

Rescuing Afghanistan? Small Western Liberal Democracies and Multinational Intervention

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Introduction

In September 2001, two remarkable events took place. The charismatic leader of Afghanistan's anti-Taliban forces, Ahmad Shah Masood, was killed by terrorists masquerading as journalists, and terrorists killed thousands of people, of many nationalities, in the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and four civilian aircraft. Al Qaeda, a terrorist network organization, at that time working out of its safe heaven, Taliban-Afghanistan, claimed responsibility for both acts.

The events in September 2001 wakened the Western world to the fact that there are real risks in allowing intractable conflicts to fester.¹ There is a broad understanding that conflict areas, but also failed and failing states are potential breeding grounds for new kinds of terrorism that can reach into the developed world and challenge its survival. Once the decision is taken to intervene, security is approached in a traditional way by defining it as a military problem. To create peace and stability, social change is needed and therefore a wider security agenda. Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde suggest securitization in the military, environmental, social, economic, and political sectors.²

¹ Crocker C. Hampson F. and Aall P, *Taming Intractable Conflicts, Mediation in the Hardest Cases* (Washington: United States of Peace Press, 2004), 7-9: Intractable conflicts are conflicts that have persisted over time and refused to yield to efforts – through either direct negotiations by parties or mediation with third-party assistance – to arrive at a political settlement. They are typically long-standing with frequent bursts of violence and temporary cessations of violence. As a consequence, they are conflicts where psychological wounds and a sense of grievance and victimization run very deep. Some intractable conflicts remain unsolved despite repeated attempts.

² Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J.: *Security, A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1998.

War has ceased to be a massively deciding event. Lasting solutions have to be found for conflicts by winning war *and* peace. More is needed than traditional hard power, the use of which must be weighed against other options. Security has to include a wider range of sectors than the traditional military and political ones to create the stability that is needed to democratize. However, force might be used to create circumstances necessary for social changes to take place.

There is broad social support for the mission in Afghanistan among Western liberal democracies convinced of the importance to rescue it by stabilizing and democratizing it. Canada and the Netherlands play – among others – leading roles in the local peace-making, peace-building and stabilization processes by using a comprehensive approach. The focus of this essay is on the role of small Western liberal democracies in the multinational intervention and how they create favourable circumstances for securitization in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan was one of the world's most dramatic warscapes for more than two decades. These decades of devastation razed Afghanistan's physical, political, and social infrastructure, creating fertile ground for the virulent combination of ideology, terror, and narcotics that took hold there in the late 1990s. After the fall of the Soviet Union, drug trafficking boomed and Arab and other non-Afghan Islamist radicals strengthened their bases. The US assumed that the collapse of Afghanistan into chiefdoms – many of them allied with neighbouring states or other external forces – was not worth worrying about. By early 2001, the Taliban controlled most of the country. They were in the financial and ideological thrall of Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist network. Pakistan, still heavily involved in Afghanistan's internal battles, backed the Taliban.

In October 2001, an international military coalition dominated by the United States invaded Afghanistan to topple the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Quick battlefield success left the Coalition and the United Nations to manage a complex political transition. Several Afghan factions that waged a brutal civil war against each other in the 1990s, moved quickly to fill the post-Taliban power vacuum. A hasty peace agreement between faction leaders and other Afghan politicians, meeting under UN auspices in Bonn, Germany, was concluded on 5 December 2001. The accord provided a roadmap for how to put the state back together, punctuated by milestones such as the selection of an Afghan transitional administration, the ratification of a new constitution, and free and fair elections by June 2004. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was created to help Afghans reconstitute and consolidate a legitimate governing authority, a multinational International Security Assistance Force deployed to Kabul to assist the government in securing the capital. By the end of 2006, ISAF assisted in securing the whole country.

Six years after the initial intervention, a basic lack of security continues to pervade all aspects of life in Afghanistan, hampering both political and physical reconstruction efforts. Tensions continue between the two primary objectives of the international engagement in Afghanistan: firstly, to uproot and destroy terrorist networks and those who harbour them, and secondly, to create a viable, peaceful, and prosperous Afghanistan – were evident from the earliest days of that engagement. Although not inherently contradictory, the goals of the war on terror and the chosen means of achieving them often seemed at odds with the longer-term aims of national reconstruction. Assessments of progress depend on which set of goals the speaker values most highly. Fact is that economically and socially, Afghanistan remains far behind its neighbours. It is the poorest country in the world outside sub-Saharan Africa, and its government remains weak and ineffective. Given that a lasting peace is the solution to meeting both primary objectives in Afghanistan, the question is in what way small Western liberal democracies can assist and support the Afghans to meet the second objective that is, making Afghanistan a peaceful and prosperous country.

Small liberal democracies

For many Western liberal democracies, the question of whether to join a ‘coalition of the willing’ and take part in an armed intervention in contested areas or whether they should take a free ride, is a dilemma – including the option that their interests would be better served if not participating. For the (militarily) small liberal democracies such as the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Canada, independent action on regional and global level is not feasible. They have neither the power to pursue unilateral policies nor the military capacity to intervene. Their limited war-fighting capability is one of the things that characterize such countries: they belong to the world’s wealthiest nations and have worldwide economic interests; and their foreign policies have a strong moral element and well-formulated paragraphs on human rights and security. They have an interest in stabilizing regions that are important for their economies.³ They believe that state-building and democratization are essential components of policies for preventing extremism and the rise of asymmetrical threats.⁴ They understand that they have to reinforce the political commitment to take collective action against states that break the rules or against terrorist organizations that are preparing attacks on their territory or their interests on foreign territories such as embassies. This can be done by supporting the EU, NATO or the UN in crisis management and peace-building, or by maintaining a balanced partnership with the US.

Most European countries are members of the EU, whose ambitions include not only shaping Europe’s regional environment, but also to influence the global system. They have adopted the view that the nature of international society is dependent on the quality of the governments of its constituent units. The EU in fact embraces the conception of demo-

³ Kennedy P., *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (London: Fontana, 1989).

⁴ See: Halperin M., Siegle J., and Weinstein M., *The Democratic Advantage: How Democracies Promote Peace and Security* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

cratic peace: “[The] best protection for our society is a world of well governed democratic states”.⁵

The foreign interventions the EU has taken part in, like that of the UN, reflect the assumption that security should not be understood exclusively in military terms but must be put into a wider context of eliminating the causes of economic and social threats. Cynics might argue that this gravitation towards comprehensive security is one ‘by default’ since both organizations, lacking massive military power, are forced to rely on soft-power instruments. On the other hand, post-World War II history suggests that spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, as well as establishing the rule of law, democratic institutions and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening international order.⁶ A safe and secure environment is a precondition in establishing such an order; economic development a catalyst but not, in and of itself, sufficient to ensure success.

Since wars are not won on the battlefield, the crux is peace-making and peace-building. It is in this long and complicated process where the small liberal democracies can make a difference or better they can use their strong economic potential to stimulate economic reform and thereby social change on local and maybe even regional level.

Collective action

Multilateral operations contribute to legitimacy, burden sharing, and steadiness. Multilateralism helps to manage risk, while unilateralism invites it: international involvement is important for helping to achieve success. Broad multilateral participation is compatible with unity of ef-

⁵ *A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy* (Document proposed by Javier Solana and adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the European Council in Brussels on 12 December 2003), 10.

⁶ Baranick M., “Learning from History”, in: Binnendijk H. and Johnson S. (eds), *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 2004), 3-14.

fort if the major participants share a common vision and can shape international institutions, as happened, for instance, in Bosnia and Kosovo with the UN, OSCE, EU, NATO and contributing nations. Most international institutions are trade-offs, however. Those that are legitimate (such as the UN) are not terribly effective, while those that are effective (coalitions of the willing) are not regarded as legitimate.⁷ The more important the interests in a region are, the more useful and feasible is a coalition of the willing. Broad but dedicated multilateral participation is compatible with unity of effort if the participants share a common vision and strategy that shape their institutions to be successful in state-building.

A balanced partnership with the US is attractive for Western liberal democracies if they have shared interests and as long as the reasons for intervening are 'just'. A Security Council resolution is important. As a world organization, the UN derives its legitimacy primarily from its universality, based on a set of basic rules shared – ostensibly – by democratic and non-democratic states alike. There is, however, a difference between legitimacy and legality of any political institution, related to the widely held belief that moral principles may override legal norms, as was, for instance, the case when NATO allies intervened in Kosovo in the spring of 1999 to stop Serbia from exercising violence.

The transatlantic relationship between the US and Europe builds one of the pillars in the world system. Together, those two bodies command over one-half of the world's economic and military resources, making their combined political weight in world affairs potentially superior to any other. Consequently, attempts to create a more secure and just international order are affected by the state of transatlantic relations. Europe needs the US because even the military capabilities of the strongest European powers are too weak to defend European interests along the entire security political spectrum. American military power serves as Europe's 'lender of last resort', as was clearly demonstrated in the final stage of the Balkan wars. On the other hand, the Americans need the

⁷ Fukuyama, F., *After the Neocons, America at the Crossroads* (London: Profile books, 2006), 155-180.

