taliban were rootless. The rise to power of the men around Mullah Omar stands for the way the lay scholar as authority in society and the madrasa (religious school) as institution under conditions of crisis and war have gained in importance over the past decades.<sup>21</sup> A good description of their norms and ways of thinking would be "Pashtun-style Islam"<sup>22</sup> under conditions of war. As exponents of the southern Pashtun region that is dominated by Afghanistan's traditional ruling caste but was only weakly represented in the official Afghan resistance, they were able—as they rose to power and in power too—to count on the political support of traditional elites who helped them to implement quasi-state power structures in Afghanistan. For this reason it would be grossly inaccurate to place the Taliban on a par with other neofundamentalist groups such as Al Qaeda. One direct consequence of the war is that the militant Koran students are part of Afghan society and not simply neofundamentalist mercenaries in the service of Pakistan. This conclusion inevitably has consequences for the international intervention. For example, it has a bearing on the assumption that a political movement can be eliminated by destroying military structures.

<sup>17</sup> On the origination of ethnic identity see Conrad Schetter, *Ethnizität und ethnische Konflikte in Afghanistan* (Berlin, 2003), which includes a superb reconstruction of the genesis of the opposition between "Pashtun" and "Tadjik" visions of Afghanistan that is at the heart of the country's internal conflicts in terms of both constitutional debates and power politics.

<sup>18</sup> Mariam Abou Zahab/Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan–Pakistan Connection* (London, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> On this term see Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (London, 1994).

<sup>20</sup> Rashid, *Taliban* [see footnote 8], pp. 31ff.

<sup>21</sup> Gilles Dorronsoro, *La révolution afghane: Des communistes aux taléban* (Paris, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Schetter, *Ethnizität* [see footnote 17], p. 521.

## Healing the Wounds of War: Peace-Building and State-Building

In post-conflict situations reconstructing state structures is normally at the top of the agenda of the international actors. In the academic literature, and to some extent in practice too, this process is referred to as *state-building*.<sup>23</sup> Most actors and also more recent publications, however, increasingly describe this process as *nation-building*. While this may be military shorthand for state-building, it demonstrates a deplorable ignorance about a terminology well-established in the social sciences since the 1950s,<sup>24</sup> and indicates a failure to appreciate what nation-building actually means: the long-term process whereby the state and the population (nation) grow together in the sense of forming collective identity structures on the basis of sustainable political, social, and economic development.<sup>25</sup> While it may seem no more than a linguistic quibble, this terminological imprecision could have dire consequences for international involvement.

However, even armed with an adequate understanding of state-building, external actors are faced with a dilemma: As a form of internationalized governance—observable as a global trend in the third world—state-building measures paradoxically, at least in the initial stages, stand in the way of a quick restoration of statehood. Because the old state institutions have either collapsed or are unsuited to dealing with the new tasks, the intervening forces are forced to create new institutions, which are not necessarily easy to dissolve again later. In this way the intervention inevitably creates *parallel structures of international presence*, which undermine traditional hierarchies, open up new areas for informal practices, and thus reinforce precisely that structural complex that underlies weak statehood.<sup>26</sup>

23 Ulrich Schneckenner, *States at Risk: Fragile Staaten als Sicherheits- und Entwicklungsproblem*, discussion paper, global issues research group (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, March 2004), pp. 15ff, and Schneckenner, *Transnationale Terroristen als Profiteure fragiler Staatlichkeit*, S 18/2004 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, May 2004), pp. 35ff.

24 See especially James Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica et al., 2003).

25 Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (New York, 1953).

26 Klaus Schlichte/Boris Wilke, "Der Staat und einige seiner Zeitgenossen: Die Zukunft des Regierens in der 'Dritten Welt,'" *Zeitschrift für internationale Beziehungen*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2000), pp. 359–384.

In Afghanistan the international community is attempting to give the internationalization of governance a lower profile: catchwords such as "light footprint approach" and "conflict ownership" (making Afghans responsible for their own affairs) stand for security and development policy concepts that aim to limit the international presence in the country and place reconstruction primarily in Afghan hands.<sup>27</sup> That is why the country was not placed under international administration. Instead, a provisional government was swiftly installed at the end of 2001, and succeeded in June 2002 by the transitional government of President Hamid Karzai, which was furnished with a certain degree of legitimacy by the emergency *loya jirga*.

In formal terms, the old structure of the state administration (as laid down in the constitution of 1964) remained in place until the new constitution was passed at the constitutional *loya jirga*; the 1964 constitution was characterized by strong centralism and a low degree of local autonomy, and had therefore never actually reflected the reality of politics and society. Peace-building is more strongly influenced by the structure of the international presence. The six-thousand-strong UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been commanded since August 2003 by NATO, before that by Britain, Turkey, and Germany/Netherlands in half-year rotation, and is not an army of occupation, but a force supporting the central government. Breaching the principle of Afghan conflict ownership, and operating parallel to the reconstruction efforts, the anti-terror coalition's autonomous Operation Enduring Freedom against the Taliban and Al Qaeda continues to deploy fourteen thousand mostly American soldiers on Afghan territory.

International aid is provided by a wide range of actors on the ground, of which the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is only one. An additional structuring element of the peace-building approach is the "lead nations" concept, where countries voluntarily take on political and financial responsibility for a particular field: the United States is responsible for rebuilding the armed forces, Japan for demobilizing and reintegrating of the warring parties, Germany for police reform, Britain for fighting the narcotics trade, and Italy for reform of the legal system.

27 Simon Chesterman, "Walking Softly in Afghanistan: The Future of UN State-Building," *Survival*, no. 3 (2002), pp. 37–46.

# Afghanistan after the Fall of the Taliban

The guiding question in the following analysis is whether, in view of the traditional weakness of the Afghan state, the international intervention is suited to effectively counteracting the underlying causes of the war, its escalation into international jihad, and its effects on ethnic identity and Islamist ideology. In the following, the status quo after three years of anti-terror war and reconstruction is from four angles sketched out in four dimensions: three of these belong in the larger perspective of statehood (capacity to control violence, extractive capacity, law-making capacity) while the fourth is concerned with external relations capacity and the regional dimension of the transnational war economy and networks of violence.

## Authority and Security

A monopoly of control over the use of physical force can be regarded as an elementary power of the state. Normally, recognition of statehood, in real international relations, too, is tied to this capacity to exercise a monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Recent studies on “weak” or “failed” states confirm this when they define the provision of security as the state function whose degree of fulfillment decides a state’s position on a scale of increasing fragility.<sup>28</sup> Capacity to control the use of force is at the same time the precondition for exercising political power in the broadest sense, because there no chance of implementing any political decision without at least the potential to enforce it using physical coercion. In territorial states authority over the use of force also ensures that law and order are enforced across the whole national territory.

