

**Grand Theory meets the Afghan case:
State failure and state-building in an age of uncertain
policy-making**

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Foreword

Hungary is a small country. Afghanistan is far away. We have no interests in Afghanistan. Al Qaida is dangerous but they threaten the U.S., rather than us. NATO is important. Drugs are dangerous. Afghanistan produces drugs. Historically, the U.S. is to blame for instability in Afghanistan, they should handle it. The Taliban brought order to Afghanistan. Afghans have to solve their problems on their own, eventually. Democracy cannot be brought to an Islamic country. A state cannot be built for Afghan tribes. We are responsible to protect the populations of failing states...

And so on. This was just a selection of the most influential ideas swirling around in bewildering cacophony in the European and the Hungarian discourse about Afghanistan, full of misunderstandings, erroneous beliefs, unqualified statements, and incoherences that one is at pain to abridge.

If we are responsible to protect, why do we not need to sacrifice more to create the conditions for good governance in Afghanistan? Why would Afghans need to solve their problems for themselves if a whole host of distant and neighbouring countries have contributed to them in a major way in the past? Why would it be good if „they” solved their problems entirely „for themselves,” in such a way that we do not welcome at all? How is a Taliban takeover of district centres in southern Afghanistan coupled with a wave of assassinations against pro-government figures a way of Afghans sorting it out for themselves? If democracy cannot be brought to an Islamic country, how come that the Taliban regularly assassinate mullahs speaking out in favour of it? If U.S. support to the mujahideen gave a boost to radical, militant Islamism in the Middle East, for which the U.S. is to be „blamed,” how can some people at the same time crave for a Taliban comeback as the only way to establish „order” in Afghanistan? How is Afghanistan supposed to be „tribal,” with millions of people living in urban centres such as sprawling Kabul? How can an entire country be described as tribal when only some of its Turkmen and Pashtun inhabitants retain tribal structures to a significant degree? Why would a „state” be impossible in a country that for decades used to have a stable monarchy, any more than it is in, for instance, Ethiopia?

This study delivers new concepts as input for the discourse on the universal reasons and consequences of state failure, at first deconstructively highlighting inconsistencies within the discourse. The pondering of the wrongs of state failure theory, identified eventually as „a theory of legitimate intervention,” instrumentalises theory by falsifying it, to thus produce improved insights. This is done on the basis of studying the Afghan case: the „case” that

redefined the discourse on state failure in an encounter that proved to be, and is still, as we speak, proving to be, literally lethal for many.

At the same time, the insights generated here can also be used to offer some normative conclusions regarding what ought to be done in Afghanistan.

This is the essence of the encounter of Grand Theory and the Afghan case, as it is presented in this study. How the post-modern imperialist turn in the state-failure discourse may adapt to the limitations of would-be intervening states' capacities as well as to the varying challenges in specific local contexts. Post-modern imperialism sees a need to exert control in the sense that it identifies securitised outcomes of political processes in potentially faraway lands and urges interventions to avoid these outcomes. Direct control is but one option, which even post-modern imperialists never thought necessary to seek for the long run. What is therefore being explored is how it is possible to use a „comprehensive approach,” one effectively coordinating the mammoth complex of governments, their militaries, IGOs, INGOs and private firms (development contractors, private security firms etc.) in the furtherance of transnational governance goals, by successfully interacting with specific local actors – appeasing, co-opting, using, or destroying them, depending on what seems necessary and/or possible in the light of specific circumstances – with now, post-9/11, and past securitisation, even security arguments informing the debates and the action in this field.

Structure

Chapter One conceptualises and introduces the major research questions that the present study looks to answer primarily with regards to Afghanistan. Chapter Two presents a conceptual innovation, “issue-specific security complexes,” as a general framework for analysing transnational security threats. This concept is promptly put to use in the Afghanistan context. Chapter Three deals with the difficulties of coalition burden-sharing, stemming partly (but only partly) from differences in individual countries' balance-of-threat calculus. Chapter Four shows how the conceptually weak sequencing of all that needs to be done in Afghanistan, together with the challenge of the ongoing insurgencies, undermines the goals of peace-building there. Finally, in the concluding section, I reflect on the hypotheses of the study, to be outlined in Chapter One.

Chapter One

Global governance vs. state failure

Introduction

The end of the Cold War was followed by a brief period of upward trend in the number of “armed intra-state conflicts” (UCD).

The reason for using the term “armed intra-state conflicts” in between quotation marks is that it is not necessarily a fortunate one. Using it, we tend to refer to conflicts that are “not interstate.” But these may not be purely “intra-state” in many a sense. They may have important interstate aspects. For example, intra-state conflicts may be directly tied to an interstate conflict, perhaps not just one but several of those. They may have causes beyond single states, for example in the way the world economy functions. So-called intra-state conflicts may spill over internationally recognised boundaries in various ways. And, to mention one more important point of criticism, the “non-armed” aspects of these conflicts are just as important to understand. Violence does not occur solely in a direct form, and its various observable forms (including its structural forms) all have an impact on the formation of conflict, which itself is a natural by-product of social change.

It is because of the discomfort with all these imperfections of the notion of intra-state conflicts that friend of mine Viktor Friedmann tried to have a journal article published in the periodical *Kül-Világ* with the letters of the adjective “intra-state” struck out in the title, i.e. as “~~Intra-state~~ armed conflicts.” I supported the idea; editor-in-chief Péter Wagner did not. Importantly, Péter Wagner did so not out of disagreement with Viktor Friedmann’s arguments, but simply out of discomfort with too unconventional a title for the article (see the end result: Friedmann, 2007).

Whichever way we should refer to them, occurrences of armed conflict, more or less limited to *within* the space of internationally recognised states, made up a significant cluster of what the influential State Failure Task Force in the mid-1990s defined as „state failure events” (Goldstone et al.; SFTF, 2000: 5).¹ It is important to note that intra-state conflicts were but one cluster. The use of terms such as “intra-state conflict” and “state failure” therefore cannot be conflated even in 1990s discourse. As much as a consensus existed, it was

¹ State failure events for the SFTF are: “revolutionary wars,” “ethnic wars,” “adverse regime changes” and “genocides and politicides.” (See SFTF, 2000: V.) To illustrate its influence: the Task Force was set up at then-Vice-President Al Gore’s initiative and its research was funded partly by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency).

that intra-state conflicts were a part of the larger set of events referred to as state failure events.

Initially, humanitarian interest – growing with the mentioned upward trend – defined much of the research on the topic of intra-state armed conflicts, failed states and state failure. The direct discursive origins of inquiry can be traced back to a 1993 article by Helman and Ratner, which itself was influenced by developments such as the “civil wars” (an even more unfortunate term) in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, in the post-Soviet space and in Somalia. Even Helman and Ratner, who did consider negative external effects of armed intra-state conflict, did so merely with the purpose of justifying the need for the United Nations Security Council to preoccupy itself with an issue of otherwise mostly humanitarian significance. They noted a potentially destructive external impact in the case of states *directly neighbouring* on conflict-struck areas and made the argument that because of this, these conflicts could endanger *international peace and security*. In other words, they saw physical proximity as a very important factor determining the likelihood of being affected by spill-over effects. They did not have many concerns about the security of faraway, Western geographical centres of the social sciences potentially becoming implicated in a major way.

Today, there is a large and constantly growing body of literature on „failed states” and „state failure” (see Lambach, 2007). This is attributable to no small degree to a more recent development. Humanitarian interest in the 1990s upsurge of armed intra-state conflicts is no longer the key variable behind it. The effect of the terror attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 brought widespread recognition of the fact that even distant armed intra-state conflicts, such as the one in Afghanistan, and a lack of effective control over state territory by an *internationally recognised government* (see *Insert 1.1.*) can have lethal indirect consequences – even for non-neighbouring, quite distant, and very powerful states.