Europeans: American hard power and European soft power are not anti-theoretical but complementary.⁸ Their common interests and benefits give rise to the logic of collective action.⁹

Why we fight

War, far from being merely a means, is often considered an end, a highly attractive activity that no other activity can adequately replace.¹⁰ Force is channelled and disciplined by the notions that members of a society share, with regard to when force is legitimate and what goals it can achieve. War is concerned with the pursuit of specific self-interests. Violence or the potential for violence is a fact of human existence. The capacity of formal political institutions, primarily nation-states, to regulate violence has been eroded. We have entered an era of long-term low-level informal violence.¹¹

Deploying force against another state is obviously not a peaceable activity. According to Michael Walzer, liberal democracies use military force only if exceptional criteria are met, because one of the duties of a sover-

⁸ For a similar view: Moravcsik, 'Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain', in: *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2003, 74-89.

⁹ Olson M., *The Logic of Collective Action, Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

¹⁰ Creveld, van M., *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 218.

¹¹ Richard Falk calls this in *On Humane Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 'cosmopolitan governance' or 'human governance' which breaks with the assumption of territorially based political entities. Falk derives it from a humanist universalist outlook which crosses the global/local divide. It is based on alliances between islands of civility and transnational institutions. There are no boundaries in a territorial sense, but there are political boundaries – between those who support cosmopolitan civic values and who favor openness, toleration and participation on the one hand, and those who are tied to particularist, exclusivist and often collectivist political positions, on the other. In the 19th century, the dominant international cleavages were national, tied to a territorial definition of a nation. These were replaced in the 20th century by ideological cleavages between left and right or between democracy/capitalism and socialism, which also became tied to territory. The cleavage between cosmopolitanism and particularism cannot be territorially defined, even though every individual particularism makes its own territorial claim.

own state is to protect its people and not to put them in harm's way, i.e. in combat.¹² The seriousness of the anticipated aggression is most important. The kind and quality of evidence of the disputed issues at stake must be high enough to justify the explicit challenge to sovereignty; fighting must be the last resort.

There are real risks in allowing intractable conflicts¹³ to fester because they can create instability. One can question whether these conflicts provide an existential threat and justify emergency measures. Most of the tensions in the current international arena that may lead to war stem from the impact of globalization and result in ethnic, tribal and religious hatred. How do these threats and vulnerabilities measure up to securitization? There are clear links between economic issues and other sectors, but where is the boundary between politicization and securitization? Although it might be possible to identify the roots of existential threats, ascertaining the form that emergency action should take is a challenge. Securitization is most visible in the military sector but, as existential threats seem to come from within the targeted society, securitization has to take a broader approach. Warfare has to be a combination of stabilizing actions that will take place across the spectrum of the political, economic, social, environmental, and military sectors.¹⁴

What issues comprise existential threats and when do they justify the use of extraordinary means, including going to war? Security is a self-referential practice (inter-subjective and socially constructed), because a 'real' existential threat does not have to exist, although an issue may be presented as such.¹⁵ Are there objective measures of security that could be used to define whether an issue is 'really' a threat? Protecting the territorial integrity of the state is the traditional object of military security. According to offensive-realism theory, military action is occasion-

¹² Walzer M., *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 3rd edition (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

¹³ Crocker C. Hampson F. and Aall P, *Taming Intractable Conflicts, Mediation in the Hardest Cases* (Washington: United States of Peace Press, 2004), 7-9.

¹⁴ Buzan et al, *Security*, 7-8.

¹⁵ Buzan et al, *Security*, 29-31.

ally unavoidable if one is to maximize the odds of survival.¹⁶ In a broader security interpretation, the state embodies the social and political purposes for which wealth is generated and therefore has to provide stability and politico-military security. Pre-emptive or preventive interventions are considered necessary when existential interests or stability *are* directly or indirectly threatened.¹⁷ Examples include obstructed access to vital resources, refugee flows, and democratic values such as serious violations of rights. It is debatable whether the use of arms can contribute to solving these problems.

Coercion is an obvious means for changing social purpose.¹⁸ Even though, by doing so, states risk violating the principle of non-intervention, states use their power to influence and try to shape the actions of the target state.¹⁹ Fighting is an option, although the effectiveness of fighting is a matter of some debate.²⁰ As evidenced in Vietnam, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, winning peace quickly is not likely. Soft power options seem to be more appropriate and effective but will take time to bring about the perceived social change.

Peace process

War has ceased to be a massive deciding event. Lasting solutions have to be found for conflicts by winning war *and* peace. More is needed than traditional hard power, the use of which must be weighed against other options. Security has to include a wider range of sectors than the traditional military and political ones to create the stability that is needed to democratize. Peace-building is the catalyst in creating self-sustaining peace.

¹⁶ Mearsheimer J., *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 21.

¹⁷ Fukuyama, *After the Neocons*, 66-94.

¹⁸ Byman D. and Waxman M., *The Dynamics of Coercion, American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4-9.

¹⁹ See for instance: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, Ch. 7.

²⁰ Maill H., Ramsbothan O., Woodhouse T., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 15-19.

Warfare is more than fighting battles; it is a combination of stabilizing actions that take place across the spectrum of the political, economic, social, environmental, and military sectors.²¹ In other words, an intervention creates peace; a combination of military, diplomatic and development efforts has to create a lasting peace. Participatory peace is the goal of an intervention since neo-colonialism is unacceptable. Such a peace offers the prospect of a self-sustaining conflict solving mechanism – the promise that future disputes will be negotiated, resolved according to constitutionally agreed procedures.

Peace is often defined or determined negatively, it is ‘the absence of war’. John Galtung and others have proposed a distinction between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ peace. Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambis adopted and modified this distinction in their study of peace-building. In their view, negative or sovereign peace “reflects that single sovereignty, a Hobbesian Leviathan, has been established and exercises a legitimate monopoly of violence”; positive or participatory peace “discounts ‘peace from the grave’ (the former enemy is all dead or in prison) in favour of a peace that includes wider participation”.²²

In a peace process, the role of military forces is changing. Combat troops play a major role during the short war-fighting phase of the intervention; their peace-making role becomes more important during the lengthy state-building process.²³ Soldiers are less occupied with combat operations and more with mechanisms such as demilitarized zones, dispute-resolution commissions, civil-military operations, and peace-support operations. They act as an external guarantee to alter the incentives to break the peace and help prevent or manage accidents that could lead back to war.²⁴

²¹ Buzan B., Waever O., de Wilde J., *Security, A New Framework for Analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 7-8.

²² Doyle M. and Sambanis N., *Making War and Building Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 18.

²³ Lederach, *Building Peace*, 77.

²⁴ Fortna V., *Peace Time, Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 173-210.

Intervention

War-fighting is sometimes necessary and pragmatic, but it is rarely, if ever, sufficient.²⁵ If *prevention* does not work, *intervention* may become necessary.²⁶ Coercive interventions, if legalized by the international community, i.e. legitimized by the United Nations Security Council, are catalysts in the state-building process.²⁷ A combination of economic sanctions and military force is used to make the opponent alter behaviour.²⁸ This method is often viewed as the 'dark side' of international relations and is identified with offensive rather than defensive national goals.²⁹

Interveners have a choice of whether to fight; this is what makes interventions different from (existential) wars.³⁰ Intervention policies lay the boundary of peace and war in international politics; they define the outer limits of sovereign control. By its nature, it involves violation of the foundational principle of international law (sovereignty) and of a central ethical component of the international community (self-determination). The burden of moral proof rests with the state that intervenes.³¹ States,

²⁵ Crocker C. Hampson F. and Aall P, *Grasping the Nettle, Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict* (Washington: United States of Peace Press, 2005), 58-62.

²⁶ Walzer M., *Just and Unjust Wars, A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, fourth edition (New York: Basic Books, [1977] 2006), 251-268.

²⁷ Wright Q., *A Study of War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 5-7.

²⁸ Pape R., *Bombing to Win, Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 4.

²⁹ Byman D. and Waxman M., *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3-9.

³⁰ Finnemore M., *The Purpose of Intervention, Changing the Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 5.

³¹ *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (New York: United Nations, 2004), 67. Five basic criteria are identified for a decision to intervene. (1) *Seriousness of the threat*: grave and massive violations of fundamental rights or the threat of such violations; (2) *Proper purpose*: the primary purpose of the intervention is to stop the violations, and the action is supported by those for whom it is intended; (3) *Last resort*: a clear urgency to act and other means not being available; (4) *Proportional Means*: the scale, duration and intensity of the proposed military action is the minimum necessary to meet the threat in question; (5) *Balance of consequences*: the action has a reasonable

therefore, debate long and hard, both internally and among themselves, whether to intervene and fight to secure their interests. These debates are harsh if there is no hard evidence that an existential threat is being targeted. There is a very reasonable set of interests that could support intervention and another equally plausible set that would support non-intervention.

The amount of force used and the decisiveness of the intervention depend on the interests at stake. Provided the interests at stake are important enough to fight for, an intervention has to meet the *Jus ad Bellum* criteria before an intervention is conducted. In addition, the intervention must meet the *Jus Post Bellum* criteria as soon as possible. The Second World War demonstrated this clearly, Germany and Japan were susceptible to change after being militarily defeated. They were ripe for change. To accomplish this, force was tied to an extensive array of other tools.³²

Intervention is more than a military quick fix since it teams with massive political and social support and state-building. It covers a vast array of very different sorts of political action with the purpose of bringing about a large-scale process of social change that redirects force in entire countries or groups of countries.³³ According to John Hare and Carey Joint, coercive intervention is acceptable if,

“... [I]t is a response to the intervention by one’s opponents; in defence of the integrity of the internal political process; a means to re-establish the balance, not to destabilize it; a venture with a reasonable chance of success; a last resort, following humane and constructive efforts to deal with fundamental problems; an undertaking proportional in its means to the value of its end; and not a violation of basic moral principles”.³⁴

chance of success at acceptable costs, the action is not likely to lead to larger problems, and the opinions of the countries in the region have been taken into account.