In Afghanistan the provision of external and internal security has not to date become a matter for the state. Now, in mid-2004, about six thousand soldiers of the new Afghan army have been made combat-ready with American help, and by the elections there could be up to about twenty thousand newly-trained police. The (in)security situation is dominated by the civil war

militias, whose strength is estimated at forty to one hundred thousand. But grounds for concern and criticism stem less from the figures—which are hard to measure exactly anyway—than from the way the intervention forces are actively hampered in the disarming of the militias in the interests of fighting terrorism.<sup>29</sup> Contrary to the decisions of the Petersberg Conference, to this day not even the capital, Kabul, has been demilitarized.

The dual strategy of simultaneously building peace and fighting terrorism, which is reflected legally in the parallel mandates of OEF and ISAF, has so far proven to be counterproductive. The war on terror demands alliances of convenience with precisely those political forces that have little interest in the reconstruction of civilian and central state structures and see a strong government as a rival—the warlords and local commanders.<sup>30</sup> It was also inevitable that the civilian population would get caught in the crossfire. In the particularly hard-fought regions in the south-east, which are inhabited by Pashtun tribal groups, this effectively alienated broad sections of the population from the central government and international aid workers. Anti-terror units of the United States and its allies are attacked regularly, probably by reorganized Taliban militias and opposition forces linked to warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. When the attacks also began targeting civilian aid workers, the United Nations and many aid organizations suspended their work in the region. This development is particularly worrying because it was the backwardness of the Pashtun southeast that allowed the influence of the Taliban to grow in the first place, at the beginning of the 1990s. So reconstruction is blocked exactly where the rise of the Taliban began.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> On the security factor as a whole see, Mark Sedra (ed.), *Confronting Afghanistan’s Security Dilemma: Reforming the Security Sector*, BICC Brief 28 (Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion [BICC], September 2003), pp. 40ff.

<sup>30</sup> Gilles Dorronsoro, “Afghanistan: The Delusions of Victory,” *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft*, no. 2 (2003), pp. 112–122.

<sup>31</sup> International Crisis Group, *Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation* (Kabul and Brussels, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Schneckener, *States at Risk* [see footnote 23], pp. 9ff, and Schneckener, *Transnationale Terroristen* [see footnote 23], p. 10.

The governments involved in Afghanistan have reacted to these symptoms of crisis with a cautious tacit correction of central parameters of the Bonn process. First and foremost of these is the creation of joint military/civilian Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) by the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and other states, to stabilize the security situation in the provinces and improve the conditions for reconstruction.<sup>32</sup> These states currently have military-led units of up to one hundred soldiers supported by civilian experts, stationed in twelve Afghan provincial capitals. The PRTs are modeled on the US Army's Civil Affairs Teams (CATs) and improve on established forms of civilian-military cooperation (CIMIC). The concept of the German PRT in Kunduz deviates in that it is twice as large, the civilian share and responsibility are larger, and the military element is under the ISAF mandate, while the PRTs of the other states operate under the OEF mandate. Leaving aside these differences of detail—amply documented in the media—the rationale of the PRTs is to export security from Kabul to the provinces and make visible progress in the field of development, especially in infrastructure.

This cautious correction of the parameters of the Bonn process also encompasses NATO's assumption of the ISAF command in August 2003 and, through the deployment of the German PRT, the expansion of the ISAF mandate to regional centers. This NATO involvement not only signals a willingness to provide greater capacities and a geographical consolidation of the international presence; its symbolic effect in the political sphere should not be underestimated. Observers all agree that the presence of armed international actors after the fall of the Taliban prevented the country from sliding immediately into civil war, as happened in 1992.<sup>33</sup> For that reason it only sensible for the international community to extend its presence to the provinces.

At the same time, the PRTs—especially those *without* an ISAF mandate—reinforce parallel structures and thus structurally counteract the goal of restoring statehood to Afghanistan. Alongside OEF, the ISAF,

and the UNAMA, the PRTs are already the fourth pillar of an international presence that is also overlaid by countless strata of state and NGO initiative. These four pillars of the international presence are themselves just one of three parallel structures; if we examine Afghanistan's internal power structures, we find that power is fragmented on three planes:

- ▶ Vertically, by a tripartite parallel structure of local warlords, nominal government, and international presence,
- ▶ Horizontally, between the central government on the one side, and the governors and local warlords on the other,
- ▶ De facto, within the transitional government, between the various factions.

The latter point deserves particular attention, because it determines the complex web making up government and state, and thus also security, in today's Afghanistan. Three different homogenous groups wrestle for influence within the transitional government: President Hamid Karzai and his exile-Afghan associates, the "Beirut Boys;"<sup>34</sup> the Tajik "Panjshir faction" of the Jamiat-i Islami under Defense Minister Muhammad Qasim Fahim and Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah; and various major warlords, the best known of whom are the Uzbek Rashid Dostum from the north and Ismail Khan from the west (Herat). With—respectively—Mazar-i-Sharif in the north and the province of Herat in the west, these two former mujahedin each rule a region and are primarily interested in restricting the influence of a government they belong(ed) to themselves as deputy defense minister and governor. The former mujahedin from the Panjshir valley north of Kabul, on the other hand, not only occupy—at the heart of the former Northern Alliance—the key ministries, but in the person of Defense Minister "Marshal" Fahim also possess their own troops, which are still stationed in Kabul.<sup>35</sup>

In comparison to these violent entrepreneurs turned politicians, President Karzai's power base is narrow. He may possess a certain gentlemanly charisma that secures him something of a power

<sup>32</sup> Kathy Gannon, "Afghanistan Unbound," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 3 (May/June 2004), pp. 35–46 (43), and Stephan Klingebiel and Katja Roeder, *Entwicklungspolitisch-militärische Schnittstellen: Neue Herausforderungen in Krisen und Post-Konflikt-Situationen* (Bonn: DIE, 2004), pp. 26f.

<sup>33</sup> Ali A. Jalali, "Afghanistan in 2002: The Struggle to Win the Peace," *Asian Survey*, vol. 43, no. 1 (January/February 2003), pp. 174–185 (176).

<sup>34</sup> Karzai's followers include Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani, central bank governor Anwar ul-Haq Ahady, and Akbar Popal, president of Kabul University; all studied at the American University in Beirut at the same time as Karzai. For further details, see Conrad Schetter, "Zur Zwischenbilanz der Post-Taliban-Ära: ein Konflikt-Mapping zum Friedensprozess," *Süd-Asien*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2003), pp. 10–14 (12).