Insert 1.1. *Brief reference to the specifics of the Afghan case regarding the issue of government recognition.* Even though some UN documents, including UN Security Council Resolution 1333 (19 December 2000), made reference to “Taliban authorities,” in reality this was short of true recognition of the Taliban as Afghanistan’s government.² The latter remained, up until shortly after the U.S.-

² UNSCR 1333 (2000) refers to „Taliban authorities” on page 2, but elsewhere in the text we also find expressions such as „the areas of Afghanistan under the control of the Afghan faction known as Taliban.” The wording in the latter case clearly shows the Security Council’s intentions. In their official view, the Taliban were merely a “faction” that controlled “a part” of Afghanistan. They were not the internationally recognised leadership of the country.

led intervention in October 2001, the government under President Burhanuddin Rabbani of the Jamiat-e Islami party, formed from the Islamic Jihad Council of *mujahideen* parties in 1992. On the (battle)ground, Northern Alliance forces represented this government in the war against the Taliban. By 2001, they were largely pushed into a corner, holding on to just about five percent of the country. Pre-9/11 Afghanistan thus offers an extreme example of how much discrepancy there can be between the international recognition of a government and effective control of territory nominally ruled by it. Because of this, it is important to note that while the Afghan case had extraordinary significance regarding the discourse of state failure, it is probably not the most relevant example for concept formation. The 1990s discourse about Afghanistan itself showed signs of confusion as the Taliban were, by virtue of their further-reaching presence on the ground, more entitled to call themselves a government, even while they were not very “internationally recognisable” in a moral or even a practical sense.³

What has been missing from the discourse, with the exception of the State Failure Task Force’s quite exact definition of state failure events (carefully devised using *event identification thresholds* and *event magnitude scales*⁴), is a truly thorough conceptualisation of state failure, with the aim to produce a definition that can be operationalised universally. It may be important to clarify at this point what “universal operationalisation” entails. It does not mean that state failure should be the most relevant conceptual framework to interpret security issues in every local context. It merely implies that we should work with the concept so that on the basis of its important variables *can* be pointed out and measured in any context. Such measurement, as is always the case in social science research, will happen with varying degrees of accuracy, relevance – and with varying potential to amaze the observer.

The lack of this kind of definition partly stems from the nature of International Relations Theory, i.e. the nature of a theory of *interstate* relations. State failure is simply outside the „box.” It poses the greatest challenge to that IR school of thought which by its very nature is most confined to the proverbial box: Realism. The latter’s uncomfortable answer to the phenomenon of state failure seems to be to note that in „failed states” one sees „a curious inversion of Hobbes” (Jackson, 1998: 5). That is reference to the Hobbesian

³ Regarding how much it was possible to establish constructive relations with them (in connection with the issue of the practicalities of recognisability), see *Insert 1.2*.

⁴ As described by the Political Instability Task Force (successor to the State Failure Task Force) at: <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/pitfcode.htm#revdesc> (accessed on 14 October 2007).

conception of the state of nature, which Realism is trained to consider on the interstate level rather than as an intra-state phenomenon. Quite ironically, since the latter clearly would not be much of a surprise even for Hobbes himself. The straitjacket of state-centric Realist thinking has paralysing analytical implications. It results in taking a very simplified view of the usually highly complex reality of social relations in the space described as a „failed state.” Anthropological and other, more in-depth studies of these realities have much in the way of lessons to offer to IR scholars. See, for example, Tariq’s study of the *arbakai* security institution of certain tribes in Afghanistan’s Loya Paktia area (Tariq, 2008), or Coburn’s study of complex, overlapping webs of *qawmiyat* (essentially group identities) in the town of Istalif near Kabul (Coburn, 2008). These, just as many other studies, wonderfully capture the complexities of social reality in various places in Afghanistan. They can be tellingly contrasted with the notion of the space of a failed state, characterised merely by the absence of a particular kind of social organisation, i.e. the state. Yet, the latter is the sort of misconception Realists and other IR scholars are often trying to sell.

Presenting a possible way to conceptualise state failure, the following section of this chapter looks to overcome the above mentioned deficiency of the IR discourse by using three basic innovations.

- I.) Firstly, by avoiding the inherently normative term „failed states,” because it results in a practice of derogatory labelling. Such labelling is influenced by considerations that are political/non-scientific in nature: considerations regarding which states one may *appropriately* call „failed.”⁵ Two other negative implications for analysis are that the adjective „failed” suggests a possibly false finality on the one hand, and that it lacks sophistication to a critical degree on the other.⁶
- II.) The second innovation is to differentiate between different research motivations, which dictate different research agendas. As a result of one or another particular

⁵ Consider e.g. the urban crime rates in major cities of states such as Brazil or the United States, the number of child deaths in India, or the number of illegal immigrants arriving into the EU every year. Rampant crime could be interpreted as a lack of an effective monopoly over the use of force by the state; a high number of child deaths may show a lack of state capacity to provide for reliable life prospects for citizens; finally, a large number of illegal immigrants may lead us to question how effective a state’s control over its territory is... Yet none of the above mentioned countries are typically examined in case studies of failed states in state failure-related volumes, which shows the latent consensus to be that somehow it would not be appropriate to discuss them in that context. That underlying statement itself is not debated here. Pointing to it merely illustrates the need to better understand reasons for such thinking, for now.

⁶ Consider in this light the rather superficial debates over whether currently insurgency-hit states such as Afghanistan are “failed” or not.

way of answering the question of „in whose interests” research is conducted, one may view „state failure” as a phenomenon from an *external/security* or an *internal/humanitarian* perspective. This results in fundamentally differing conceptions of state failure – even if the phenomena described by the different concepts can easily happen to be interconnected.

- III.) Thirdly, state failure does not necessarily have to mean an absence of statehood or imply a decrease in statehood, i.e. a diminishing of „state-likeness”. Keep the analogy of market failures in mind here. A market failure does not have to be interpreted as something that implies the *overall absence or failure* of the market as an institution. The expression can even be used in the plural, referring to the various, potentially contemporaneous forms of market failure.

It is especially the definition from a specifically external/security perspective that may offer additional value. In the post-September 11 world it may have advantages over the SFTF’s definition by *arguably* being more *relevant*. Having said that, the humanitarian considerations-based definition that the Task Force designed cannot be overlooked, even with a staunch security focus in research, for reasons made clear in this chapter later on.

Dealing with state failure primarily from the external/security perspective and using the concept of Negative Spillover Effects (NSEs), which will be introduced in the following section, one may define an important secondary stake of the discourse of state failure. It stems from identifying a program of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) as a task of global governance. CTR is conceptualised here in such a way, as the reader shall see, as though it would offer *converging gains* to all the states on the planet. One may sense that the latter is quite a daring proposition to make, for example in light of the actual experience of state-building in Afghanistan (this will be discussed in more detail later on).

To elaborate on all that CTR may imply, an overview of the discourse of state failure and a description of different schools of thought within it follow. That allows for distinguishing between various conceivable and debatable normative frameworks for CTR and global governance. These normative frameworks are generated from the schools of thought outlined in the overview of the discourse. A discussion of them may help define the enormous challenges of the sort of interstate cooperation that is conceived of here. It is cooperation on a highly ambitious scale, on epistemologically and empirically questionable grounds, and of a debatable content as to the concrete measures to be taken.

Conceptualisation

Something that can be viewed as welcome change in the new, „post-9/11” interpretation of state failure is the honesty in it about the security considerations and the security interests motivating research. Mass refugee flows, for example, have usually been a key external security concern in the case of humanitarian crises. Generally, however, such concerns remained more latent in the discourse, only implicitly motivating and informing research and policy-making. The threat of terrorism, especially since it was highlighted by what happened on September 11, 2001, tends to figure much more prominently in reasoning justifying any kind of research or policy agenda related to state failure. This is shown the most clearly in the title of Robert I. Rotberg’s oft-cited volume („State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror”; Rotberg, 2003) or in former UK foreign secretary Jack Straw’s statement that we shall fear the coming of the „next Afghanistan” (Straw, 2002: 4). It is welcome honesty, even if there certainly exist chances for the manipulation of the notion: for example through unfoundedly – irrationally or manipulatively – playing to the security fears of the general public.

The use of the concept of state failure may be somewhat clearer now. An approach that reflects the dual – security-oriented and humanitarian – nature of the research shall be applied. Based on this, one can come up with both a “national (or societal) security-oriented”⁷ and a „humanitarian”⁸ concept of state failure. In other words, these may be viewed as the duo of one concept from an *external* perspective and another from a *local or internal* point of view⁹ (drawing on Marton, 2005: 2). Examples follow regarding how these different approaches appear in a number of widely cited studies.

The already mentioned State Failure Task Force did its work largely with humanitarian motives, while the RAND Corporation’s 2007 study of ungoverned territories

⁷ The „referent object” (i.e. what we claim to be threatened) from an external security perspective is somewhat problematic to define. What is conventionally referred to as „national security” deals with a number of threats, such as the drugs trade, that are not necessarily threats to the “nation” (the equivalent of the state in Anglo-Saxon discourse) itself. These threats matter more on the human security level of analysis. Consequently, the argument is made by some that „societal security” would be a more appropriate catch-all term for policy. Having said that, the reason why the term „societal security” is not going to enter public discourse any time soon is quite clear: it seems overly complicated as the obscure meaning of „societal security” is known only to a limited set of individuals privy to the Security Studies discourse, while the term might deceive others.

⁸ I do not claim here a false dichotomy between the two different perspectives in the sense that one would have something to do with security, and the other (the humanitarian perspective) would not. Humanitarian concerns are essentially human security concerns: concerns for the lives and well-being of the people living in the country that one happens to study as an observer.