³² See for instance: Brocades Zaalberg T., *Soldiers and Civil Power, Supporting or Substituting Civil Authorities in Modern Peace Operations* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005).

³³ Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 7-12 and 129-137.

³⁴ Hare J. and Joynt C., *Ethics and International Affairs* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 160.

States understand intervention as being different from, and less than, war. War fighting is, however, a common element in both cases. The difference is the intensity.³⁵ In general, wars are at the high end of the conflict spectrum, interventions are conducted in the grey area between peace and war, often at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. In an existential war, the goal is to defeat the other party; in interventions, war is functional to make the target state susceptible to change. The change itself is brought about – after the short-war phase – with softer instruments.

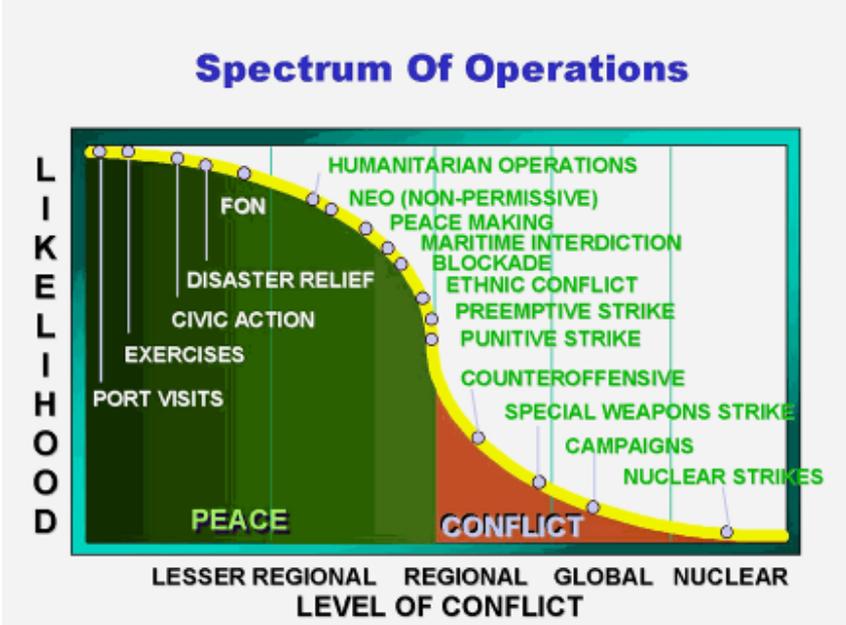


Figure 1: Spectrum of Operations
 Source: Phister and Plonisch, *US Air Force Research Laboratory, News Release R-01-78* at: http://www.rl.af.mil/div/IFO/IFOI/IFOIPA/press_history/pr-99/pr-01-78.html

The conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bosnia show that warfare has changed: state military organizations have vast superiority over their non-state opponents in what is called ‘combat power’, but despite this

³⁵ Lund M., *Preventing Violent Conflict: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington: United Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 38.

superiority, more often than not, they end up losing. Winning or maybe controlling these protracted, self-sustaining, deep-rooted conflicts, often the product of ancient hatreds, demands a different attitude.³⁶ Wars are no longer won on the battlefield; military force can stop battles but then the battle for stability and peace starts in an effort to end the will to fight.

The focus in modern conflict is on winning wars, not battles.³⁷ A short well-defined war can work as catalyst to give up the will to fight, while soft power is used to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the population.³⁸ If the overall objective of a war is to win the clash of wills, it follows that every trial of strength must be won in such a way that each success complements and supports the measures to win the clash of wills.³⁹ Only then does war have utility and support the desired political result.

Third Party intervention

War has a function in an intervention and is the result of a clearly debated political choice. Leaders of liberal democracies particularly need to engender support from large groups of people and diverse organizations when taking their nations to war, since it is probably the most brutalizing of human experiences. War risks the involvement of the whole population, not only as enabler of a massive war machinery but also as targets of attack. If existential interests are at stake, it is clear that these interests are fought for. Nevertheless, one must also determine how to respond to serious, non-existential, and often indirect threats that stem from asymmetrical attacks?⁴⁰ Securitization as a practice is considered to be just and morally right. But is it right to take up arms? Georg Sorenson

³⁶ For a more detailed discussion see Zartman W., “Analyzing Intractability”, in Crocker C., Hampson O., All P. (eds), *Grasping the Nettle, Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2005), 47-62.

³⁷ Nye J., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 5-11.

³⁸ Smith, *The Utility of Force, The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allan Lane, 2005), 277.

³⁹ Clausewitz, von C. [translated by Graham J. and Maude F.], *On War* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), Book four, Chapter XI, 242-247.

⁴⁰ Buzan et al, *Security*, 23-26.

has pointed out that war has been a much less effective driver to secure interests in the long run, since social change is necessary.⁴¹ The majority of the successful cases show that reforms occur when a society generates a strong domestic demand for institutions. According to Stephen Krasner, interveners must provide basic government services as soon as possible after the intervention, in order to generate the demand for institutions.⁴² In the long run, securitization does not take place on the battlefield but a short, well-defined war will create the conditions necessary for it.

Life Cycle of a Conflict

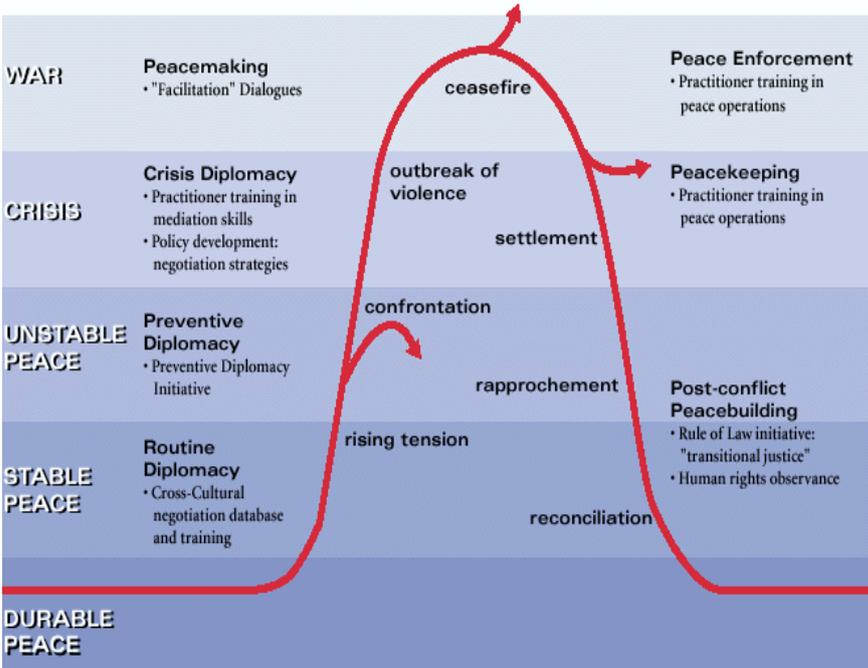


Figure 2: Life Cycle of a Conflict
 Source: Lund M., *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington: United States Institute for Peace, 1996), 38.

⁴¹ Sorenson G., "War and State-Making: Why Doesn't it Work in the Third World", in: *Security Dialogue* 32(3), 341-354.

⁴² Krasner S., "Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States", in: *International Security* Vol. 29, No. 2 (2004), 85-120.

The use of military force needs to be weighed against other options because wars are not won on the battlefield, as *inter alia* the third-party interventions in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan have shown.⁴³ Joseph Nye refers to the uses of positive and negative inducements as soft and hard power.⁴⁴ Hard or command power – the ability to change what others do – rests on coercion. It grows out of military or economic might.⁴⁵ This approach is anchored in a rational-choice-view of the world that largely revolves around the use of force to restore order during the actual intervention.⁴⁶ Soft or co-operative power – the ability to shape what others want – rests on the attractiveness of one’s culture, political ideals, policies and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices during the mediation.⁴⁷ In the ‘carrot-and-stick approach’, a mix of positive and negative inducements shapes the preferences of the target population.⁴⁸

The transition from war to peace is a sensitive process that can easily derail but an impartial military force can prevent this.⁴⁹ The less the stick is needed, the more the carrot can be used and the faster the *Jus Post Bellum* criteria are met. The interveners must have ‘full-spectrum dominance’ and information dominance in order to be successful but the local

⁴³ Haass R., *Intervention, The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World* revised Edition (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 70.

⁴⁴ Nye, *Soft Power*, 5-11.

⁴⁵ Nye, *Soft Power*, 30-31.

⁴⁶ Touval S. and Zartman W., “International Mediation in the Post-Cold War Era”, in: Crocker C., Hampson O., All P. (eds), *Turbulent Peace, The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 427-444; Haass R., *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Rubin J., “The Timing of Ripeness and the Ripeness of Timing”, in: Kiesberg L. and Thorson S. (eds), *Timing the De-escalation of International Conflicts* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 237-246.

⁴⁷ Nye, *Soft Power*, 11-15.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, Schell J., *The Unconquerable World, Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People* (New York: Henry Holt, 2003).