<sup>35</sup> Gannon, "Afghanistan Unbound" [see footnote 32], p. 38.

base among a section of the Pashtuns, but his triple role as Afghanistan's "savior" in the tradition of the king, representative of the Durrani Pashtuns, and friend and ally of the United States forces him into repeated tactical contortions that undermine his credibility.<sup>36</sup>

Horizontally Afghanistan is fragmenting into at least eight main zones, each controlled by a different group.<sup>37</sup> The influence of the Afghan government is restricted to Kabul, where it has to share control with the Panjshir faction. This faction, led by Defense Minister Mohammed Fahim, also controls the regions northeast of Kabul, in particular the Panjshir Valley and Kunduz. In Herat, close to the Iranian border, Ismail Khan has set up a para-state, where however his grip on power has not remained unchallenged. In the northern region around Mazar-i-Sharif, too, two warlords—Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ustad Mohammad Atta—are vying for influence. Most restive of all are the eastern and southern regions with Pashtun majorities where stable power structures have yet to be established. Taliban or neo-Taliban groups critical of or hostile to the Bonn process and the transitional government hold considerable influence there. These now also include the followers of Hekmatyar, who was one of the most powerful warlords in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The political dynamic set off by the constitutional *loya jirga* and the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections has already brought this unstable regional balance of power boomeranging back to politics in Kabul. In the first half of 2003 Karzai apparently succeeded in first dividing the Northern Alliance and then drawing important figures such as Fahim and the Hazara Karim Khalili to his side by making constitutional concessions and promising permanent inclusion.<sup>38</sup> However, Karzai's decision to make Ahmad Zia Masood, brother of the Northern Alliance hero Ahmed Shah Masood, his running mate for the office of Vice-President rather than Defense Minister Fahim, deepened the split in the former Northern Alliance to Karzai's detriment. Central

leading figures such as Defense Minister Fahim, Foreign Minister Abdullah, ex-Interior Minister Qanuuni, and warlord Dostum have apparently left the Karzai camp or—as in the case of the latter two—are themselves standing in the presidential elections.<sup>39</sup>

The upshot is that to date the international presence has done little for the development of the state, and this is now having a strong effect on political maneuvering in the capital and on the elections. The fundamental problem does not lie in the power shifts we are currently observing, but in that, especially in the provinces, control of the means of violence—popularized in the media in the figure of the warlord—remains the precondition for accumulating political, economic, and social capital. The measures so far implemented to reform the security sector have failed even to place a state monopoly on the use of force within reach.<sup>40</sup> In Afghanistan state structures exist only on paper. Until the mujahedin are disarmed and at least the capital Kabul has been demilitarized, Afghanistan will remain a region of conflict where free and democratic elections will be almost impossible to conduct.<sup>41</sup>

## Extractive Capacity and Welfare

The capacity to extract and monopolize resources from society in the form of duties and taxes is the second elementary function of the state. This extractive capacity or fiscal monopoly is the precondition for a functioning state machinery,<sup>42</sup> and in particular for the state's capacity to provide welfare services for society.<sup>43</sup> In historical state-building processes there is a close causal link between capacity

<sup>36</sup> Conrad Schetter, "Hamid Karzai—Übergangspräsident für Afghanistan," *Orient*, no. 1 (2002), vpl. 9–19.

<sup>37</sup> Emma Sandström, *Afghanistan and Central Asia after September 11: The Security-Political Development*, FOI-R-0821-SE (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, March 2003), pp. 13ff, and Schetter, *Kleine Geschichte Afghanistans* [see footnote 10], p. 139.

<sup>38</sup> Abubake Saddique, "New Political Alignments Emerging in Afghanistan," *The Friday Times* (Lahore), April 30, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Camelia Entekhabi-Fard, "Afghan Presidential Campaign Entering Critical Phase," *Eurasia Insight*, August 3, 2004, [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org) [accessed August 6, 2004].

<sup>40</sup> Mark Sedra and Peter Middlebrook, *Afghanistan's Problematic Path to Peace: Lessons in State Building in the Post-September 11 Era* (Silver City, NM, and Washington, D.C.: Foreign Policy in Focus, March 2004).

<sup>41</sup> International Crisis Group, *Elections and Security in Afghanistan*, ICG Asia Briefing (Kabul and Brussels, March 30, 2004). In his report of 19 March 2004 the UN Secretary-General said that "security remains a significant problem" and showed "no signs of significant improvement." Source: UN doc. A/58/742-S/2004/230.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans et al., pp. 169–191 (Cambridge, 1985).

<sup>43</sup> On the social welfare function in risk analysis, see Schneckenner, *States at Risk* [see footnote 23], p. 8.

to control the use of force and fiscal monopoly. The development of the fiscal quota, in turn, is a measure of the strength of the state or the degree of stateness. In the context of post-conflict societies, establishing extractive capacity is important in order to minimize the initially unavoidable dependence on external aid or loans and thus to build state sovereignty not only in the formal sense but also in fact.

In the case of Afghanistan, despite the intention to put reconstruction in Afghan hands, external dependency is enormous due to the great need. The share of aid in the state budget for 2002 and 2003 was estimated at approximately 80 percent.<sup>44</sup> So there can be no talk of a self-financing state budget in this period and consequently the scope, structure, and implementation of external aid flows become central points of criticism. Almost all experts agree that the welfare services provided by the transitional government, donors, and NGOs for other than purely humanitarian purposes—for example investment in infrastructure—are less than insufficient, and that the blame lies not only in low provision of funds (commitment), but above all in delays in releasing funds (disbursement).<sup>45</sup>

The verdict becomes even harsher if we consider that the \$4.7 billion pledged at the December 2001 Tokyo donors' conference for the period until 2005 and the \$8.2 billion promised in Berlin in April 2004 make up only a small part of the total of \$27.5 billion that experts believe Afghanistan will need for the first seven years.<sup>46</sup> And even if there is discussion over the required volume of aid, there is no question that peace-building and state-building in Afghanistan are underfinanced: aid per capita promised for these purposes is \$182, the amount delivered \$67. The figure for Kosovo is five to ten times higher, for East Timor and Bosnia about double.<sup>47</sup>

Not only the volume of funds, but also their distribution and handling is problematic. If we add the intervening states' strictly defined military spending

on the fight against international terrorism to the aforementioned (civilian) aid, we have a total of \$18 billion with a military proportion of about 70 percent.<sup>48</sup> Turning to the handling of aid, out of \$1.2 billion in 2002, less than 20 percent flowed through channels over which the Afghan government has influence, such as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. The rest was received by NGOs and the United Nations, which in turn have to work together with local rulers whose interests are, however, by no means identical with those of the central government.<sup>49</sup> This perpetuates a parallel administration that has a delegitimizing effect on the Kabul government and reinforces the power of the local rulers. In that respect the government lacks the means to present itself visibly as an agent of national development and promote the "Afghan state" project.