⁹ It is important to see that such a point of view can be taken by someone who is not “there”: e.g. a Mongolian scholar can write from such a point of view about Somalia, even while he/she is „external” to Somalia.

and the ways in which they might aggravate the threat of terrorism falls clearly within the category of external security-oriented inquiry. In both of these cases, research was conducted on conceptually clear grounds when it came to the objective of research (“understanding intra-state conflicts to prevent or alleviate suffering” in the case of SFTF; “defending from terrorism” for the RAND Corporation).

Both motives of “national” and humanitarian interest are explicitly present in Robert H. Dorff’s 2000 paper as the author tries to devise a “triage” system¹⁰ for failing states. His aim is to provide a framework for decision-making regarding which states ought to be assisted or where intervention should occur. A triage system addresses the need to prioritise or neglect cases of state failure – a need stemming from the harsh reality that policy can only draw on limited resources, and policy-makers cannot hope to deal with all challenges. Dorff’s more or less objective criterium (based on humanitarian interest) is a pragmatic assessment of who *can* be helped in practice. The clearly subjective added criterium (based on U.S. national interest) is an assessment of which countries are “pivotal” from the viewpoint of U.S. grand strategy. Although the needed assessments cannot be expected to be truly transparent, Dorff’s is still work that leads to realistic policy implications.

An overall counter-example is the volume of studies edited by Robert I. Rotberg that appeared in 2004 with the title of “State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror.” Here the title explicitly refers to post-9/11 concerns about possible consequences of state failure, yet there is no clear rationale outlined in it regarding why it may be worth looking at the case studies of the volume *specifically in light of the terrorism threat*. In the case studies that follow, the politics, the economics and the key social issues of a number of states are discussed without one perceiving a clear nexus with how security policy should address the threat of terrorism originating overseas. The Brookings Institution’s study of state weakness in the developing world (Rice and Patrick, 2008) is flawed in a similar sense. It talks about state weakness as a “national security threat” and describes poverty alleviation as an imperative for national security policy. It does so specifically mentioning sub-Saharan Africa as a key target of assistance. Concluding that poverty in sub-Saharan Africa should deeply trouble us in a moral sense is one thing. Concluding that poverty in sub-Saharan Africa should deeply trouble us because it is a threat to national security is a different thing. The latter statement seems to be in fundamental disconnect with how policy-makers approach sub-

¹⁰ Triage is the system according to which a doctor or a medic distinguishes between the hopelessly wounded and those that can still be helped, at the scene of a disaster or on the battlefield. Put simple, it is the priority order of giving/receiving aid.

Saharan Africa, and the reason for that may not be short-sightedness on the part of policy-makers. The explanation seems to be rather that security policy cannot rest on a general securitisation of state weakness without adequate resources to live up to this highly demanding standard. Prioritisation on the basis of clearly defined interests and threats is required of policy-makers.

The confusing picture offered by the latter two sources, in contrast with the clearer perspective offered by the ones mentioned prior to them, illustrates the need to be clear about research motivations. “State failure,” or the function of a state that it fails to fulfil, will imply different things from a “humanitarian or internal human security” or an “external, national or societal security-oriented” perspective. Put differently: based on whether it is defined by what the outside world wants from a particular country (no safe haven there for terrorists, no production of narcotics etc.) or whether it is defined by what the locals suffer from or by what others think they are suffering from (lack of political freedoms, dreadful economic situation, rampant crime, “civil war,” genocide etc.).

Depending on the context, a lack of honesty about this might disguise:

- 1) an attempt to sell intervention in a country where there are no national interests for the would-be intervening power;
- 2) national interests behind an intervention presented as humanitarian.

Neutral research requires clarity about the motives of research, even while it is otherwise perfectly possible that in the case of an intervention both humanitarian and security interests may be identified as factors in the intervening country’s action. The point is that one shall distinguish between such interests, and that this be reflected in the definition of different challenges.

(*The external, security-oriented definition.*) According to my security-oriented definition, state failure occurs when the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG from hereon) of a state does not exercise sufficient control over its internationally recognised state territory and therefore fails in its chief function from an external point of view.

Said primary function is defined here, for the purposes of abstract conceptualisation, on the basis of a norm of *cooperative sovereignty*. According to the latter, a state is responsible for maintaining sufficient control over its sovereign portion of world territory. State failure thus occurs when an IRG is unable to prevent the emergence of Negative Spillover Effects (NSEs) – negative external security consequences or negative security externalities, with alternative wording – from its territory. In the case of such IRG incapacity,

the use of incentives or deterrents by the actors of the outside world cannot get the IRG in question to prevent or cease NSEs from its territory – hence the IRG is „indeterrable.”

To express what is meant by the term „indeterrability,” and why IRGs matter, one has to point to the significance of the issue of government recognition. The present global state system should ideally function so that the list of IRGs and – referring to Henry Kissinger’s famous question about the EU’s telephone number – that of the telephone numbers belonging to each would suffice to keep the problem of NSEs under control. Such a list would provide contact points to able leaderships in every corner of the world. For instance, should there appear a terrorist training camp in Country X, it could be enough to dial the right number and ask the leadership there to make that camp disappear. That is, assuming the benevolence of Country X’s leadership, stemming from the premise of the universal acceptance of the norm of cooperative sovereignty. Even if that benevolence is not there, however, Country X’s leadership is supposed to be capable of *credible commitment*, to do what it takes to meet its external obligations. Therefore if it is reluctant to do something out of benevolence, it can still be given incentives, or deterred or sanctioned into doing it.

When Country X is not capable of practicing its sovereignty in this way, it might be for various reasons. Some IRGs are weak to act even in the absence of an armed challenge. In other cases it is an armed force other than that of the IRG that controls territory from where NSEs may emerge. In that case it is the non-IRG armed faction that would need to be deterred by “the outside world” (see *Insert 1.2.*).

Insert 1.2. Brief reference to the specifics of the Afghan case regarding the issue of deterring a non-recognised government. There were a number of reasons why deterrence did not work against the Taliban. The reason is not that a non-state actor cannot in general be approached, paid, negotiated with, threatened, fought or destroyed. All these things are possible, provided certain conditions are met.

In the Taliban’s case, one of the problems was that they were not entirely able to talk with a single voice. Relatively moderate, pragmatist elements were from time to time in a disagreement within the regime with those holding more radical views. This struggle affected Taliban policies towards a range of issues. Rules of engagement in Hazara areas where the Taliban had to face an insurgency almost constantly; Taliban policy towards tolerance (or lack thereof) of the Bamiyan statues of the Buddha; the Taliban’s recognition of breakaway Chechnya; the Taliban’s support to Uighur separatists from China; the Taliban’s

harbouring of jihadist¹¹ networks from all over the Islamic world, organising under the umbrella of al-Qaida etc. Moreover, the struggle between the pragmatic “relative moderates” and the radicals was not an autonomous process that could have played out entirely within the regime’s ranks. Its outcome, and the general slide towards more and more radicalism, was increasingly influenced by the influx of foreign jihadists, their guns and their money.

In other words, the Taliban were neither benevolent, nor a unitary actor, nor capable of credible commitment.

The appeasement of the Taliban or even attempts to establish constructive relations with them therefore could not work. This sort of policy was tried in vain at different points in time by Russia (over the Taliban recognition and support of breakaway Chechnya¹²); by China (over the support to Uighur separatists from the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region); by the U.S. over the safe haven that the Taliban provided to Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaida organisation; and finally even by Pakistan, as all its support to the Talib regime can be regarded as directed at securing a friendly neighbour in Afghanistan that should have, if this policy would have truly worked, recognised the Afghan-Pakistani border, but did not.

In one especially memorable case, Saudi Prince Turki al-Faisal, who headed Saudi Arabia’s General Intelligence Directorate from 1977 to 2001, tried, together with members of the Pakistani leadership, to personally convince Taliban leader mullah Omar to extradite Osama bin Laden in September 1998, but to no avail. In an overly dramatic scene, Omar poured a bucketful of cold water on his head to then say he needed this to be able to bear hearing such an inappropriate request from his guests. Later, when the Organisation of Islamic Countries protested mullah Omar’s February 2001 decision to destroy the Buddha’s statues in Bamiyan, it was a similarly futile attempt at altering the Taliban’s will. Even prominent Muslim scholars, such as Egyptian Yusuf al-Qaradawi,¹³ tried to pay a personal visit to mullah Omar to talk to him about this, only to be harassed on the

¹¹ „Jihadist” is used here as a synonym of radical Islamist, while “Islamism” is used “to refer to an Islamic revivalism usually characterized by literalism, moral conservatism, and an attempt to implement increasingly radical Islamic values in all spheres of life, particularly in the law and politics” (based on Gregory, 2007: 1027).