⁴⁹ Brocades Zaalberg T., *Soldiers and Civil Power, Supporting or Substituting Civil Authorities in Modern Peace Operations* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005).

government is responsible and must take its responsibility.⁵⁰ Confidence increases when the interveners show their commitment to the cause, not only during the intervention but also by taking part in the peace-making and state-building process.

The hard military force used during a third-party intervention is short and intense to stop the hostilities. According to Michael Walzer, any war is an act of aggression but it can be morally right when the legalistic paradigm is applied.⁵¹ The third-party intervention is functional and morally right because it is legalized. The goal is to get the disputants to acknowledge that some outside control over their conflict is needed to settle the dispute.⁵² The conflict must be 'ripe' for mediation, however.⁵³ This situation is known as a Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS),⁵⁴ a condition that exists when neither side feels it can win the conflict. When both parties perceive the costs and prospects of continuing war to be more burdensome than the gains to be achieved, a settlement has prospects.⁵⁵ The mediation process that follows depends upon persuasion and manipulation.⁵⁶ The mediator plays a principal role in the peace-building process by providing confidence-building measures that reduce the incentives to defect.⁵⁷ The mediator's impartial involvement, moral commitment, economic potential and indirect interest will strengthen the disputants' confidence.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ See for instance: Berkowitz B., *The New Face of War, How War will be Fought in the 21st Century* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

⁵¹ Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 58-63.

⁵² Crocker et. al., *Taming Intractable Conflicts*, 134.

⁵³ Zartman W., "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments", in: Darby J. and MacGinty R. (eds), *Contemporary Peacemaking, Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 19.

⁵⁴ Crocker et. al., *Taming Intractable Conflicts*, 103-104.

⁵⁵ Zartman W. and Touval S., "International Mediation: Conflict and Resolution and Power Politics", in: *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 41 No. 2 (1985), 27-45.

⁵⁶ Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, 19-21.

⁵⁷ Lake D. and Rothchild D., "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict", in: *International Security* Vol. 21 No. 2 (1996), 27-28.

⁵⁸ See, for instance, Zartman W. (ed.), *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1995)

The various stages of this transition process form a strategic-value chain.⁵⁹ Whereas ending hostilities sets a short-term goal, conflict resolution and state-building work toward long-term solutions.⁶⁰ The social-psychological challenges in the transition from war to peace are immense, while the internal capability to move from a state of war to a state of peace is weak.⁶¹ The third-party needs to assist and stimulate this process.

A state that supplies the core functions that only governments can provide creates stability, and that is what it is all about.⁶² State-building is a lengthy, fragile, and contradiction-ridden process.⁶³ An integrated approach to winning the peace is needed to prevent citizens from transferring their primary allegiance away from the state to tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities and organizations, gangs, ideologies, and so on.⁶⁴ Matthew Horsman and Andrew Marshall have pointed out that in weak states, this localizing dynamic can be seen as part of a much wider process, in which increasing liberalization is weakening state structures everywhere and pushing individuals towards more tribal forms of association.⁶⁵ Where states are strong and societies well developed, they are relatively cohesive and stable. The opposite is also true. Since supposedly, there is a correlation between development and democracy, it is

⁵⁹ The term “strategic-value chain” is widely used in business management. Values are the timeless principles that guide an organization. They form a chain if they are a strategic collaboration to meet specific (market) objectives over the long run and for the mutual benefit of all “links” of the chain.

⁶⁰ Jones B., “The Challenges of Strategic Coordination”, in: Stedman S. et al., *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, 2002), 89-119.

⁶¹ Crocker et. al., *Taming Intractable Conflicts*, 166-167.

⁶² Macgregor D., “New Strategic Concepts”, in: Binnendijk H. and Johnson S. (eds) *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 2004), 18-22.

⁶³ Last D., *Theory, Doctrine and Practice of Conflict De-Escalation in Peace-keeping Operations* (Cornwallis Park: The Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1997), 25.

⁶⁴ Buzan et. al., *Security*, 52-53.

⁶⁵ Horsman M. and Marshall A., *After the Nation State: Citizens, Tribalism and the New World Disorder* (London: Harper Collins, 1995).

essential for a ‘normal’ economy to start up soon after hostilities have ended.⁶⁶

Winning the Peace

During the transition from war to peace, a general decline of the state must be prevented. The political order needs to be rebuilt and the population is encouraged to participate in governance.⁶⁷ Francis Fukuyama distinguishes three distinct phases.⁶⁸ During the first phase, outside powers provide short-term stability. The goal is to rebuild state authority. The first or transition phase is critical; the security-related functions predominate along with the military command structure. As the situation is stabilized, the military commanders give way to civilian-led operations and agencies that control them; development agencies and workers gradually take the lead in the second and third phase. In the second phase, self-sustaining state institutions are created that survive the gradual withdrawal of the interveners.⁶⁹ The emphasis lies on reconstruction, which involves returning a society ravaged by war (or natural disaster) back to something like the status quo ante. It requires partnership between the interveners and the intervened. This state-building phase is successful if democratic state institutions function effectively. In the

⁶⁶ Fukuyama F., *The End of History and the Last Man*, second edition (New York: Free Press, 2006), Afterword.

⁶⁷ Crevelde M. van, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁶⁸ Fukuyama F., *State-Building, Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 100-101.

⁶⁹ See: Sutton F., “Nation-Building in the Heyday of the Classic Development Ideology: Ford Foundation Experience in the 1950s and 1960s” in: Fukuyama F. (ed), *Nation-Building, Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 42-63. Note that Americans use the term *nation-building* differently from Europeans: by *nation-building* they mean state-building coupled with economic development. Fukuyama notes in the introduction of the cited book (3) that according to the Europeans “[...] Nations [...] are never built particularly by outsiders; rather, they evolve out of an unplanned historical-evolutionary process. What Americans refer to as *nation-building* is rather state-building – that is, constructing political institutions, or else promoting economic development.”

third phase, institutions are further strengthened with indirect support. The accent lies on development, which involves the creation of new economic or political institutions that will be self-sustaining after the withdrawal of the international community. It requires local ownership. This nation-building phase is successful when democracy is anchored in state and society.

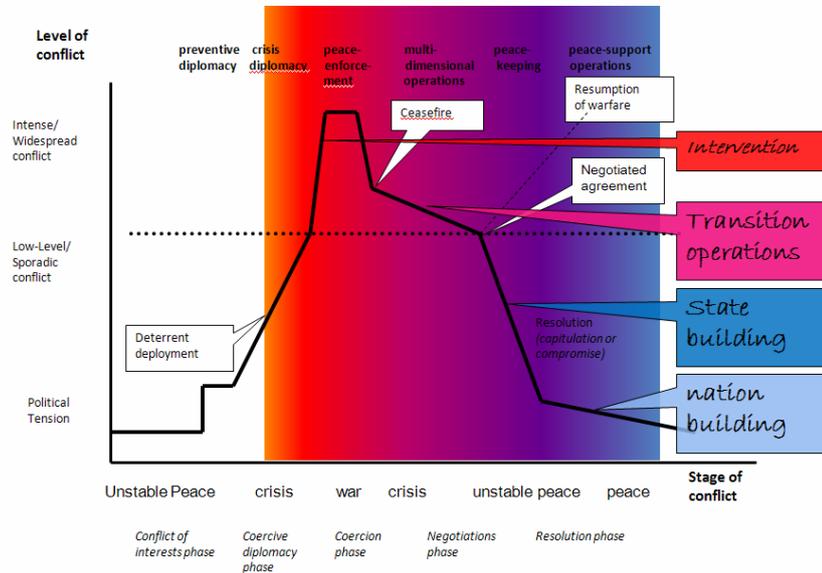


Figure 3: Conflict-Coercion Cycle

Source: Wagemaker A., *Raging Hunger for Peace, Power, Mediation and Western Military Intervention in Bosnia* (Leiden: Leiden University, 2005), 17.

External powers may provide security and expertise, there are however limitations to their ability to create a demand for institutions and democratization.⁷⁰ There are physical and moral limitations on the transfer of knowledge about institutional construction and reform.⁷¹ As Fukuyama states: “[P]ost-conflict situations seem to pose an insoluble conundrum

⁷⁰ See: Flournoy M., “Nation-Building, Lessons Learned and Unlearned”, in: Fukuyama F. (ed), *Nation-Building, Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 86-96.

⁷¹ Fukuyama, *State-Building*, 82-91.

regarding local ownership: intervention was necessary in the first place because there was no functioning local government, but the outside provision of government services becomes an obstacle to the creation of new state institutions that can stand on their own [...]”.⁷² Interveners cannot do more than form a partnership with the national and local authorities in the intervened country, because the latter have to own the transformation process during the state-building and nation-building processes. It provides an elegant exit strategy or a problem for the interveners.