These difficulties could be interpreted as partly inevitable, partly harmless teething troubles and transitional phenomena of a peace-building process that also has to be understood as a learning process—except that the Afghan state and the legal spheres of justice and welfare have to cope with strong competition. An even greater threat to the rebuilding of statehood than backwardness and clumsy handling of meager aid is presented by the tenacity of the war economy structures that have grown up over the past twenty-five years. Here we see the emergence of a parallel society that is threatening to permanently eclipse the state. Outside Kabul, it is not the state monopoly on the use of force, but a kind of private "market of violence" that functions as the guarantor of personal security and general welfare.<sup>50</sup> The warlords and local commanders act as violent entrepreneurs in this segmented market, and offer security as a kind of commodity—a commodity designed to protect against exactly the threat of violence produced and maintained by the entrepreneurs themselves. They are reacting to the demand for security at the local level, which is why the power and profit-making opportunities for most warlords are geographically restricted.<sup>51</sup>

44 Amin Saikal, "Afghanistan after the Loya Jirga," *Survival* 44, no. 3 (fall 2002): 47–56 (52), and Sedra and Middlebrook, *Afghanistan's Problematic Path to Peace* [see footnote 40], p. 4.

45 See Barnett R. Rubin et al., *Building a New Afghanistan: The Value of Success, the Cost of Failure*, Center on International Cooperation Policy Paper (New York: New York University, March 2004), pp. 15ff, and Peter Mardsen, "Afghanistan: The Reconstruction Process," *International Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 1 (2003), pp. 91–106.

46 Rubin et al., *Building a New Afghanistan*, *ibid.*, p. 5.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

49 Barnett R. Rubin et al., *Through the Fog of Peace Building: Evaluating the Reconstruction of Afghanistan* (New York: New York University, Center on International Cooperation, June 2003), p. 5.

50 Conrad Schetter, *Die Gewaltökonomie der Taliban*, ZEF-News No. 9 (Bonn: Universität Bonn, Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung [ZEF], Februar 2002).

51 Antonio Giustozzi, *Respectable Warlords? The Politics of State-Building in Post-Taliban Afghanistan*, Crisis State Programme,

We would be misunderstanding the character of the war economy and order of violence if we were to highlight a few less popular or more notorious figures as opponents of rebuilding and to think their tacit inclusion or violent exclusion would solve all our difficulties. It is a structural problem that affects the future geographical and functional cohesion of Afghan society as such.

In a war economy, economic opportunities and individual welfare are linked to command of armed force or purchased protection. In the case of Afghanistan, the most important—although certainly not the only—part of the war economy is to be found in the field of opium cultivation, production, and trafficking. Drug cultivation and trafficking are ingrained in other economic spheres and in political relations, making it harder to combat them. One expression of this economic and political embedding is found in the tendencies, since the fall of the Taliban, for cultivation and trafficking to shift from the southern provinces (Helmand, Uruzgan) to the north (Nangarhar, Badakhshan) and from Pakistan and Iran to the central Asian states and Russia.<sup>52</sup> As the power centers change the trade routes shift, and with them the political and ideological orientations too. Because control of the means of violence also allows access to the legal, informal, and criminal sectors of the global economy,<sup>53</sup> it must be feared that the informal and criminal economy not only undermines statehood, but also that its centrifugal forces prevent economic and social unity from evolving in the first place. That means that developing authority over taxation and welfare for the Afghan state may well be a precondition for the cohesion of society as a whole.

## Legal Capacity and Legitimacy

The capacity to set and also enforce legal norms is the third elementary capacity of the state. It represents the precondition for the state to guarantee its citizens

constitutionality and rule of law.<sup>54</sup> The law represents an important interface between state power and citizenship. Thus a lack of constitutionality and legitimacy is not simply an expression of “bad governance,” but also of a semantic incongruence between state and society: What the state sees as justice is regarded by parts of society as injustice, and vice versa. Low legitimacy and a lack of legal certainty point to a deficit in social penetration of the state and state penetration of society. The importance for peace-building of developing legal capacity lies particularly in its medium- and long-term stabilizing effect. Immediately after the end of hostilities we cannot expect a social consensus that is open to state sanctions. In the long term, however, reconstruction will fail unless state and citizenry grow together. Developing legal capacity is therefore not only a part of state-building, but also of nation-building.

In keeping with the Petersberg Agreement, three reform commissions were formed for justice, human rights, and the civil service. They were supposed to work “from below” in parallel with the constitutional commission to advance the setting up of a legal system that connects modern, traditional, and Islamic elements.<sup>55</sup> All four commissions have been accused of ineffectiveness and lack of transparency.<sup>56</sup> President Karzai himself has also repeatedly been criticized for giving too little importance to justice and reconciliation.<sup>57</sup> So far, we cannot even discern the outlines of a legal system. Additionally, in the OEF framework, one of the intervening powers, the United States, has set up an obscure parallel, and partially privatized judicial system completely contrary to any modern understanding of justice and statehood.<sup>58</sup>

So currently state, community, and religious legal systems exist alongside one another. Various tribal legal systems—not recognized as such by the West and

Development Research Centre, Working Paper 33 (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, September 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Sandström, *Afghanistan and Central Asia after September 11* [see footnote 37], p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Lock, “Gewalt als Regulation: Zur Logik der Schattenglobalisierung,” in *Kriege als (Über)Lebenswelten: Schatten-globalisierung, Kriegsökonomien und Inseln der Zivilität*, ed. Sabine Kurtenbach and Peter Lock, pp. 40–61 (Bonn, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> On the legality and legitimacy function see: Schneckener, *States at Risk* [see footnote 23], p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> International Crisis Group, *Afghanistan: Judicial Reform and Transitional Justice*, ICG Asia Report No. 45 (Kabul and Brussels, January 28, 2003), and Mark A. Drumbl, “The Taliban’s ‘Other’ Crimes,” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 6 (2002), pp. 1121–1131.

<sup>56</sup> International Crisis Group, *Afghanistan’s Flawed Constitutional Process* (Kabul and Brussels, 2003).

<sup>57</sup> Karzai is quoted as saying that in the current situation justice was a “luxury”; *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> “‘Enduring Freedom’: Abuses by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan,” *Human Rights Watch*, vol. 16, no. 3 (C) (March 2004), and: “Americans Ran Illegal Jail, Kabul Alleges,” *International Herald Tribune*, July 19, 2004.

dismissed as “injustice” or lawlessness—compete with Islamic legal forms and the remnants and new beginnings of state justice. The formal compromise of the new Afghan constitution offers a viable basis for nationalizing and unifying the law—which would be the central precondition for legalizing the state and fostering a feeling of national belonging and a national political culture and could also guarantee security of expectations for business investment. But it is by no means certain that this will come to pass. The new constitution provides for a strong president (with two vice-presidents) and an indissoluble two-chamber parliament. It stresses the Islamic tradition as the heritage of the civil war and recognizes international human rights. The real achievement of the new constitution is that it has incorporated the widely differing semantics of Afghan warrior society, civil society, and the international community. So far, however, it is only a text—one that runs counter to deeply rooted practices at the local and international levels.