¹² Relations were officially established between the two in 2000, in a formal agreement between mullah Omar and Chechen leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

¹³ A long-time, prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood, currently based in Qatar.

way by the Taliban's religious police. The Buddha's statues were then destroyed in March that year.

The UN and its various agencies tried various forms of engagement as well. UNESCO attempted in vain to save valuable artefacts from Afghanistan's museums from destruction by bigot radicals, but eventually they received no cooperation from those elements within the regime with whom they were in contact. The U.S. and UNODC (the UN Office for Drugs and Crime) tried to get the Taliban to become involved in counter-narcotics, as Afghanistan was already becoming a global centre of poppy cultivation and a chief exporter of opiates in the 1990s. The mixed result of this policy was the at times brutally enforced Taliban ban in 2000 on poppy cultivation, which sent heroin prices on the world market soaring back to record highs from a previous low point, and helped some of the Taliban's old-time allies, such as Haji Bashir Noorzai, to enormous revenues out of the export of opiates (notably, export trade was not banned by the Taliban).

Non-state actors did not get good results out of approaching the Taliban, either. Over the course of the rise of the Taliban, at first even the *mujahideen* commanders, such as Ahmed Shah Masoud, Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ismail Khan, tried supporting them financially, in order to stabilise southern Afghanistan.¹⁴ Masoud's air force even flew close air support sorties backing Taliban forces in the battle of Charasyab, in February 1995, against Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami faction. At around that time, Masoud held personal talks with a Talib leader, mullah Rabbani, and it later transpired that he was almost arrested on the occasion. In March 1995, Hazara leader Abdul Ali Mazari's Hizb-i-Wahdat party tried to curry favour with the Taliban and hand over to them their fighting positions within Kabul. Hizb-i-Wahdat forces on the ground failed to abide by the commands they received and this first attempt by the Taliban to gain a foothold in the Afghan capital failed. The Taliban were furious, they called on Mazari to hold personal talks, then arrested the Hazara leader and killed him. According to one account, Mazari was thrown out of a helicopter. In the Spring of 1997, by which time the Taliban were in control of Kabul, they attempted the conquest of northern Afghanistan for the first time. Their military

¹⁴ They were just one of the Taliban's several early supporters. Later on Pakistan would emerge as the ultimately important one.

campaign was aided by treason within the opposing factions. One commander helping the Taliban move into the key northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif was Abdul Malik Pahlawan, a commander from the predominantly Uzbek Junbesh-e-Milli militia. Pahlawan expected a leadership position in reward for his treason from the Taliban, yet when a group of Taliban came to his house on May 25 they behaved completely unlike guests. They destroyed Pahlawan's TV set and the goat-skin painting of a famous Persian poet, Omar Khayyam. At that point Pahlawan realised he would be eventually sidelined by the Taliban in any arrangement, and decided to betray them as well. Further examples could be given here, to illustrate the Taliban's general lack of a readiness to compromise, but perhaps this many may suffice.

As to the deterrence of the Taliban, it did not work as long as no major resources were devoted to it, and either nothing was done, or merely cruise missile strikes were launched. But even meaningful deterrence did not work eventually, either, when the Taliban was faced with the prospect of destruction in conventional war, in October 2001. Even then they were not ready to hand over Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaida leaders.¹⁵

Referring to whose interests may be harmed by indeterrability, the „outside world” may mean potentially every state on the planet, a group of states or even a single state affected by NSEs.

NSEs can be interpreted as any external impact that may become *securitised*. Keeping securitisation theory (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998: 23-42) in mind is important for a critical view of this issue. The most often considered NSEs are those of terrorism-related or organised criminal activities (including, for example, the drugs trade). The possibility of a dangerous epidemic getting out of control in the territory of a poor or a conflict-struck state, facilitated by critically weak health services, also belongs in the category of more frequently considered threats (see e.g. Urquhart, 2004).

One may think of yet many other possible NSEs.

For example, a guerrilla organisation active in one country may take advantage of the weakness of a neighbouring country's IRG and the political vacuum in the latter's territory and establish rear-bases in the relative protection of internationally recognised state boundaries. To name but one such instance, this happened in the case of the Rwandan

¹⁵ I drew many historical details here from the narrative offered by Gutman, 2008. For an alternative account, written earlier than mine, but one still essentially very similar to the one outlined here, see Bleuer, 2008.

Interahamwe militia and the regular armed forces formerly under the command of Rwanda's late Hutu President Habyarimana. They retreated from Rwanda to rear-bases in the eastern part of the DRC after the Tutsi Revolutionary Patriotic Front's victory in 1994. Other examples include the Albanian NLA operating partly from Kosovo in the 2000-2001 guerrilla war in Macedonia; Chechen groups fighting Russia operating from the Pankisi gorge in Georgia, following the outbreak of the Second Chechen War; Lord's Resistance Army guerrillas operating from Sudan and the DRC against the Ugandan government forces; and PKK insurgents operating from Iraqi Kurdistan against Turkey – to name just a few more cases (Marton, 2006).¹⁶

Pirates – guerrillas of the sea in analogous terms – may similarly establish operating bases for themselves along an insufficiently controlled coastline. The International Maritime Bureau of the International Chamber of Commerce regularly updates its live piracy map. On the latter you can see in one glimpse where insufficiently controlled coasts pose a problem, Somalia's coast being one of the most problematic areas (IMB/ICC, 2006).

It might also be perspective-widening to break away, in connection with the threat of epidemics, from our preconceptions about lethal, rapidly killing viruses like the ones causing Ebola or SARS. Consider therefore the threat of multi-resistant TB-strains or the spread of HIV, for instance. These are also aided by weak health services.

Another NSE taken into account very early on, already by Helman and Ratner in their mentioned discourse-opening article (1993), is the chance that armed conflict itself might spread beyond borders. Contagion of this kind may aggravate a local problem into a regional one. Entire zones or complexes of conflicts in West Africa, in Central Africa, in the Western Balkans and elsewhere may remind us of the reality of this possibility. The literature talks, in connection with this, at times simply of “spill-over effects” (CGDev, 2004:1), of “spawn conflicts” (Rice, 2003:3) or, more poetically, of “the dangerous exports of failed states” (FP-FFP, 2005).

A *critical* interpretation of the concept of NSEs implies first and foremost that one does not simply accept any security agenda. For example, one should not accept it as an objective fact that the outpouring of refugees from a state is a security issue. Such a view can only be the result of an inter-subjective process with a *more or less* stable, i.e. a potentially dynamically shifting, outcome, which can then be challenged as non-objective reality by any sceptical observer.

¹⁶ In fact, in this case one sees an NSE taking place in both directions. One state suffers an NSE in the form of having to endure cross-border attacks. The other suffers an NSE in the form of the intrusion of an armed group.

An even more critical reading could be that the term „IRG-failure” may be preferable to „state failure” because of the greater accuracy of the former. The implications of the oft-seen erroneous tendency of conflating state and government *as an actor* in IR discourse can be avoided by using the term „IRG-failure” as a substitute. The term „state failure” will only be used in this chapter from hereon in order to conform more to the tradition of the discourse. Otherwise, state failure is effectively re-conceptualised as “an NSE as a result of IRG-failure” here. Taking a global perspective on the issue, an instance of state failure may also be interpreted as the failure of the global system of IRG-operated states, i.e., simply put, as “state system failure.” Of course, here again, the use of the word „state” would draw attention away from the distinctness of state and government, and lead to what could be described as “IRG-centricity.” It is potentially problematic in analysis because, for instance in areas that have been firmly controlled for decades by an armed faction other than an IRG, one that provides more or less acceptable governance and may in fact aim at establishing constructive relations with the outside world, one should not speak of indeterrability. There *is* somebody to deter. Jeffrey Herbst speaks, in connection with this, of „legal blinders” and concludes that „the standard international legal practice almost always equates sovereign power with control of the capital city” (Herbst, 2004: 302).

All these critical considerations notwithstanding, the security-oriented concept of state failure is useful because it can lead to operative research and measurements. NSEs can be measured, or at least relevant indicators can be found to draw conclusions regarding their scale. The amount of heroin intercepted at a country’s borders; the number of dead and wounded in terrorist attacks in one country by organisations operating from another country; the difference in terms of the prevalence of HIV in a border region compared to its country-wide average prevalence etc. Such and plenty of much more complex indicators can be thought of.

Even critical research may capitalise on using the concept of Negative Spill-over Effects. It raises a number of obvious, empirically answerable research questions that may offer food for critical thought. A few examples of this wrap up this section of the chapter.