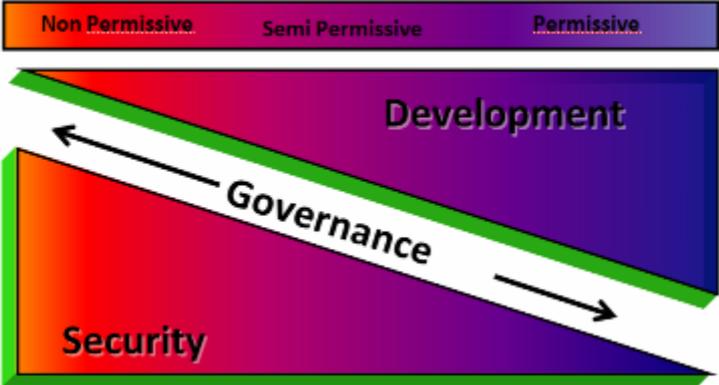


Figure 4: Lines of Operations

State-building is essential for winning the peace. It focuses on reconstructing the political system and on rebuilding security as a foundation. Everything else that is considered desirable in the political, economic, and social spheres can be built beyond this basic level. Security is conventionally thought to refer to threats that originate from outside the state and, if fulfilled, could undermine the stability and integrity of the state. Such threats can also originate from within the borders of a state, in the form of deliberate subversion or even destabilization of social arrangements because of the dissemination of new ideas, practices, and

⁷² Fukuyama F., “Guidelines for Future Nation-Builders”, in: Fukuyama F. (ed), *Nation-Building, Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 241-242.

technologies and how leaders of a state define and explain security consequently.⁷³ Once a state is functioning, the focus should shift toward nation-building which in the end safeguards positive peace. In other words, hatred between various groups within the state and within society, which is typical in internal conflicts, is gone with self-sustaining peace as a result. For winning peace securitization, using a comprehensive approach to state-building and nation-building processes, is necessary.

Invading Afghanistan

By mid-2001 the Taliban controlled most of Afghanistan's territory and harboured Al Qaeda. The Taliban had been unable to dislodge the remaining resistance fighters from their whereabouts in the mountains in the north-east of the country. Officially known as the United National Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, the 'Northern Alliance' was an occasional coalition brought together by the common struggle against Taliban rule.⁷⁴ Most of them belonged to Massood's Shura-i-Nizar, the wing of the predominantly Tadjik Jamiat-i-Islami party headed by former president Burhanuddin Rabbani.⁷⁵

The initial military campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda was rapid and decisive, mainly due to American help. There was, however, basic disagreement between Colin Powell's State Department and Donald Rumsfeld's Defense Department. Powell wanted to consider long-term political consequences and adjust the campaign accordingly; Rums-

⁷³ For explorations of the concept of security, see Buzan B., *People, States and Fear*, 2nd edition (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991).

⁷⁴ The Northern Alliance primarily consisted of *Jamiat-i-Islami*, *Junbesh-i-Milli*, *Hezb-i-Wahadat*, and *Harakat-i-Islami*. It also includes other, more marginal participants such as Hadji Wadir's eastern *Shura*, and *Ittihad-i-Islami*. It is noteworthy that the Northern Alliance was mostly devoid of significant Pashtun representation.

⁷⁵ This wing of Jamiat, in which the military and administrative power of the party became concentrated, was controlled by defense minister Mohammad Qassem Fahim, by former interior minister and now education minister Younus Qanooni, and by foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah.

feld wanted to dislodge the Taliban as quickly as possible, regardless of the consequences. The Defense Department prevailed.⁷⁶

After the Northern Alliance was armed, it was unleashed in the beginning of November 2001 with direct military support from seventeen nations.⁷⁷ From a short-term military perspective, the collaboration was a remarkable success, leading to the collapse of the Taliban within five weeks. From a long-term political and military perspective, the choices made at the start of this operation proved extremely costly. Although the Taliban were decisively overthrown, they were not defeated. Hundreds of Al Qaeda warriors and their leadership were able to escape from the mountains of Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan into Pakistan, where they found refuge in the Northwest Territories. Currently they use the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan – North and South Waziristan, Bajour and Mohmand – as their sanctuary, from where they launch operations in southern Afghanistan.⁷⁸

Various renowned Pashtun leaders warned during and after the successful Northern Alliance offensive that the fall of the Taliban regime would create a political vacuum that could ignite a new phase of bloodshed and disorder. Hoping to avoid this, the US, its Coalition partners, and the UN started a dialogue during the fall of 2001 in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, and with supporters of the former Afghan king in Rome to create a broader-based Afghan political coalition.⁷⁹ Kabul needed to be protected as ‘neutral political space’, a demilitarized zone in which politics could

⁷⁶ Cooley J., *Unholy Wars* (London: Pluto, 2002), 81-106.

⁷⁷ See: Gerleman J. et al, *Operation Enduring Freedom: Foreign Pledges of Military and Intelligence Support*, document no. RL31152 (Washington: US Congressional Research Service, 2001) available at www.fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/6207.pdf

⁷⁸ To defend Pakistan from ethnic fragmentation, Pakistan’s governments have tried to neutralize Pashtun and Baluch nationalism, in part by supporting Islamist militias among the Pashtun. Such militias wage asymmetrical warfare of Afghanistan and Kashmir and counter the electoral majorities of opponents of military rule with their street power and violence.

⁷⁹ Chopra J, McCallum J., and Their A., “Planning Considerations for International Involvement in Post-Taliban Afghanistan”, in: *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 8, no. 2 (winter 2002).

flourish, away from the threat of armed conflict. For this reason, the Northern Alliance was warned in public statements to stay out of the capital. Despite repeated assurances to respect these international calls, the Alliance took Kabul on 13 November 2001.⁸⁰ As the Taliban receded throughout the country, the newly reinvigorated factional armies rolled into old domains, one after the other.

Operation Enduring Freedom effectively turned the control of Afghanistan back to an array of regional commanders who had spent the early 1990s in a vicious civil war. With the Northern Alliance in control of Kabul and various groups in control of the countryside, the post-Taliban political environment looked like pre-Taliban Afghanistan. At best a fragile negative peace was created but it did not provide the security that allows people to begin reconstruct their lives. Since there was no coherent plan for the transition to a positive peace and disregard for the political and economic consequences of the operation Enduring Freedom, the remarkably unstable security situation in Afghanistan put the success of the entire operation in question.

Transition

Faced with a *fait accompli*, the UN called a conference in Bonn, in December 2001, with the goal to re-establish and confirm Afghanistan's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Given the civil war of the 1990s, representation at the table was intended to be broad. Numerous Afghan civil society groups felt that they were not represented. It is questionable whether the Bonn peace talks represented the Afghan people. Indeed, the Bonn agreement itself acknowledges in its preamble that many groups were not 'adequately represented' at the talks. In the end, the talks were dominated by the *Panjshiri Tadjik* faction of the Northern Alliance, the *Shura-i-Nizar*. With undisputed control of Kabul, the strongest military, and their strong battlefield alliance with the US, they could successfully insist on key positions in the new government: Defence, interior, and foreign affairs. In exchange, they agreed to a relatively unaffiliated Pash-

⁸⁰ Woodward B., *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 308-309.

tun tribal leader, Hamid Karzai, as head of the interim administration; to a limited international security force in the capital; and a transition process that would lead to the creation of a new constitution and elections in just thirty months. In Afghanistan, confidence in a peaceful transition of power was understandably low. It was not only the underrepresented non-Northern Alliance groups who complained, even powerful members of the Alliance, such as Rashid Dostum and Ismael Khan, decried the outcome as unfair and even humiliating.⁸¹

The Bonn Agreement provided a framework for the transformation of the Afghan political system. It was ambitious in scope but provided little detail on how the most essential details could or should be accomplished. However, it set two simultaneous processes in motion, a state-building process and a peace process. The state-building process would be the engine for reconstruction, for the formation of long-term security arrangements, and for a return to national unity. The peace process would maintain order among factions, allowing them to lessen their enmity, while acknowledging, though implicitly, their de facto control of the country. The Agreement envisioned that the state and political institutions would slowly draw sovereign authority back to the government and the people and away from the rule of the gun. However, the problem with the Bonn Agreement is that compared with the process of political transition it established, the security provisions were demonstrably weak. Critical aspects of the agreement went un-enforced, for example the provision of putting all armed forces under the control of the Afghan interim administration.

The security strategical transition – from creating a negative peace to a continuation of it – took place in summer 2003. The International Security Assistance Force that was created in Bonn and initially ‘only’ guarded the negative peace in Kabul, was boosted in August 2003.

⁸¹ For a detailed discussion see for instance Suhrke A., Strand A., and Harpvikken K., *Peace-Building Strategies for Afghanistan, Part I: Lessons from Past Experiences in Afghanistan; and Part II: A Decade of Peace-Building: Lessons for Afghanistan* (Bergen: Chr. Michelson Institute, 2002); Johnson C., Maley W., Their A., and Wardak A., *Afghanistan's Political and Constitutional Development* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2003).

NATO took over the command of ISAF, and two months later, its mission expanded to include securing relatively quiet north-eastern and north-central Afghanistan. At the Istanbul conference in June 2004, NATO agreed to increase its forces in the country to 10,000 by October 2004. However, the Alliance struggled to find troops and equipment to meet these commitments.⁸² During the London Conference (31 January-1 February 2006), the ‘Afghanistan Compact’ was signed. With another five years of international commitment it acknowledges that the country’s “transition to peace and security is not yet assured” and requires “strong international engagement”. However, ISAF’s expansion to southern Afghanistan (stage 3 and 4) saw a similar manning problem as two years before in the northern part (stage 1 and 2).

ISAF’s state-building mission consists of four stages, each of them having its own tailor-made approach. According to Afghanistan Compact, the US-led Operation “Enduring Freedom” and the NATO-led ISAF-operation were to promote security and stability “in all regions of Afghanistan” by the end of 2010, while the Afghan National Army would reach its target ceiling of 70,000 personnel. The reality is that the state-building phase has de facto been extended until at least 2010. How to deal with rapacious local militias and bandits and aggressive anti-regime militants who seem to remain a fact of life, is a challenge. In effect, nation-building cannot effectively start until there is basic security and (effective) state institutions function on all levels and in the whole country.