If the constitution were to fail in practice, this would mean that for lack of generally binding institutions, justice would remain coupled to de facto power relations. There are signs that this is indeed the case. At the local level the primary source of legitimacy for political power and the “state” is found in the warrior and state-founding myths of the *mujahedin*.<sup>59</sup> Glorification of the struggle against Soviet occupation and the Islamist ideology steered in that struggle occupy a central place in political debate, which is dominated by local rulers and clergy. Success in war thus becomes the central source of legitimacy for power; state-building and warfare coincide. Considering that the Supreme Court largely toes a similar political and ideological line, there was no reason to believe that these difficulties would disappear when the new constitution was accepted by the constitutional *loya jirga* in December 2003. On the contrary, they will continue to burden the political agenda after the October 2004 elections and in spring 2005.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, “Transitional Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan,” *International Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 3 (Mai 2003), pp. 567–581 (571ff).

<sup>60</sup> See also Abbas Poya, “Perspektiven zivilgesellschaftlicher Strukturen in Afghanistan—ethnische Neutralität, ethnische Parität und Frauenrechte in der Verfassung der Islamischen Republik Afghanistan,” *Orient*, vol. 44, no. 3 (2004), pp. 367–384.

## External Relations Capacity and Regional Security

The contours of statehood are defined both from without and within. Just as from a legal standpoint states are only those political formations that are recognized as such by other states, the political behavior of neighbors—in the whole spectrum below the level of formal recognition—shapes the quality of statehood. Thus, for example, a military threat from a neighbor has a direct effect on the internal condition of a state. This dimension of statehood comes into play where state-building turns to shaping external relations.

Afghanistan is a prime example. As a buffer state it is the product of hegemonic ambitions and scheming. Afghanistan’s post-conflict situation is also marked by the transnational, regional character of the problems. For years now, the trade in weapons and drugs has been organized transnationally, as has the supply of international fighters to the warring parties. The fighters’ radius of operations has expanded during the past decade from Kashmir via Afghanistan to central Asia, the Caucasus, and even the Balkans. In this respect, at least, we find no structural difference between supporters and opponents of the Bonn process, so it would also be short-sighted to claim that the transnational aspects were found solely in the Pakistan-Afghan border region.

Pakistan’s foreign and security policy behavior over the past decade would seem to substantiate the often-raised suspicion that Pakistani military and secret service agents (with or without official backing) have been gathering scattered Taliban fighters and followers of the opposition warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to form a Pashtun militia, in order to “stay in business” in Afghanistan.<sup>61</sup> There has indeed been a cumulation not only of clashes between opposition Pashtuns and units from the anti-terror coalition, but also of repeated border clashes involving Afghan, Pakistani, and American troops. In response, the United States, the Karzai government, and Pakistan have formed a trilateral commission to restore mutual confidence and improve coordination of anti-terror operations. Since spring 2004 Pakistan has also been taking military action against Al Qaeda fighters on the Pakistani side of the border, plainly in coordination with the American and Afghan forces on the Afghan side.

<sup>61</sup> Wilke, Pakistan [see footnote 15], pp. 20–24.

The problem, however, is not one that can be solved simply by intergovernmental coordination and mediation of border disputes. The irredentism of the Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand line has been troubling relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan since the 1950s.<sup>62</sup> For Pakistan, the security of its western border became one of the determinants of its foreign policy, while conversely for Afghanistan the self-image of the Pashtuns played a central role in the nation-building process.<sup>63</sup> The interaction of these two forces explains Pakistan's almost unveiled interference in Afghanistan's nation-building process, with, for example, President Musharraf declaring that the Pashtuns are the majority and all other ethnic groups are minorities.<sup>64</sup> The other side of the coin is that Pashtuns in Afghanistan continue to nurse irredentist claims against Pakistan, and Karzai's government refuses to recognize the border.

There is another reason why it would be too easy to simply blame Pakistani obstruction (private or official) for the failure, so far, to bring peace to Afghanistan. All the conflicting parties in Afghanistan receive financial support from outside. This is particularly visible in the case of President Karzai, who is protected by a private American security outfit. To this day, the external dependency of all the Afghan actors allows neighboring states and regional powers such as Iran, Russia, Pakistan, India, the central Asian states, and not least Saudi Arabia and the United States to project their conflicting interests into Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup> In the eyes of the Western intervening states, the degree of legitimacy of the various interventions may differ widely but, as shown by experience from Somalia through Afghanistan to Iraq, legitimacy cannot be decreed from outside.

Consequently, in the case of Afghanistan, a strategy that aims to prevent interference by unwanted third parties must take into account that the roots of international networking and embroilment stretch back to pre-Al Qaeda times, and geographically extend beyond the Pakistani border regions. For decades both state and non-state actors in Afghanistan have been

closely allied with foreign powers and dependent on them. This means that although it is possible to defeat a single violent entrepreneur such as Al Qaeda or a "rogue" element like the Taliban militarily, it will be impossible to stabilize Afghanistan and the region as long as large parts of these violent market and power structures remain intact, conflicts in the region are mainly settled using violence, the young men believe their only employment perspective is to enter the service of the warlords, and the states in the region follow their own self-interest in their dealings with violent non-state actors.

It is therefore all the more remarkable that the regional and international dimension has played only a subordinate role in peace-building in Afghanistan since 2001. One of the central elements of the strategy for strengthening Afghan conflict ownership is that the neighboring states, which had in the past conducted their power struggles on Afghan soil, were deliberately excluded from active participation in the Bonn process. They are welcome to assist in reconstruction, but not at the price of political interference. The Kabul Declaration on Good-Neighborly Relations concluded by Afghanistan in December 2002 with its six neighbors (China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran) merely reiterates the familiar principles of noninterference and good neighborly relations under the conditions of the war on terror. Aside from a duty to report to the United Nations, it provides no mechanism for consultation between Afghanistan, its neighbors, and the intervening states. Apart from that there are only bilateral agreements, by and large uncoordinated and opaque.

It is questionable whether this approach is sufficiently rooted in reality. The past three or so years in Afghanistan have shown that a small intervention force of fifteen thousand soldiers from a completely different part of the world is neither politically nor militarily able to prevent clandestine interference. If the social relations as a whole take on an international character and pay little regard to national or ethnic dividing lines—because the Afghan state is unable to finance itself or guard its borders—the only sensible way to understand the "Afghanistan problem" is as

<sup>62</sup> Schetter, *Kleine Geschichte Afghanistans* [see footnote 10], pp. 81ff.

<sup>63</sup> Wilke, *Pakistan* [see footnote 15], pp. 17f, and Schetter, "Territorialisierung" [see footnote 9], pp. 77ff.