1.) The 2003 European Security Strategy mentions organised crime partly as an NSE. “Europe is a prime target for organised crime. This internal threat to our security has an important external dimension: cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons” – it is stated in the document (ESS, 2003: 4). The notion of organised crime, as seen here, covers human trafficking, which itself includes the trafficking of sex workers. The question can be asked, to whom is that trade “negative”? The answer to it can be, by the use

of indicators, even quantified to a degree. To which stakeholders and in what sense do we see a negative impact? Is it legitimate to describe the impact as negative *from one country* (the source of the sex workers) *to the other* (where there is demand for them)? Questioning this even leads one to questioning if it is appropriate to use a state-centric mode of speech in this context (and the answer is “no”).

2.) As one gets down to measuring impact, counter-intuitive findings may include the observation that an NSE may be taking place in the opposite direction to the one that is conventionally expected. The drugs trade’s complex logistics, for example, include the smuggling of precursor materials used in laboratory processes to produce the drugs. Trade in small arms usually also accompanies the trade in drugs. Small arms and precursor shipments travel generally in the direction of the source of the drugs, and it seems plausible to conclude that they might also represent NSEs.

3.) Mass migration flows are often regarded as NSEs. Critical engagement with the concept of spill-over effects could lead one to look at which countries are more affected by these, for example in the form of refugee flows. One could also look at factors of migration, and identify its actual winners and losers. This could correct misperceptions regarding to what degree industrialised countries are affected, and compare the impact seen by them with what other countries face. This happens to conform to Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde’s mixed-epistemology research agenda (1998), which encourages research aimed at comparing perceptions or inter-subjective views with realities of whatever is identified as a security threat.

(*The humanitarian definition.*) Having clarified the security-oriented concept, the existing humanitarian concepts of state failure still have to be discussed.

Rotberg, for instance, drew up a continuum along which a country may move: from the rank of being „strong” through that of being „weak,” „failing”, „failed,” and finally „collapsed.” He did not differentiate between problems of insufficient or incomplete territorial control, on the one hand, and those of weak government performance or the insufficient provision of „political goods” on the other. For his approach, he drew latent criticism from Jenne, who pointed out that this would have allowed for including seemingly strong North Korea and then-fragmented Sri Lanka in the same category (Rotberg, 2003: 2-10, Jenne, 2003: 222-223). Even exchanging a uni-dimensional approach for a bi-dimensional one may not suffice, however, for the purpose of truly refined analysis. For an example of even more multi-dimensionality, the Center for Global Development offered a tri-dimensional

assessment framework from its part. They distinguished security, legitimacy and capacity gaps in their study of state weakness (CGDev, 2004: 14-16 and 47-49).

There have been a number of attempts at designing indexes which could be used to evaluate states, and thus place them along the kind of continuum Rotberg described, giving us a more refined assessment of individual states' performance than just the binary coding of "failed" and "non-failed." I am providing two examples below.

- § *The Failed States Index (FSI)* is indirectly a perception index, resting on software-based text analysis of thousands of media and other sources the results of which are reviewed – correctively adjusted – by subject-matter experts. It is assembled since 2005 in a joint project of the Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy Magazine.
- § *The Brookings Institution's index of state weakness in the developing world* (Rice and Patrick, 2008) is a composite index using many already available indicators of the World Bank, Freedom House and others.

In 2007, I wrote a brief critique of the Failed States Index for the World Security Institute's Brussels Blog (Marton, 2007). The points I made there are still valid regarding FSI and to some extent regarding the Brookings Institution's index as well. These objections include the methodological challenge of dealing with states as homogeneous units of analysis when in reality they can be very different even in their sheer size. Russia, spanning eleven time zones, is a good example of this, with large differences in terms of the general situation across its vast space from Grozny or Vladivostok to St Petersburg. A concern more specific to FSI is that worried or disapproving media coverage will cause distortions in the results – for instance, in my reading, this might have been the explanation for the bad score of otherwise stable-looking Belarus in 2007, or Bosnia's ending up behind Angola in the same year.¹⁷

Definitional issues can also be highlighted. The FSI rests on interest in twelve dimensions of state weakness which include vague categories such as "Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia" and "Rise of Factionalized Elites." The Brookings Institution on the other hand defines a weak state (Rice and Patrick, 2008: 8) as one that cannot, for example, "foster an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic growth." The criterium of sustainable and equitable growth seems to question whether there are any healthy states on the planet.

¹⁷ In the 2008 index both Bosnia and Belarus still lagged behind Angola in FSI's rankings (FSI, 2008).

Putting irony aside, the definitional problems show that the bigger issue is not simply a lack of nuanced enough analysis, but that the „internal perspective” makes it necessary to make normative statements regarding the desirable quality of a state in much more detail than does the security-oriented concept of state failure. That, implicitly or explicitly, means taking as the basis of such considerations an ideal model-state, which rather inevitably results in West-centricity.

With the aim of being strategically vague, and on an arguably Hobbesian basis, one may define the state as the chief means for the population of a given territory of ensuring stable, reliable life prospects for the long run. State failure thus occurs when a state fails in this chief function (Marton, 2004: 134). Based on Hobbes’ concept of the Leviathan and what might go wrong with it, one gets to four distinct possibilities, three of which (*I. to III.*) will eventually appear empirically relevant.

- I.)* The Leviathan may be too strong, in which case the state itself makes life prospects non-reliable by violent arbitrariness.
- II.)* Two or more Leviathans may fight for the control of state territory in a „civil war” or an intra-state armed conflict (although a persistent division of state territory is also imaginable in a frozen conflict, without continuous fighting).
- III.)* If the Leviathan is simply too weak, unmitigated miseries of life, corruption, and organised and unorganised forms of crime might be a source of uncertainty.
- IV.)* Finally, it is a theoretical, rather than a practical, possibility that any kind of Leviathan may be absent altogether.

The first option shows *strongly* authoritarian rule as being the equivalent of state failure. A person to likely protest that would be Hobbes himself, who, in accordance with his vision of „the state of nature,” was ready to welcome even such authoritarian rule as preferable to the possibility of civil war (Hobbes, 1970: 145-149). Still, scholars such as Nicholson seem to be following a logic similar to mine. Nicholson does not in general refer to states that provide their populations with „coercive” stability, as opposed to the „consensual” stability provided by democracies, „failed.” Since coercion means state violence, however, he acknowledges that it *might* constitute a failure in guaranteeing individuals’ physical security. His benchmark for judging the latter is a critical threshold of „the probability that a new-born

infant will reach a suitably advanced age and then die of natural causes” (Nicholson, 1998). This leaves room for soft authoritarian states in the category of „non-failed,” similarly to my classification of Leviathans.

The third option, that of the weak but non-challenged Leviathan, is also a peculiar case. The State Failure Task Force’s definitions of state failure events cover only two of the three relevant possibilities listed above (that of the genocidal Leviathan and the case of rival Leviathans). They do not cover this particular case. It is easy to understand why it remained outside the framework of the Task Force’s empirical inquiries. State weakness, *seemingly* in the absence of anything dramatic happening, can hardly be qualified as an „event,” even while for many individuals life may be quite brutish and short as a result of poverty-related diseases or organised and un-organised crime. Observers of Central American countries, like Nicaragua, readily point out how some of the earlier intra-state armed conflicts of the region seem to have transformed into a large wave of crime generating levels of supposedly “non-political” violence potentially exceeding what was experienced during the “political” conflicts of earlier times (Rodgers, 2007).

The main challenge regarding the humanitarian definition is that it is less objectively operationalisable. Using the critical threshold suggested by Nicholson may be quite problematic in instances when we do not have sufficient and/or reliable statistical data. Also, even more importantly, the humanitarian concept of state failure may be too wide to really benefit analysis at all. If low-income and conflict-struck states as well as countries ruled by strongly authoritarian regimes all fall within the category of “failed states,” in what way could this term be an accurate or even meaningful description for a country *in itself*?

Yet we cannot just ignore the humanitarian concept. For example, the issue of refugee flows as an NSE shows that the „internal vs. external” differentiation of research approaches cannot be clear-cut. The risk of a mass-refugee-flow NSE is clearly higher when a state’s population does not have stable, reliable life prospects. This is more than a plausible hypothesis. *Per definitionem* it is so, based on any interpretation of the term „refugee.”

The dots need to be connected in this sense.

An interesting attempt at just that is the RAND Corporation’s study of “ungoverned territories.” It looked specifically to say what variables made the terrorism spill-over more likely in a number of case studies. Notably, the Afghan-Pakistani borderland was included in the sample. For a conceptual framework, RAND’s team distinguished areas of contested, abdicated, and weak governance, and examined these in terms of “conduciveness,” i.e. to what degree they fit the needs of a terrorist group looking for a safe-haven or seeking sources

of financing. Through the notion of conduciveness they connected security-oriented research with the examination of internal challenges and weaknesses of governance (RAND, 2007).