Holding the coalition of actors, assembled through the Bonn Process, together in a peaceful transition process has been the primary occupation of the political arms of both the UN and the Western powers engaged in Afghanistan. There has been nearly universal support for the Bonn Agreement among those working towards peace. The US and to a lesser extent the UN, treated peace and security as their foremost concerns,

⁸² See: Bhatia M., Lanigan K., and Wilkinson P., “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan”, Briefing Paper Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, June 2004, available at: <http://www.cmi.no/pdf/?file=/afghanistan/doc/AREU-Brief-2004-June-security.pdf>

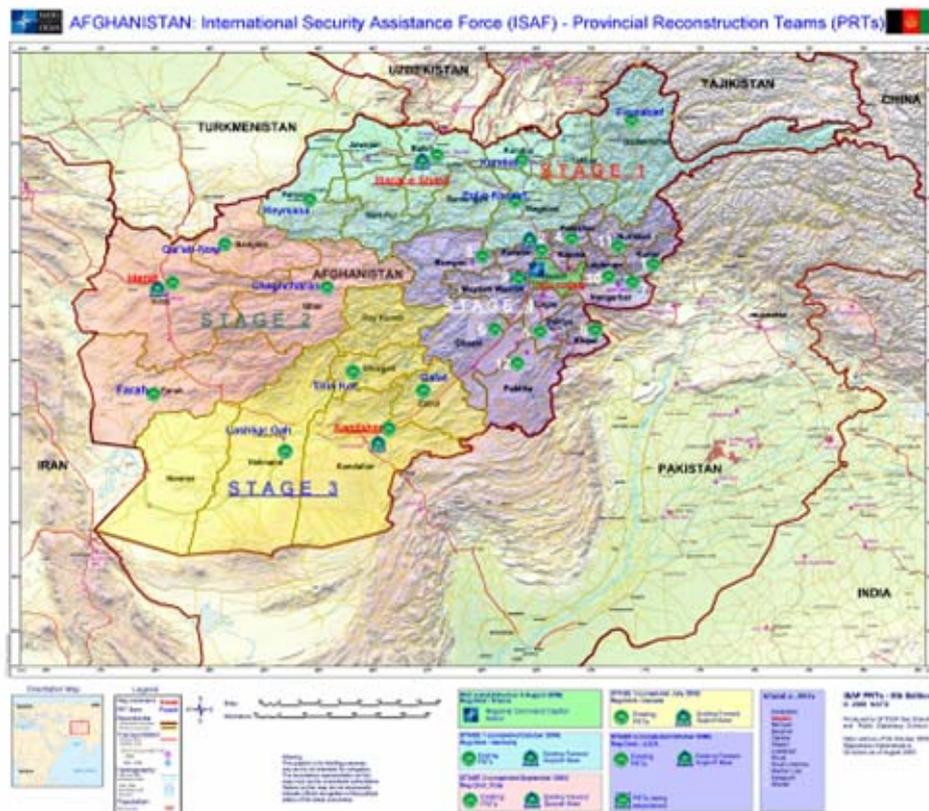


Figure 5: ISAF deployment, October 2006.

Source: <http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/graphics/e040628a.jpg>

subordinating – at least in the short-term – other principles such as broad representation in the government and human rights accountability. The approach rested on the premise that a lasting peace could be forged only if the country’s faction leaders – all armed, many dangerous – could be kept inside Bonn’s tent.

Civil-Military Cooperation

In ISAF’s strategy, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) assist and support the Afghans in the continuation of the negative peace, and sup-

port the transition toward state-building, or better, from a militarily run peace mission to a development mission.

The PRT concept models civil-military cooperation in disrupted areas, an ad hoc device for marrying security, reconstruction and state-building. The Americans developed the concept of spreading the ISAF effect without expanding ISAF itself.⁸³ General Barno (commander of the coalition forces in 2003) and the US ambassador Khalilzad, identified the PRTs as a mechanism that could contribute to the fulfilment of the short-term political objectives of the Bonn Agreement. However, they seem to be more important in the long-term strategy because state-building and nation-building processes demand long-term commitments.

The various PRTs do not follow a single model, as Peter Viggo Jacobsen has shown. Characteristically they are military-run enclaves, providing safe havens for international aid workers who assist with the reconstruction and extending the writ of the Kabul government.⁸⁴ PRT activities focus on assisting the (provincial and district) authorities, that can range from resolving local disputes to coordinating local reconstruction projects. Guiding securitization programs are the National Solidarity Program (NSP)⁸⁵ and the Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The idea behind NSP is community-driven development that facilitates a link between state and civil society. In practice, it is a rural development program without a direct urban analogue. Its key elements are assisting and facilitating local decision-making and priority setting; block grants (up to \$60,000) for activities of elected community development councils; capacity building for council members; and strengthening of institutional linkages. Conditional are economic recovery and a human resource base for government. With few natural resources, a largely devastated agricultural economy and little domestic investment or extractive

⁸³ McNerney M., "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?", in: *Parameters*, Winter 2005-2006, 32-46.

⁸⁴ Jacobsen P., *PRTs in Afghanistan: Successful but not Sufficient* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Affairs, 2005), 17-28. This document is also available through: www.diis.dk/graphics/publications/reports2005/pvj_prts_Afghanistan.pdf

⁸⁵ See: www.nspafghanistan.org

financial capacity, Afghanistan is heavily dependent on international largesse but that falls short. Although 10.5 billion dollars were pledged at the 2006 London conference, it is only a fraction of what is needed. As far as bureaucracy is concerned, the lack of trained and motivated personnel is apparent. District administrators and even governors are often unqualified, low salaries in the public sector deter capable individuals from taking jobs in the ministries. Personnel problems in the law enforcement and justice systems are especially deleterious to reconstruction. SSR is a complex process that embraces four elements.⁸⁶

- forces authorized to use force;
- security management and oversight bodies;
- justice and law enforcement institutions; and
- non-statutory security forces.

In Afghanistan it features five major pillars, each of which has been the responsibility of a different donor nation. The US have taken the lead in the formation and training of the Afghan National Army (ANA); Germany develops the Afghan National Police force (ANP); Italy reforms the justice system; Britain spearheads the anti-narcotics efforts; and Japan the effort to neutralize private militias through the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration program (DDR). The SSR program suffers poor internal coordination and raises doubts about the “lead donor nation model” and the adjustment with other efforts. The lack of progress in law enforcement (police and judicial pillars) in combination with failures to break the vicious cycle between warlords, the government and the opium economy lead to a general feeling of insecurity. A loss of momentum is the result and ambitious targets in state-building have to be adjusted downward.

The PRTs with a multi-pronged approach make sense as part of an overall strategy in which the military and the economic, societal and political sectors are securitized. According to Jacobsen, a PRT model that consists of “extensive consultation and cooperation with all the relevant

⁸⁶ Hendrickson D. and Karkoszka A., ‘Security Sector Reform and Donor Policies’ in: Schnabel A. and Ehrhart H. (eds), *Security Sector Reform and Post Conflict Peacebuilding* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 23.

actors in the area (partnership); a willingness to heed NGO and UN advice; a strong focus on security; effective intergovernmental cooperation; in-depth understanding of local security dynamics; and a robust approach towards spoilers coupled with extensive long-range soft patrolling aimed at winning hearts and minds”, seems a formula for success.⁸⁷ The PRTs translate and adjust the NSP and SSR to the local level. Depending on the security situation and the susceptibility of the local population to state-building, two approaches to the PRT concept are distinguished:

- Teams in instable parts – in 2007 in southern Afghanistan or ISAF stages 3 and 4 – give effect to the American doctrine on civil-military cooperation which is derived from the ‘hearts and minds’ strategy that Field Marshal Templer pursued in dealing with the Malayan Emergency. The emphasis is on providing physical security, the PRT conducts civil affairs operations, while state-building programs are subordinated.⁸⁸
- Teams in more stable parts – in 2007 in northern Afghanistan or ISAF stages 1 and 2 – are approaching their tasks differently. The focus is on state-building, ‘partnership’ and ‘ownership’ principles. Although impartial, they are not deployed to tackle military threats posed by the Taliban or Al Qaeda, by the infighting between warlords and increased lawlessness and banditry or the booming opium cultivation and drug trade. The PRTs assist in providing security that is “primarily about the ability of the ruling elite to maintain civil peace, territorial integrity, and, more controversially, the machinery of government in the face of challenges from its citizens”.⁸⁹ In other words, the PRTs create the circumstances in which, at provincial level, state-building is made possible which is primarily done by diplomats and development workers.

⁸⁷ Jacobsen, *PRTs in Afghanistan*, 33.

⁸⁸ Dziedzic M. and Seidl M., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*, Special Report No. 147 (Washington: United States Institute for Peace, 2005), 6.

⁸⁹ Buzan et. al., *Security*, 50.