<sup>64</sup> David C. Isby, "Terrorism in Afghanistan: Remaining Threats," *Terrorism Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 11 (February 12, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Gilbert Etienne, "Un triangle dangereux: Inde-Pakistan-Afghanistan," *Politique Étrangère*, no. 3-4 (2003), pp. 582-598.

part of a regional web (of violence). The international actors must take this into consideration, and peace-building must therefore always be conceived as a regional solution.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> For an early discussion, see Barnett R. Rubin et al., *Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in a Regional Framework* (Berne: Kompetenzzentrum Friedensförderung, 2001), pp. 39ff; similar, but more recent: Barnett R. Rubin and Andrea Armstrong, "Regional Issues in the Reconstruction of Afghanistan," *World Policy Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1 (spring 2003), pp. 31–40, and F. G. Wisner et al., *Afghanistan: Are We Losing the Peace?* Chairman's Report of an Independent Task Force Co-Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society (June 2003), p. 15.

## Ways Out of the Crisis of the Bonn Process

Given the premise that peace-building must first and foremost mean state-building,<sup>67</sup> we cannot say that the international efforts have been particularly successful to date. Afghanistan may be a state in the legal sense, but in sociological terms it is a region with blurred borders where political power has become internationalized and fragmented. This dilemma of *state-building* qua intervention is initially unavoidable. The decisive point is, however, that the correct steps be taken to allow statehood to evolve in the three core dimensions of guaranteeing security and controlling violence, providing welfare services, and establishing extractive and law-making capacity.

The crisis of the Bonn process became incontrovertible in 2003,<sup>68</sup> when the fathers of the Bonn process had to pay dearly for failing to address the really difficult questions in the Petersberg Agreement, namely, a political solution of the Pashtun problem, reform of the security sector, and medium-term financing of the Afghan state.<sup>69</sup> In response, the United States government increased funding and at the same time began, with some success, to tackle the Pashtun problem by exerting pressure on the Pashtuns' "protecting power," Pakistan, while simultaneously signaling willingness to make concessions, in order to draw opposition Pashtuns with links to the Taliban onto the side of the government. The deployment of the first PRTs, NATO taking over command of ISAF (August 2003), and the third Afghanistan conference (April 2004) represent a cautious correction of central parameters of the Bonn process.

The question is whether these corrections are sufficient, or perhaps a new approach is actually required. Convincing as the reasons are for restricting the international presence and emphasizing Afghan conflict ownership, three arguments speak against this approach: the continued existence of cross-border

structures of the war economy, the historical reality that statehood in Afghanistan has traditionally depended on the consent of the neighboring states, and the observation that minimizing the international presence did not in the end prevent the formation of parallel structures. The possible alternatives are explored below.

### No Democracy without a Monopoly on the Use of Force

The plans of the Afghan transitional government and the international community to hold presidential elections on October 9, 2004, and parliamentary elections in spring 2005 could cause more harm than good to the peace-building process. The elections have been postponed repeatedly, for good reason, and are already well behind the original schedule of summer 2004. The wish to conduct democratic elections as early as possible is understandable, not only from the normative standpoint of the Afghan population and world public opinion; it is also correct from the state-building perspective. Like no other process, elections are ideally suited to encourage state and society to grow together. Historical experience shows that they are the absolute precondition for any form of lasting legal authority. The precondition for democratic elections, in turn, is that control of the means of violence is not a weapon in the political arena. All other forms of subtle coercion—for example, manipulation of public opinion through control of the media—or even clientelism and corruption are merely irritations as against a political process dominated by violent entrepreneurs.<sup>70</sup> Otherwise Afghanistan, especially in view of its tradition of weak statehood, could become the scene of an involuntary updating of the dictum coined for great historical processes, that state-building and organized crime are two sides of the same coin.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Rubin et al. seem to follow a similar approach in their analyses in *Through the Fog of Peace Building* [see footnote 49], p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> Larry P. Goodson, "Afghanistan in 2003: The Taliban Resurface and a New Constitution Is Born," *Asian Survey*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2004), pp. 14–22.

<sup>69</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Other War," *The New Yorker*, April 12, 2004.

<sup>70</sup> Emphatically, Barnett R. Rubin, "(Re-)Building Afghanistan: The Folly of Stateless Democracy," *Current History*, vol. 103, no. 672 (April 2004), pp. 165–170.

<sup>71</sup> Tilly, "War Making" [see footnote 42].

So disarmament and reform of the security sector are necessary conditions for peace-building. However great the practical difficulties may be, there is no alternative to the fullest possible disarmament of society if the structures of the war economy are to be broken up. War economies of the kind found in Afghanistan are not restricted to sectors; they permeate all branches of the economy including the public sector.

Civilian reconstruction on the basis of a state monopoly on taxation and the use of force presupposes the disarmament, disappropriation, or more or less amicable take-over of the violent entrepreneurs. The transition from a market of violence to a monopoly on taxation and the use of force is, however, a long and difficult process, because the different forms of war economy, all of which arise out of long periods of war and armed conflict, are firmly anchored in the affected societies. This is particularly true for Afghanistan, because in many parts of the country the widespread availability of weapons is not a new phenomenon born of the necessity to survive a crisis, but is based on deeply rooted traditional ideas of morality and honor, whose power is in no way weaker than that of modern legal norms.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, under some circumstances—for example when supply of and demand for security are in an equilibrium that is not disturbed from outside—war economies can generate a certain degree of (illusory) stability.

Thus one of the core tasks of the international community, in cooperation with the government and the neighboring states, is to establish a stable order in Afghanistan, one which no longer faces competition from illegal rivals that have grown up over the past two decades and more. Only then can we expect to see a consolidation of the Afghan state and its revenues. The key here is to be found not in more aid, which would merely perpetuate dependency, but in the disappropriation of the violent entrepreneurs. Disarming combatants—already established in the vocabulary of development policy as the trinity of “disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration” (DDR)—is the central precondition for successful peace-building. Although the chances of the DDR program must be viewed with skepticism for the historical reasons outlined above, that can be no excuse for the international community not seriously tackling this

<sup>72</sup> Herfried Münkler, “Afghanistan: Legitimität der Tradition und Rationalität der Modernisierung,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. B21, (May 29, 1982), pp. 32–44.

core task before May 2004.<sup>73</sup> Even the capital, which is under ISAF protection, is still awaiting demilitarization. Elsewhere too, the militias of the major warlords remain combat-ready, and their planned demobilization is to be only partial and voluntary, under the responsibility of a defense minister who is himself a warlord.<sup>74</sup> Thus it can be no surprise that this conflict of interest was said to have been an important factor behind Karzai’s decision not to nominate Fahim as candidate for the office of vice-president. Karzai now says that the militias are the greatest threat to Afghanistan, an assessment that is shared by ISAF representatives.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, Afghanistan will probably still have to wait a long time for a state monopoly on the use of force—with the well-known negative consequences for the democratization process.