Meanwhile, humanitarian considerations matter also from an ethical perspective. A state where the IRG does not produce sufficient public good is hardly well-functioning, even if there are no NSEs originating from its territory.

Further critical remarks are still necessary, regarding both the security-oriented and the humanitarian concepts of state failure. Most importantly, albeit one may empirically identify states' individual failures in a trans-spatial and trans-temporal set of state failures, this should not imply that one cannot look beyond any given individual state in analysing the *reasons* for a particular instance of state failure. Currently, this is what commonly happens as the discourse of state failure is very closely connected to the discourse over „good governance.” The two share basically the same analytical framework, existing in a complementary relationship with each other (Kasnyik, 2007: 55-56).

Contrary to the main streams of these discourses, structural factors have to be taken into account beyond a narrow-sighted, „agency-focused” approach to reviewing individual states' features. One also has to counter the generally a-historical nature of the discourse (Bilgin and Morton, 2002). To illustrate the importance of the last argument, from an a-historical point of view, 9/11 could possibly be described as an Afghanistan spill-over, or in other words the consequence of state failure in Afghanistan. Such a narrative negates, or makes harder to see, past Soviet, U.S., Saudi and Pakistani policies' – as well as other countries' – obvious role in the outcome, and the blowback element of the “9/11 NSE.”

NSEs, interdependent security, and global governance

A security-oriented conceptualisation of state failure, focusing on NSEs, treats a co-operative interpretation of sovereignty as the norm. The objection that it is not actually the norm of our days is welcome. This is merely to say that cooperative sovereignty could be the norm in the ideal world of credibly committing and benevolent IRGs described in the previous section.

The notion of cooperative sovereignty is essential to understand why the issue of state failure is problematised at all. A traditional Realist (normative) framework of thinking would leave far smaller room for such problematisation: weak, failing and failed states shall perish, unless they are allies. One has to look at the concept of security interdependence in this

section, to more comprehensively account for the problematisation of state weakness that has taken place.

It is commonplace to say that as a result of globalisation the world has become highly interdependent, not only in an economic but in a security sense as well. In this world, the benefit of having stable states with credible leaderships, covering all of world territory, is obvious. Assuming a high level of interconnectedness, Country X might spend whatever great amount of money on its security: regardless of how much it spends, it may not be able to preserve its security if meanwhile Country Y is a totally dysfunctional state, which operates as fertile ground for NSEs (see this, in an abstract, exaggerated form, in *Figure 1.1.*).

„X”			
		„Y”	

Figure 1.1. States as building blocks

In the absence of a world state – the starting point of any discussion of global governance – the existing states serve as building blocks of global stability.

Assuming the highest attainable level of security interdependence, physical proximity might be an irrelevant factor in affecting the probability of NSEs from a dysfunctional state, such as Country Y, reaching Country X. *Wherever* Country X is, NSEs are going to reach it. If this does not happen directly, then it will happen indirectly, through a shock effect across the entire system. Country X and Country Y do not have to be adjacent to one another. That is how unlimited security interdependence could work.

Insert 1.3. Parallels: examples of security interdependence in other systems. Several analogies may highlight the essence of this sort of interdependence. The study by Kunreuther, Heal and Orszag (2002) on security challenges faced by companies in the airline industry is one such useful analogy. The authors point to the example of Pan Am flight 103, which was blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland on December 21, 1988. The luggage containing the explosive device that destroyed the aircraft did not go through Pan Am’s own reliable screening system

– it was transferred from another flight. Thus, Pan Am lost an airliner effectively due to another airline's lax approach to security (p.2.).

Other analogies include interconnected computer networks like the Internet itself, where one insufficiently defended computer might be a threat to the entire network. The chances are that it might more easily be bot-infected and controlled by malevolent third parties.

Similar interdependence may be observed among human populations trying to defend themselves against communicable diseases. Those people who are not vaccinated against certain infectious diseases pose a risk to their entire society. Diseases may spread in the non-vaccinated part of the population, and may eventually evolve, through a process of mutation, into a threat even to the vaccinated part of the population (to which the old vaccination no longer provides protection).

Security interdependence in general works according to the principle that the higher the ratio of sufficiently protected units, the lower the level of threat to the entire set of units. This might hold true for states as well.

Epidemiologists use the term “herd immunity” when referring to the inverse relationship between the number of protected units and the threat level. The following example may be useful in grasping the practical implications of the concept. Communicable diseases return to cause epidemics when there is a drop below the *herd immunity threshold* of a population, for example as a result of a decrease in the vaccination rate within the population. This is the case with meningitis in Africa's Sahel region, in the so-called “meningitis belt,” where people get vaccinated against meningitis only during times of major epidemics (see e.g. WHO, 2003).

One may say that state-building, and in general all measures aimed at strengthening states, contribute to the achievement of a kind of herd immunity for states, if not the maximal goal of having the ratio of sufficiently protected units reach a hundred percent. If a large number of states are non-functioning units, in the sense that NSEs emerge from their territory, that does not bode well for overall global stability. This is where state-building comes in as a pivotal task for global governance, ensuring that the global society of states stays above the critical threshold for maintaining stability in an interdependent environment. This may also be described as global NSE management.

The above discussed, worried view of threats to global stability explains the emergence of a post-modern imperialist stream of thought. “The premodern world is a world of failed states,” Robert Cooper writes, of much of the post-colonial world (Cooper, 2002: 16). “All of the world’s major drug-producing areas are part of the pre-modern world. (...) If non-state actors, notably drug, crime, or terrorist syndicates take to using pre-modern bases for attacks on the more orderly parts of the world, then the organised states may eventually have to respond. If they become too dangerous for established states to tolerate, it is possible to imagine a defensive imperialism” (Cooper, 2002: 16-17). Fukuyama effectively echoes the same when he talks of the need to ready ourselves for more frequent interventions in the “failed state part of the world” (Fukuyama, 2005). So do others such as Mallaby, who speaks of the emergence of a kind of “reluctant imperialism” (Mallaby, 2002), or Fearon and Laitin, who describe neo-trusteeship as something offering potentially equal gains for every major power interested in global stability (Fearon and Laitin, 2004: 6-7).

In fact, the call for neo-trusteeship has been made a lot earlier, e.g. by Helman and Ratner (1993), as well, albeit on different (i.e. humanitarian) grounds. That is the essence of the change right there: a shift from primarily humanitarian interests to external security interests in calling for rather similar measures (intervention). Arguably, that has been brought about in large part by the events of September 11, 2001. Nevertheless, post-modern imperialists do acknowledge that – in Cooper’s words – both the “demand” for and the “supply” of imperialism are short of what would be sufficient for a non-problematic implementation of the concept as policy.

The theoretical construct of a polemic

Having already discussed the post-modern imperialist stream of thought associated with the likes of Cooper et al., it is still necessary to give a more complete picture of the discourse of state failure. What follows here, as indicated in the title of the section, is a *theoretical* construct of the polemic, i.e. a structured description which allows for model debates to be read out of the mass of speech-acts highlighted in it. It is developed on the basis of visibly distinct patterns of thought, or paradigms of thought. However, it is not meant to suggest that everyone contributing to the actual polemic necessarily takes up one of the positions defined in the following scheme. This concerns even those authors who are mentioned specifically in connection with a particular viewpoint here. Hybrid positions as well as inconsistencies are

fully imaginable, even out of pragmatic considerations, dictated for example by an author's personal circumstances or other factors.

One possible way to structure one's inquiry is to start with looking at the polarising issue of whether intervention is acceptable. "Intervention," however, has to be interpreted in a broad sense: as an active attempt to influence the outcome of ongoing armed conflicts. On the basis of this, I present here two distinct schools of thought. That of "human rights universalists" is the one often taking on IRGs in their opposition to regimes that violate human rights. That of "statists" is a school which in general is more inclined to support existing IRGs, albeit not necessarily without conditions – therefore a compromise between statist and human rights universalists is imaginable.

(*Human rights universalists.*) Human rights universalists are those who are ready to intervene for the sake of the universal application of human rights even in an open confrontation with IRGs, if need be. To account for the rise to prominence of their views, one has to emphasise the significance of two historical normative shifts (as does Bain, 2000).

Colonisation has been legitimised in the past by ideas such as the "dual mandate," put forward by Lord Lugard. Along the lines of such thinking, it was suggested that colonisation was a mission, and that the West was morally obliged to deliver civilisation to the savages and use the resources of their lands for the benefit of all mankind. By the time of decolonisation, these ideas have been largely discredited. Colonial rule, it seemed, was irreversibly de-legitimised. The new society of states was ready to accept even strongly authoritarian forms of rule within its new members. The new members were protected by the principles of territorial integrity and non-intervention (the latter is often called the principle of "negative sovereignty").