Mutual trust is the guiding principle for the partnership between the PRT and the local population. The local government has to own the state-building process; the PRT assists and supports it by providing security, so that economic, social and governmental change can take place. This comprehensive approach is successful in northern Afghanistan and stands model for the approach in the south. The idea behind their comprehensive or 3-D (Defense, Diplomacy and Development) approach – developed by the British, the Canadians and the Dutch – is that the transition process and the early stages of state-building are vulnerable to attacks by forces of hatred and extremism. The main threat comes from Islamist groups whose programs are ideological rather than political, megalomaniac rather than concrete. Their ambition is to weaken or destroy societies based on liberal democracies, fundamental freedoms and human rights. To prevent that these groups find shelter among the local population, the goal is to encourage active citizen participation in governance, strengthen the (local) economy to prevent extremism, and maintain a balance between respect for cultural diversity and the need for a shared sense of direction. Therefore, it is essential to win the hearts and minds and imperative to set the democracy and human rights agenda of the local i.e. provincial government. Forces within the society that oppose this have to be isolated.

The usability of military force is limited and sensitive, as it could easily undermine the mutual trust. Winning the hearts and minds involves demonstrating that the PRT cares about improving people's lives and addresses the humanitarian consequence of fighting. In the war amongst the people, it is not about traditional military success but about creating stability, so that development can take place. Military force is bind to development. The PRT is a mechanism allowing other actors to push the state-building process and the security sector reform forward. In the longer term, this will provide the basis for nation-building.

Whether Afghanistan becomes a functioning state depends on its own population. However, a long-term commitment of this and similar PRTs in combination with a (special) relationship with provinces or regions makes a difference to Afghanistan's state-building program. Therefore, the PRTs need a broad range of development and rule-of-law expertise,

improved civil-military cooperation, determine more carefully what activities have the greatest impact (rigorous analysis of cause and effect in relation to the long-term state-building strategy) and put great emphasis on improved local governance by supporting capacity-building programs.

State-building

Starting point of virtually all discussions is the disruption of the Afghan state. Given the reality of state collapse, an immediate focus of activity seems obvious and sensible. The term ‘state’ here refers to what Robert Jackson called a ‘quasi-state’.⁹⁰ This kind of state enjoys a high level of ‘juridical sovereignty’ (indicated by the broad international acceptance of its existence within its present boundaries) but a low level of ‘empirical sovereignty’ (as measured by the capacities of government instrumentalities). Consequently, there is a great deal of popular cynicism about what politics can deliver. However, the task of reconstituting the political system and the government is central to the promotion of long-term stability. Overcoming corruption and nepotism is one of the major hurdles. Both problems are endemic to Afghanistan.

The upper levels of government received the earliest attention, with the consequence that regional power-holders stamped their (traditional) control over certain state-functions at the local levels. This resulted in a rift between the formal (*de jure*) and functioning (*de facto*) state.⁹¹ The Bonn Agreement provision that each member of the interim administration could head a department proved unfortunate. Instead of reconstructing the state, beginning with a careful examination of what the state should be responsible for and of what its scope and strength should be, it began with office appointment, based on the view that what the state should be doing had already been established. On top of this, politics in

⁹⁰ Jackson R., *Quasi States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁹¹ Evans A., Manning N., Osmani Y., Wilder A., *A Guide to Government in Afghanistan* (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2004), 12-21.

Afghanistan are highly personalized, tending to crystallize around powerful men and their patronage networks, not on their professional quality.⁹² Although Afghanistan is on paper a unitary state with a highly centralized government, warlords (and in some cases governors) have captured, both strategic decision-making and overall fiscal resources, and the public sector is essentially autonomous from the central government.⁹³

One of the most surprising features of the administration in Afghanistan is the survival of local administrative structures in at least skeletal form throughout the years of bitter internal struggle.⁹⁴ Indigenous non-governmental organizations and councils (*Shuras*) became prominent in society. They may have survived simply because nominal occupation of state positions, even on an unpaid basis, was a source of some social status. But this does not mean that the local state structures will remain intact in face of the changing circumstances. As new actors, both governmental and non-governmental, position themselves to perform reconstruction tasks in the various districts of the country, opportunities will emerge for old state employees to obtain better-remunerated work. There is thus a risk that outlying components of the state will fall victim to a kind of internal 'brain drain'.

The exercise of state power is further complicated by the existence of a system of provinces and provincial governors who are centrally appointed for political reasons rather than for their merit. Within the provinces there are over 350 districts and 200 municipalities, but there is considerable uncertainty as to their exact boundaries. The degree of effective local power is considerable. A 2005 World Bank study concluded that,

⁹² Rubin et. al., *Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond*, 47-52.

⁹³ *Afghanistan – State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty* (Washington: The World Bank, 2005), 44-47.

⁹⁴ See for instance: Evans A., Manning N., and Tully A. with Osmani Y. and Wilder A., *Subnational Administration in Afghanistan: Assessment and Recommendations for Action* (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2004); and Evens A. and Osmani Y., *Assessing Progress: Update Report on Subnational Administration in Afghanistan* (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2005).

“in revenue-rich provinces, governors make resources allocation decisions except on basic salaries. Staff appointments from Kabul are frequently rejected in favour of those loyal to regional factions, and even Kabul-based appointments regularly reflect loyalties and ethnic ties rather than merit. In these areas, where the warlords (and in some cases governors) have ‘captured’ both strategic decision-making and overall fiscal resources the public sector is essentially autonomous from the central government.”⁹⁵

By 2002, the local and regional power brokers stood at crossroads. In one direction lay the Bonn vision of a more harmonious, peaceful future but they had much to lose in this transition. The process of building a national army and demobilizing local militias would diminish their military power. The reconstruction of the central government would reduce their resources and ability to dispense largesse. The other direction was unclear, since it seemed unlikely that the economically attractive status quo ante of the civil war years could hold. If the goal of the international community was peace and stability, it was clear that the independent fiefdoms throughout the country would cease to exist and with it the attractive illicit (narco) economy. However, the weakness of the state, the absence of a functioning judicial system, and the lack of security for the licit economic activity has encouraged this illicit economy as well.

The disruption of the Afghan state was felt in the sphere of security, for where military and police forces fragment, the state ceases to be in a position to provide a safe environment for ordinary people. Afghans lost their trust in the state and put their trust in other mutual support systems, ranging from local community-based gendarmeries to regional militias. Tribes – characterized by strong norms of reciprocity based on shared lineage – are the form of mutual support association in Afghanistan.⁹⁶ This is known as ‘*qawm*’, a word which is difficult to translate but “network” comes close. *Qawms* are difficult to incorporate into a democratic

⁹⁵ *Afghanistan: State-Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty* (Washington: The World Bank, 2005), 46-47.

⁹⁶ See Glatzer B., “Is Afghanistan on the Brink of Ethnical and Tribal Disintegration?”, in: Maley W. (ed), *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (London: Hurst & Co, 1998), 167-181.

decision-making process, for they are relational rather than hierarchical and not considered to be ‘actors’. It is considered a breakthrough that Karzai (officially) bases all staffing changes on professional competence rather than ethnicity or region of origin. Because the contact of the Afghans with the government authority is mostly limited to officials at the local level, the importance of these measures cannot be overrated but they have to be viewed in relation to what is done at the lower levels of government.⁹⁷

The population needs to feel represented in the government at all levels. It is questionable whether the current presidential system is appropriate in a country as diverse as Afghanistan. Coalition building is second nature to the Afghans and should also be done in the national and provincial governments. A parliamentary system offers better possibilities for this than the current presidential system. It is questionable whether the current system with powerful provincial governors and powerless provincial councils and a powerless parliament of individuals is an appropriate representation of the civil society.

Challenges

Afghanistan’s problems are enormous.⁹⁸ Any attempt to sum them up will necessarily be fragmented and superficial. It is a desperately poor country, although strong norms of social solidarity have sometimes disguised the scale of its development problems to casual outside observers. It has also been so ravaged by decades of conflict and armed struggle that there is no easy point of departure for addressing them.⁹⁹ State-building is fundamental and institutions have to be built from the zero

⁹⁷ Weinbaum M., “Rebuilding Afghanistan“, in: Fukuyama F. (ed), *Nation-Building, Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 131-134.

⁹⁸ For an overview, see: *Afghanistan – State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty, A World Bank Country Study* (Washington: The World Bank, 2005).

⁹⁹ See Maley M., “The Reconstruction of Afghanistan”, in Booth K. and Dunne T. (eds), *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 184-193.

point. Even before the Soviet invasion of 1979, the country was governed with only a thin web of civic institutions.¹⁰⁰ To understand what rescuing Afghanistan entails, it is necessary to identify key challenges. Destabilizing threats hamper state-building. Keystone is a security plan that considers three major challenges.¹⁰¹

The first challenge is the revival of the Taliban and other groups that try to derail the state-building process in the northern part of the country and raise the level of violence significantly in the south (transnational in character, often coming from Pakistan and linked to the “Pashtunistan” dispute).¹⁰² Afghanistan is a diverse country with rough and difficult accessible terrain and limited economic possibilities. Ethnic divisions, reinforced by linguistic, sectarian, and geographic differences, have caused major fissures within the Afghan national political elite that have, in turn, retarded state-building. Although the country has been a frequent theatre for Indo-Pakistani enmity as those two states strove for strategic advantage, Afghans overwhelmingly favour the country’s integrity.¹⁰³ Although inter-provincial tensions in Pakistan have at times fuelled ethnic resentments across the border, there is minimal sentiment for a new Pashtun state called “Pashtunistan”, envisioned to be carved out of northwest Pakistan and southern Afghanistan.¹⁰⁴ The combination of ethnic tensions and various strategic interests in Afghanistan is a reason why Taliban oriented militias receive outside help – most notably from

¹⁰⁰ Starr S., “Sovereignty and Legitimacy in Afghan Nation Building”, in: Fukuyama F. (ed), *Nation-Building, Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 107.