### State-Building before Nation-Building

Disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating the fighters is a first step in the process of state-building. Thereafter, strengthening state structures will have to remain at the center of the international community’s reconstruction efforts, if only because the state’s lack of proper roots in society counts among the main causes of the Afghanistan conflict. After more than twenty-five years of civil war, state and society have drifted even further apart, whereby the former has been weakened and the latter strengthened.<sup>76</sup> Every measure should be considered in the light of its suitability to strengthen state structures, to protect the state (which is kept alive by international development aid) from becoming easy prey for particular interests.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup> BBC News, May 17, 2004; BICC Conversion Survey 2003, pp. 102–120; and International Crisis Group, *Disarmament and Reconstruction in Afghanistan*, ICG Asia Report No. 65 (Kabul and Brussels, September 30, 2003).

<sup>74</sup> Sedra, *Confronting Afghanistan’s Security Dilemma* [see footnote 29].

<sup>75</sup> “Karzai Calls for Warlord Militias to Be Disarmed,” *International Herald Tribune*, July 12, 2004, and Ahmed Rashid, “Karzai Seeks to Accelerate Pace of Militia Disarmament in Afghanistan,” *Eurasia Insight*, July 29, 2004, [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org) [accessed August 6, 2004].

<sup>76</sup> Rubin, “(Re-)Building Afghanistan” [see footnote 70], p. 165.

<sup>77</sup> Andreas Wimmer and Conrad Schetter, *Staatsbildung zuerst: Empfehlungen zum Wiederaufbau und zur Befriedung Afghanistans*, Discussion Papers on Development Policy No. 45 (Bonn: Zen-

A “light footprint” approach should be oriented on the internal necessities of the post-conflict situation rather than the short-term perceived interests of individual states and international organizations. So far donor states and international organizations have been pursuing different approaches. For some, such as UNAMA, state-building is the explicit focus, while others give priority to anti-terror measures, even where they are detrimental to state-building.<sup>78</sup> In this connection the question arises whether the lead nations model is up to the job. State-building is not just a technical process, but touches on strategic decisions that at least require coordination. Above all, however, the lead nations approach creates parallel structures within political sectors, and may result in the setting up of institutions that are not really compatible.

It is too early for comprehensive nation-building and other forms of aid meant to encourage the partially subjective process of fostering a sense of citizenship and belonging vis-à-vis the state. Whether external actors can or should intervene at all in such complex and long-term processes is of course a different, and very difficult question. The Afghan state, however, has to be put in a position to push forward reconstruction according to its own development parameters. International or local (but internationally funded) NGOs cannot achieve this if for no other reason than their lack of legitimacy.

## A Balance of Local and National Conflict-Regulation Mechanisms

However, state-building is no cure-all. In the case of Afghanistan it must be remembered that every instance where state structures are strengthened with external support can be interpreted by Afghans as the continuation of foreign intervention. Even the mujahedin’s war against the Soviet occupation was motivated less by rejection of a particular ideology than by resistance to military-backed state-building.<sup>79</sup>

trum für Entwicklungsforschung, April 2002). See also Uwe Kievelitz, “Sicherheitspolitische Herausforderungen für die Entwicklungszusammenarbeit in Afghanistan,” *Sicherheit + Stabilität*, no. 2 (2003), p. 77.

<sup>78</sup> Gordon Thompson et al., *Social Reconstruction in Afghanistan through the Lens of Health and Human Security* (Cambridge, Mass.: Institute for Resource and Security Studies, May 2003), p. 5, and Suhrke et al., *Peacebuilding* [see footnote 5], p. 68.

<sup>79</sup> Münkler, “Afghanistan” [see footnote 72].

At the same time, in view of the large number of armed rivals to the state, it is absolutely necessary to create the institutions of a functioning central state. Many international donors and aid workers with experience in dealing with heterogeneous societies would say that a federally organized state would be the way out of this dilemma. In the case of Afghanistan, however, this is not a convincing solution because, given the fragmentation of power, a federal constitutional order would ultimately boil down to ethnic proportionality. That would make it even easier for warlords and violent entrepreneurs to exploit ethnicity as a political lever to gain entry to the political sphere and its sources of legitimacy, and undermine the state order. For this reason, federal approaches are almost an anathema in Afghanistan. In fact, the idea that Afghanistan should be treated as one polity divided into ethnic groups has been decisively strengthened by the international community’s reconstruction efforts.<sup>80</sup> To that extent it is no surprise that the representatives at the constitutional *loya jirga* chose a solution with a centralized state and a strong president.

It would be better to counteract the evident tendencies toward ethnic unraveling by strengthening local structures. Even if the political and military alliances formed in wartime came to overshadow many local institutions, that does not mean that the latter were dissolved or deleted from collective memory. It is certainly possible to deal with many practical aspects of conflict regulation at the local level,<sup>81</sup> and local knowledge that has survived the crises can be put to the service of the country’s political integration.<sup>82</sup> For this reason, the international community should connect state-building with support for local institutions, even if in political and legal terms they do not match up to the usual standards of Western democracy.

<sup>80</sup> Julia Eckert, “Politisierung und Ethnizität in Afghanistan,” *Welttrends*, no. 38 (2003), pp. 88–98, and Conrad Schetter, “Der Afghanistankrieg—die Ethnisierung eines Konflikts,” *Internationales Asienforum*, vol. 33, no. 1–2 (2002), pp. 15–29.

<sup>81</sup> International Crisis Group, *Peacebuilding in Afghanistan*, ICG Asia Report No. 64 (Kabul and Brussels, September 29, 2003), p. 20.

<sup>82</sup> Volker Böge, *Neue Kriege und traditionelle Konfliktbearbeitung*, INEF-Report 74 (Essen: Universität Duisburg-Essen, Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden [INEF], 2004). For the importance of local knowledge in state-building processes see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London, 1998).

Once the foundations for a local culture of conflict resolution have been laid, the next crucial step would be for local and national institutions to grow together. In this connection ethnic identity could then play a positive role in the process of nation-building, by becoming the basis for a balancing of interests between the regions. In the Afghan context ethnic identity is, in comparison to the otherwise dominant local sense of community, an unprecedentedly broad form of collective identity, which could become a core factor in national unification.<sup>83</sup> However, strong national and local institutions would be an indispensable precondition.<sup>84</sup>

### PRTs as Bridgeheads for the Central State

The initiative of the United States, Britain, Germany, and other states to deploy Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to anchor the international presence more strongly in the provinces could be of great significance in connecting the local and national levels.

It would seem plausible, in view of the national fragmentation and local polarization of the relations of power and rule, to say that only the outside instance of the international community is in a position to create islands of greater security and relative civility, where progress can be achieved in reconstructing the country. At the same time the PRTs, as double bridgeheads to both the central government and the international community, could help to distribute the fruits such progress more widely. Ultimately, the point is not to bring high-profile projects to completion, but to kick-start a long process of transition from a market in violence to a state monopoly on the use of force that puts the Afghans in a position to earn a livelihood without being involved in violence.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> This argument is put forward by Bernt Glatzer, "Centre and Periphery in Afghanistan: New Identities in a Broken State," *Sociologus*, vol. 52, no. 1 (2002), pp. 107–124.