In the 1990s, however, views, that one shall not tolerate everything, started gaining prominence.¹⁸ UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in his Millenium Report that no legal principle should shield crimes against humanity (Annan, 2000: 48). One of Annan's former advisors, Mohamed Sahnoun, has voiced that instead of the possibility of intervention, we should talk of the "responsibility to protect" (see e.g. Sahnoun and Evans, 2002). In fact, a call for this had earlier been made by many others as well, for example by Bernard Kouchner,

¹⁸ Structural explanations of this may emphasise that „we are part of the post-1945 international order even today (...) [only] it became possible to assert the U.S.' leading role without a counter-hegemonic adversary after 1990" (Romsics, 2007: 13). In this not-entirely-new world order, respect for human rights upheld through intervention could be, at the same time, extra-legal/revolutionary and conservative, in promoting something the UN member states nominally always meant to promote (as it is codified in the UN Charter).

the founder of *Médecins Sans Frontières* and *Médecins du Monde*. Kouchner's life story is illustrative enough to be mentioned here in some more detail. He founded Médecins Sans Frontières after having personally witnessed the plight of civilians in the Biafra War of 1967-1970, which, he felt, was largely ignored by the world. Nigeria could settle that conflict the way it did since it was accepted as its domestic issue and since separatists worldwide were to be delivered a message in the form of the Biafra outcome.

The “responsibility to protect” (R2P) has since, in 2005, been included on the UN reform agenda, consequently to which the plenary meeting of heads of state and government collectively endorsed it (albeit without much practical relevance, in a soft form). In April 2006 then, the United Nations Security Council again endorsed the principle of R2P, in its Resolution 1674, with regards to instances of “genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”¹⁹

The sort of activism stemming from R2P does not tolerate passivity in the face of mass violations of human rights that are often seen in states deemed „failed” once they fail to provide “protection” to their populations in some sense, be it intentionally or not. Intervention, however, often takes place in the defence of minorities. Then-UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated in his 1992 *Agenda for Peace*: “One requirement for solutions (...) lies in commitment to human rights with a special sensitivity to those of minorities, whether ethnic, religious, social or linguistic” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). That is a major, recognised contradiction of the activism stemming from an individualist interpretation of human rights. It can lead to situations in which holding a state together can become close to impossible and fragmentation is hardly avoidable. This dilemma was a constant feature of the polemic that surrounded the case of Kosovo.

(*Statists.*) There exists a fifth stream of thought within the state failure discourse – the “statist” stream. Through a historical prism, it might seem to be in complete opposition to human rights universalists. It is a complex stream and it is problematic to conceptualise. There are at least three distinct camps within it.

(*Statism #1.*) A more traditional statist school of thought argues for the preservation of all currently existing, internationally recognised states, as well as for the preservation of their borders, accepting only the idea of interventions serving this very aim: interventions in the sense of passively or actively assisting a government in the face of separatists and other

¹⁹ Available at <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/331/99/PDF/N0633199.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed on May 2, 2009.

“trouble-makers.” Its main argument is that one of the stabilising pillars of the post-1945 international order is the non-changeability of borders on the basis of “ethnic” claims of self-determination, or as a result of violence. With several exceptions, this principle has been largely consistently applied, and stability arises from it. Hence, if we let today’s states fragment, recognising new entities as states, we may, in this school’s view, contribute to a process of global fragmentation or fragmentation “on a planetary scale” (quote from Gottlieb, 1994: 2 and 26; see also Boutros-Ghali, 1992: 11).

Regarding Kosovo’s independence, which it interprets as a “precedent,” this school has a kind of domino theory to envision what will follow. Its predictions go against the long-run optimism of “corrective modernists” (an anti-intervention school of thought to be outlined further on). Therefore, traditional statisticians may regard as acceptable a variety of means for the preservation of a state and may show suspicion towards minorities’ political agendas. For example, the following was stated by the Kenyan delegation at the 1963 opening meeting of the Organisation of African Unity, about Greater Somali nationalism: “if they [Somalis] don’t want to live with us in Kenya, [...] they are perfectly free to leave us and our territory. This is the only way they can legally exercise their right to self-determination” (quoted by Jackson and Rosberg, 1989: 109).

Aggressive measures of ethnic engineering, such as population transfers, almost inevitably come with human suffering or at least relative deprivation, and may subsequently amount to a mass violation of (individual) human rights. Statisticians may accept such measures in return for the stability they hope is so created for the long run – a collective good that is worth the sacrifice. At this point, there is an obvious clash between them and human rights universalists.

(*Statism #2.*) However, statism is not necessarily incompatible with the endeavour to, in the long run, turn states into neutral containers of their populations, i.e. into neutral providers of human rights. A statist stance may be better defensible than separatism, if it does not come in one package with the aim of achieving ethnic homogeneity. Then it might validly use the argument that it is impossible to create “non-artificial” states through the recognition of new entities or the modification of borders, in the sense of creating ethnically homogeneous new units. That is especially true in areas characterised by mosaic-like ethno-geography. The situation of such areas could be well described by slightly adjusting the wise words of former Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov: “Today you are the minority in our

state, tomorrow we would be the minority in your state” (the original phrase²⁰ is quoted in ICG, 2004: 4). Upon the creation of new units, this would be the only change.

Such, pro-human rights statism may be sensed in Bookman’s works. He argues for an “administrative disassociation between ethnicity and territory” and against providing exclusive territorial autonomy to ethnic groups, which might be a risk to stability (Bookman, 2002: 44), all the while maintaining that states shall be ethnically neutral containers of their populations. Following a somewhat different logic, also with a minority-friendly statist agenda, Gottlieb advocates a functional – as opposed to an essentialist – interpretation of borders and territoriality and the creation in some instances of trans-state “national homes” for stateless nations (Gottlieb, 1994: 44-47).

(*Statism #3.*) The rise of yet another kind of statism was observable during the 1990s. This form of statist thought is termed here “IGO statism” (Inter-Governmental Organisation statism). In its preference of preserving currently existing states, it does not fall too far from the form of statism outlined in the previous paragraph, but its motives are different.

It received ample input for instance from the findings of the World Bank Group’s research on civil war, which was led, among others, by Paul Collier. Certain findings and conclusions of the latter inspired a series of scholars in outlining the concept of a “new” form of civil war. According to new war theorists, contemporary rebellion around the world is primarily found to be motivated by opportunity (facilitating conditions) and greed (that of leaders as well as of those being led), rather than by objective collective grievances. Collier himself published a study with the title *Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity* (Collier, 2000). The title might raise the suspicion of one-sidedness if we think of Charles Tilly’s famous essay and its title, *War Making and State Making as Organised Crime* (Tilly, 1985). Interestingly, in reality, Collier takes an overall more balanced view of armed conflict than what the above cited title could suggest.

Still, Collier’s works provided inspiration for the sort of thinking emblematic of which is the “new war concept.” Mary Kaldor, among others, talks of the emergence of “new war,” by which term she means those armed conflicts that “are sometimes called internal or civil wars to distinguish them from interstate or Clausewitzian war.” Kaldor repeats the rebellion–organised crime analogy and stresses the importance of opportunity vs. grievance (Kaldor, 2001). One may, of course, find changes in the nature of armed intra-state conflicts, just as the world itself has changed significantly in the meantime. Nevertheless, Kaldor’s conclusions

²⁰ President Gligorov was referring with irony to the problems in the Balkans in general.

still seem ideological. Numerous studies have since criticised these views for their methodologically erroneous basis or their Euro-centrism (see e.g. Kalyvas, 2001).

It may be worth pondering why the endeavour to de-legitimise, or even criminalise, anti-IRG rebellion in general surfaced more or less directly from prestigious institutional sources. One may point to the interests of development-focused, multilateral IGOs that by definition maintain relations mainly with IRGs. They run into frustrating problems when attempting to give assistance to countries destabilised by internal armed conflict. Hence the suggestion that their reaction could be looked at as “IGO statism.” To support this, one may quote Jackson and Rosberg, who state that since the time of decolonisation, international organisations have served as “post-imperial ordering devices” for Africa, where “there was little choice but to establish independence in terms of the colonial entities” (Jackson and Rosberg, 1989: 114 and 108).

A regime such as the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme exemplifies such a device as it criminalises rebel organisations’ profiting from a natural resource (diamonds). In theory, should it function perfectly, it would only leave room for internationally recognised state actors to profit on the diamond market.