¹⁰¹ Maley W., *Rescuing Afghanistan* (London: Hurst and Company, 2006), 60-64.

¹⁰² Ibramini S., *Playing with Fire in Afghanistan’s North*, Special Report Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 9 June 2007, available at: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=arr&s=f&o=336209&apc_state=henparr

¹⁰³ See: Vogelsang W., *The Afghans* (Oxford: Blackwell publishers, 2002). Vogelsang shows that despite bitter ethnic and regional rivalries, traditionally virtually no sentiment exists for separation or autonomy on ethnic or other grounds. Afghans overwhelmingly favor the country’s integrity over joining ethnic cousins across the Pakistani, Iranian, Turkoman, Uzbek, or Tajik borders.

¹⁰⁴ Vogelsang, *The Afghans*, 16-28 and 290-300; Rashid A., *Taliban, Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I.B. Taurus Publishers, 2002), 186-187.

or via the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan (see figure 6).¹⁰⁵



Figure 6: Map Pakistan-Afghanistan, border area
Source: Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Library Online

¹⁰⁵ See for instance: Kleveman L., *The New Great Game, Blood and Oil in Central Asia* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 234- 254; Misra A., *Afghanistan, The Labyrinth of Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004),29-32; and Rashid, *Taliban*, 183-195.

The second challenge is how to continue the negative peace. The threats posed by local potentates with arms at their disposal have a serious destabilizing potential. They have to be kept in the tent but can hamper the democratization process that is deemed essential for lasting peace. Warlords, like Ismail Khan, Abdul Rashid Dostum, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Muhammad Qasim Fahim, and Atta Muhammad, are often regional strongmen whose presence in part accounts for the relative weakness of the state.

The third challenge is the threat of criminality, especially from crime cartels that are linked to Afghanistan as a narco-state and in fact fuel instability i.e. they provide the means for local potentates to stay in de facto power.

The creation of the new Afghan National Army (ANA) – keystone in the security plan – is a complex exercise since it involves also identifying the specific roles of the military and developing an organizational culture that will make the force robust rather than fragile. ANA achievements are considered a ‘success story’, since they are moving toward fair and broad representation. However, the ANA currently has only about half the number of soldiers needed, and factional tendencies prove particularly difficult. These factional tendencies are linked to powerful warlords. An example is Mohammad Fahim who initially controlled the Ministry of Defense and is military leader of the *Shura-i-Nizar*. He had his own substantial armed forces in or near Kabul and tried to make them part of the ANA. On top of this, he appointed mostly Tadjiks and primarily *Panjshiris* as generals. In 2003, Fahim was replaced by Abdur Rahim Wardak, a Pashtun and professional soldier of the old royalist army. Most of Fahim’s forces were removed from Kabul and cantoned under international observation in 2004.¹⁰⁶ Many of them were demobilized but are now working for Fahim’s security company in Kabul. Whether the national army has become a major force in stabilizing the country and a national symbol is questionable at best. One problem is

¹⁰⁶ See for instance: Rubin B., Hamidzada H., and Stoddard A., *Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond* (Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, April 2005), available at: www.clingendael.nl/cscp/publications/occasional%2Dpapers/, 39.

that ISAF through its PRTs is not in a position to safeguard the negative peace, Coalition Forces are using so much force and create so much ‘collateral damage’ that the trust in their good intentions evaporates.¹⁰⁷

The governance structure is weak at all levels. The shortfalls in education, produced throughout decades of war and conflict, are mainly felt in the civil service, which is the backbone of a functioning state. Improving the educational system is a solution in the long-run but on short term, civil servants need specific and intense training. ISAF, through its PRTs and NGOs, can initially support and facilitate these training programs; UNAMA is primarily responsible according to Resolutions 1383 and 1401. It needs to be noted that the Security Council introduced a note of conditionality in 1401, suggesting that assistance ought to be provided “where local authorities contribute to the maintenance of a secure environment and demonstrate respect for human rights”.¹⁰⁸ With no effective means to secure the negative peace, a transition to positive peace in which the Afghans will govern themselves – initially with the support and assistance of the international community – is still a way to go. The main problem at provincial and local level is that after the change of guard, much of the administration quickly came under the control of local power holders and still remains outside the control of Kabul where the bulk of the civil servants are located. Currently, many of the governors, though approved by Kabul, are appointed mainly at the insistence of warlords and are often weak and corrupt, with little authority over the ministry departments at the provincial level.

Rescuing Afghanistan

Ultimately, the longevity and sustainability of the ongoing peace process depends on the Afghans themselves. They are weary of years of conflict and migration, though hostility prevails. The physical, economic, and cultural devastation of multiple wars has left the population desperate for basic security, that is, freedom from war and predation. It has also left

¹⁰⁷ See for instance: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6615781.stm

¹⁰⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 1401, S/RES/1401, 28 March 2002.

many aspects of society weak, and the ability of traditional institutions to enforce norms on social and political actors has broken down. In this vacuum the warlords flourish. Many Afghans believe that international attention and resources will not last long enough, especially if the country reverts to war.

The most critical success – and simultaneous failure – of the Bonn Process is that it contributes to maintaining the status quo. UNAMA and ISAF work assiduously to keep the key faction leaders on the path to peace, frequently shuttling among factions, and between factions and the central government, to resolve disputes. As a result, long-term outbreaks of factional fighting were avoided for the most part. The continuation of the negative peace seems to have the highest priority. The creation of the ANA moves forward more quickly than most international programs but still has a long way to go. Maintaining the negative peace seems to be an international affair for decades, maybe years, to come. If this negative peace is not maintained throughout the country, the Bonn process has no chance for success or even worse, will fail.

The American military has an enormous amount of political authority in the country – since it provided massive resources and because of the ‘success’ of the anti-Taliban campaign, and their support for key Afghan factions. The capacity of the Afghan government to absorb this kind of help and assistance in general is so limited that funding programs that require substantial technical means and know-how are simply not sufficient. Because of the instable situation in the country and the pursuit of a (negative) peace in the whole country, non-security key goals of the Bonn Agreement – such as the mission of creating a representative government and ensuring human rights accountability – are lagging behind. This delays the overall peace process, because factional leaders are able to consolidate power, while international support for the peace process wanes. A fundamental problem in the short run is the transition toward a positive peace which is not accompanied by a transition to the rule of law. Most factional leaders are able to entrench themselves in opium trafficking, politics, and the government, with enduring ill effects.

Pashtuns were initially alienated from the state-building process. They were simultaneously stripped off most of their power. As the Coalition forces systematically armed and empowered the Northern Alliance (which lacks Pashtun representation), they disarmed and humiliated the largely Pashtun southern and eastern parts of the country. As a result, Pashtun disenfranchisement and resentment grew. Although no single Pashtun force is capable of undoing the process as a whole, weak Pashtun support for the Bonn Process or for the future government would make those arrangements untenable in the long run. The constitutional convention in late 2003 marked a distinct turnaround in Pashtun politics, as Karzai and his supporters secured the presidential system. Pashtuns saw this as a victory, due to their status as the nation's largest ethnic group and are, therefore, the likely political beneficiaries of that system. Strong Pashtun turnout in the 2004 presidential elections secured Karzai's position but did not lead to an improvement of the Pashtuns' position in the short run. Currently, Karzai is trying to "*Pashtunize*" the government and the administration with persons that have a narrow Islamic – *Sharia*-like – interpretation of the constitution. Many other ethnic groups do not feel represented, which will lead to adverse reactions. Hence, the oft-noted paradox of modern Afghanistan: a country that needs decentralized governance to provide services to its scattered and ethnically diverse population has one of the world's most centralized governments with a presidential system. That paradox has left the basic needs of Afghanistan's citizens largely unfulfilled – and thus left them vulnerable. A possible solution to this is to change from a presidential form of government to a parliamentary style in which the many various groups feel represented and have to share power in coalitions. In the current presidential system the non-Pashtun groups will always feel subordinate.

ISAF and the involved Coalition plans to start withdrawing forces and hand over the responsibility for the security system to the Afghans, is like throwing a child into the water hoping it can swim. Small liberal democracies, like Canada and the Netherlands, play leading roles in ISAF. They have the responsibility to make the leading countries, especially the UK and the US, aware of their responsibility to rescue Afghanistan.

Creating a reasonably effective state in Afghanistan is a long-term project that requires an end to the conflict, a capable and ethnically balanced representation in the national, provincial and district governments, a parliamentary democratic system with functioning political parties, and the promotion of economic development. Reform cannot succeed unless the ineffective and corrupt leadership at all levels and in the ministries is steadily replaced, the regional influence in Afghanistan's internal affairs is tamed and the narco-state which is dominated by warlords comes to an end. If the international community truly wants to win self-sustaining, positive peace in this country, it must focus its efforts, resources and attention on securing and stabilizing Afghanistan not only for decades but years to come. If we manage to securitize the country, the Afghan people will have reasonable prospects of a decent future. If we fail to do so, it will tell us very little about the Afghans, but a great deal about ourselves. Small liberal democracies have a lot of economic and sufficient military potential that could become essential in the creation of a positive peace in Afghanistan. They have more than sufficient interests that justify the use of their securitization potential to help rescuing Afghanistan. Small liberal democracies should take their responsibilities.