<sup>84</sup> In a historical perspective the states of the third world have yet to reach the peak of ethnic and national consciousness and nationalism as a political and ideological form; other states, such as India, have long overtaken Afghanistan in this process. For this question in general, see Jens Siegelberg, "Staat und Internationales System—ein strukturgeschichtlicher Überblick," in *Strukturwandel internationaler Beziehungen*, ed. Jens Siegelberg and Klaus Schlichte (Opladen, 2000), pp. 43f.

<sup>85</sup> Larry Goodson, "Afghanistan's Long Road to Reconstruc-

A strong civilian element in the PRTs and direct Afghan participation in the reconstruction measures could show young men who know nothing but war that there are other employment alternatives and in this way diminish the power of the market in violence and the market power of violence. However, this would have to go hand in hand with disarmament and demilitarization. Here, as in the other measures, the military element should not be restricted to a symbolic presence, but designed so that it can carry out the core tasks of the state as a proxy for central government and in cooperation with local forces. A systematic integration of civilian and military tasks is therefore unavoidable. But systematic integration must not be allowed to lead to an impenetrable muddle. In view of the problems for reconstruction that have already arisen from parallel structures, a transparent allocation of functions and a shift of emphasis to increase the powers of central government will be required. The military elements of the PRTs should not, however, take on genuinely civilian tasks.<sup>86</sup> Conversely, their presence must be reconsidered if there are no military functions to fulfill.

The risk in deploying PRTs stems above all from their symbolic effect, simultaneously representing both the international community and the central government it supports. This symbolic level is implied where the German government talks of PTRs forming "ISAF islands." One must be clear about the military and political risks involved.

### Strengthening Regional Security

The insecurities associated with a transnational configuration of violence reappeared clearly in the deadly attack on eleven Chinese workers close to the German PRT in Kunduz.<sup>87</sup> After years of civil war, it is absolutely routine for all the involved actors in the region—state and non-state, supporters and opponents of the Bonn process—to operate across the borders. For that reason, the intervening powers would see institutionalizing the regional security efforts as a logical step toward the goal of either

tion," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 14, no. 1 (January 2003), pp. 82–99 (96).

<sup>86</sup> Citha D. Maaß and Uwe Kievelitz, "Kunduz, Herat und der paschtunische Süden: Krisenpräventive Überlegungen," *SPICE Newsletter*, No. 6 (Eschborn: Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2003), pp. 3–4.

<sup>87</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 24, 2004.

integrating these actors or confronting them in a coordinated manner. In the case of the Chinese workers, for example, it is unclear whether there is a link to the murder of Chinese citizens a few weeks previously in Gwadar, Pakistan, and what consequences such a connection would have for regional security and involvement in Afghanistan.

In the end, the question is whether it is possible to stabilize a state that is surrounded by numerous ambitious neighbors and major powers and furthermore stands at the center of a transnational illegal economy, without putting relations with these neighbors and powers on an institutional basis. Without a doubt Pakistan is the key state in the region, but powers such as India and Russia are also involved in destabilizing Afghanistan, when they fail to confront the narcotics trade decisively enough or open (Indian) consulates close to the Pakistani border, with obvious ulterior motives.<sup>88</sup> Policy toward Afghanistan must be embedded in an overall concept for the region. Consequently, out of healthy self-interest if nothing else, the substantial exclusion of the neighboring states from the Bonn process needs to be corrected. As a buffer state, Afghanistan is particularly prone to disintegration,<sup>89</sup> and at a time where statehood is coming under pressure everywhere, there is no reason to assume that the historical rule that Afghanistan is not a viable state on its own and will always need outside help to survive should lose its validity at this precise moment. A secure regional environment must be understood as a contribution to external stabilization of statehood.

That is another reason why the neighboring states should be made *accountable* partners of the peace process: it would create a strong long-term tie with the Afghan government. The weakness of the central government and the dependency of local rulers on external support allows Afghanistan's neighbors to continue to exercise influence without having to accept political responsibility. In this respect the very general Declaration on Good-Neighborly Relations made by these states in December 2002 is insufficient.

There are encouraging first signs of multilateral cooperation in the field of border policing, but it would be better if such efforts were institutionalized.<sup>90</sup> That would give the relevant external actors a responsible role in the peace process, such as they played from 1997 to 2001, in the "Six plus Two" group (Afghanistan's neighbors plus the United States and Russia). This time, however, India and Saudi Arabia should also be included,<sup>91</sup> and certainly NATO, too.

<sup>88</sup> Etienne, "Un triangle dangereux" [see footnote 65], p. 596; Mark Sedra, *Afghanistan: Between War and Reconstruction: Where Do We Go from Here* (Silver City, NM, and Washington, D.C.: Foreign Policy In Focus [FPIF], March 2003), p. 2; and Azfal Khan, "Afghan Opium Production Goes Unchallenged," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 34 (June 18, 2004).

<sup>89</sup> Tanisha M. Fanzal, "State Death in the International System," *International Organization*, vol. 58, no. 2 (2004), pp. 311–344.

<sup>90</sup> Rubin and Armstrong, "Regional Issues in the Reconstruction of Afghanistan" [see footnote 66].

<sup>91</sup> Suhrke, *Peacebuilding* [see footnote 5], pp. 5ff and pp. 54f.

## Outlook: International Intervention in Afghanistan

The critical interim verdict that for the moment finds that state-building in Afghanistan has largely failed, has room for a more optimistic outlook on the future. If we concentrate on disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating the fighters, and consolidating the core institutions of the central state, while at the same time tapping local knowledge and strengthening the regional dimension by involving neighboring states and regional powers, a stronger Afghanistan could emerge from the present crisis. Retrospectively the civil war might even, as in other cases, turn out to be a state-building war.

The precondition for this would be power-political realism not only in dealings with actors in Afghanistan itself, but also in the region, where neighboring states have their own legitimate (and illegitimate) security interests. If the states involved in Afghanistan ignore these realities, there is a real risk of gradual fragmentation and disintegration toward the centripetal force fields to the west, north, and south. The symptoms are all too clear. Over the past twenty-five years the degree of institutionalization of the quasi-states in the north and east was always greater than in the southeast.<sup>92</sup> The differing degrees and forms of institutionalization also correspond to integration in separate economic systems. The disintegration of Afghanistan is plainly not in the interests of German and European foreign and security policy. However, if a stabilization policy is to be successful in the long term, it will require not only money, but also time, as shown by experience elsewhere. The positive image enjoyed by Europe, and especially Germany, in Afghanistan and the region as a whole, offers a good starting point for building confidence and reliable partnerships.

### Abbreviations

BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CATs	Civil Affairs Teams
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DIE	German Development Institute (GDI)
ICG	International Crisis Group
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)
PRTs	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNO	United Nations Organization
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
ZEF	Center for Development Research

<sup>92</sup> Rubin, *Fragmentation* [see footnote 12], p. 265.