(*Post-9/11*) The “global war on terrorism,” or GWOT, has created an incentive for universal pro-IRG bias. By now, a great number of countries from Zimbabwe through Bolivia to China attempted to capitalise on this, looking to use the inevitably greater understanding towards the traditional authoritarian method of de-legitimising regime opponents as “terrorists”: doing so against journalists in Zimbabwe, autonomists in Bolivia, separatists in China. The Bush administration itself was caught in two minds over an urge to push for democracy promotion through intervention and develop warm ties to friendly tyrants offering useful services (for example in Central Asia) [Carothers, 2003]. To the extent that the goal of the promotion of human rights was compromised in some cases, we may say that GWOT strengthened *Statism #1*. Yet this is not universally true. For example, the U.S. was ready to confront Islam Karimov’s regime in Uzbekistan over the Andijan massacre in 2005, even while it lost access to the Karshi-Khanabad airbase in the country as a result, making logistical support to operations in Afghanistan temporarily more difficult.

Having overviewed these two pro-intervention schools of thought, one of them “potentially anti-IRG,” the other “generally pro-IRG,” one gets a surprising result when turning to a discussion of anti-intervention discourse. Here, one may find alongside each other, in the non-interventionist camp, a typically Eurocentric and an essentially non-Eurocentric stream of

thought – even though they are otherwise clearly distinct from, even antagonistic, to one another.

(*Corrective modernists*.) Those whom I refer to as “corrective modernists”²¹ attempt to set their analysis in a context of uni-linear development. They regard the occurrence of state failure as one point along a uni-linear, universal development path. In this view, state failure is a necessary misery. “There is nothing novel about the phenomenon of state failure,” writes Herbst, adding that even the European states of today have failed once or twice during their history (Herbst, 2004: 303). Prunier and Gisselquist start their study of Sudan by declaring that state failure can be observed in the history of the Roman Empire, France and China as well, and thus, “any discussion of how an African state has failed has to be carried out with these parameters in mind” (Prunier and Gisselquist, 2003: 101).

Behind these views there are often two underlying premises (not necessarily in the case of the authors cited above, however).

- I.) That in Europe the possibility of fragmentation led to the coming into being of stable nation-states – by necessity, as nations cannot be created from any mass of people. Thus real nations need a chance everywhere, along the lines what Anthony D. Smith describes as the „core doctrine” of nationalism (Smith, 2001: 22).
- II.) That Africa’s future could or should be seen in Europe’s past. The necessary fragmentation will lead to stability there in the end, given that in Africa the chief source of problems is the instability of the artificial states that were created upon decolonisation. Colonial administrative entities and their boundaries were preserved in Africa as post-colonial states and their state frontiers, in accordance with the international legal principle of *uti possidetis iuris*.²² There are quite expressive adjectives in use that refer to the stated artificiality of African states: “quasi-states” and “juridical” states, as opposed to “empirical” states (Jackson and Rosberg, 1989; Woodward, 2002: 5-6), or „might-have-been-states.” According to a particularly

²¹ In an earlier version of my description of the discourse, I referred to them as „historicists.” I now find that the term „corrective modernist” may more simply and perhaps more accurately name what I have in mind: a stream of thought that believes in the possibility of universalising the state model of political organisation, but does not see current conditions apt for that, largely because of the unsatisfactory delimitation of units.

²² Holding together large entities with diverse populations, such as the Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and others.

sceptical statement cited by numerous sources, “African states are neither African, nor states.”

Of course, these premises can be critically examined, and one may ask several questions, such as the following ones.

- 1) Do we really have (only) “nation-states” in Europe today? *Especially with the ambiguity of the term “nation” in mind...*
- 2) How stable are these states? *For instance, in the Balkans...*
- 3) Has there always been, and is there today, the possibility of fragmentation? In other words, has it always been around and is it currently allowed to happen? *Again, for instance, in the Balkans...*
- 4) In times and places in which it did happen, just how *spontaneous* was this process of fragmentation? *For example in the cases of Belarus, Moldova, Albania...*
- 5) Have all of the currently existing European states come into being through a process of fragmentation? *For example Germany, Italy...*

In light of the above mentioned premises, Herbst, for his part, makes the call “Let them fail” when advocating a solution to the inherent long-term instability of some states. More exactly, he says that what we need is “to increase the congruence between the way that power is actually exercised and the design of units” (Herbst, 2004: 311). That is why he advocates “decertifying” sovereignty in the case of non-functioning states together with conditionally recognising sovereignty in the case of fragment-entities that provide stability and acceptable governance to their population for a reasonable amount of time – for instance, in the case of the former British colonial territory of Somaliland within Somalia (Herbst, 2004: 314).

In a (much) more radical reading, taken to the extreme, the call could be made for abandoning the post-colonial straitjacket of existing boundaries altogether, thus letting new, more viable states emerge in an almost intervention-free, or a carefully catalysed, process.

(*Anti-Eurocentrics.*) What one may call an anti-Eurocentric stream may effectively be regarded as agreeing with the slogan “Let them fail.” It is an extremely diverse stream of varyingly labelled, post-colonialist, post-Marxist, post-structuralist, cultural relativist and other thinkers who see the need for a kind of emancipation of different cultures, by freeing them of alien institutional structures.

As Frantz Fanon wrote, right at the dawn of the post-colonial era: “...let us not pay tribute to Europe by building states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her [...] If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe [...] then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us” (Fanon, 1963: 315).

Such culture-based anti-statism generally emphasises that the state is an institution that was exported to the non-Western world, even forced on it – at least in the case of most of those states that were created at the time of decolonisation. Critical concerns of this stream of thought have already been voiced in reaction to the increasing prominence of the idea of humanitarian intervention, in the 1990s. In the view of some of these thinkers, it is akin to *hubris* on the part of the West when Westerners articulate a wish to take into their care the populations of the very states that were exported and created by Western powers, trying to save them, or their populations, out of stated humanitarian concerns – as is the case from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Sudan’s Darfur region.²³

In the background, these thinkers tend to suspect a kind of re-colonisation attempt (e.g. in the form of “cultural imperialism,” through the promotion of human rights and democracy), connected to classical imperialist aims. Even behind the occasional, “emergency” revision of ex-colonial (= artificial, in their view) boundaries that divide ethnic, religious and tribal communities²⁴ and make it difficult for nomadic peoples to continue with their traditional way of life,²⁵ they find the endeavour to preserve the rest of the ex-colonial boundaries, and the majority of the original post-colonial states, largely inflexible. They see this inflexibility as a structural form of violence.

Thoughts with similar roots are not alien to Western thinkers either. Samuel Huntington, for instance, argues in his book, *The Clash of Civilisations*, for the respect of a kind of “civilisational” autonomy, equating universalism with imperialist tendencies (Huntington, 1998: 548, in the Hungarian edition). Christopher Clapham provides a picture of the lack of pre-colonial proto-statehood in Africa, noting some exceptions but even then with major differences from the European experience. He subsequently reaches the conclusion that “zones of statehood have to coexist with zones of less settled governance” and that

²³ An element of *hubris* is arguably most present in the discourse about „saving” or „rescuing” countries or certain vulnerable groups, with these words included even in some NGOs’ names (International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Save Darfur etc.) – this is not to deny that those concerned do valuable work.

²⁴ Think, for example, of the Pashtun lands divided by the Afghan-Pakistani border, the Durand Line, leaving different segments of a number of tribes on different sides of the line.

²⁵ Think here, for example, of the Tuareg nomads in the Sahara and the Sahel. The lands they traditionally roam were divided up between Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Algeria and Libya. The Tuaregs launched several insurgencies since decolonisation to achieve independence or autonomy.

“attempting to restore universal statehood is chimerical” (Clapham, 2004: 78). With regards to Somalia, he wonders if the Somali proverb “every man his own sultan” indicates that statehood may be too alien to Somalis for it to be realisable there in any stable way (Clapham, 2004: 87). With the latter thought, which basically stresses a kind of individual sovereignty, even a number of libertarian thinkers might sympathise. A most notable real-life example from their ranks is the late Michael van Notten. Having felt disappointed by liberal democracy, van Notten moved to Somalia, where he spent most of the latter part of his life, having even adopted a family there. Based on his experiences, he wrote an essay in which he described the system there in the 1990s as one which contained both libertarian and anarcho-capitalist elements, one which is thus rather close to his heart (van Notten, 2002).

Implications for global governance

Encoded within the theoretically constructed streams of thought overviewed here is their own version of a *global* solution to the problems at hand. Post-modern imperialists may wish to take over much of the post-colonial world and run it themselves again (at least temporarily). They might do so out of the fear that leaving it self-destruct would put our security in danger as well. Human rights universalists would intervene in the protection of all “minorities at risk” on the planet. Statist thinkers, for their part, would either prefer to put down every single revolt or resolve all conflicts within existing state structures, preserved in their post-colonial geographical boxes. Anti-Eurocentrics and corrective modernists would vote for a *laissez-passer* approach for their part.

Further insight may then be gained about the relation of the different streams *vis-à-vis* each other if one ponders their attitude towards the necessity of democracy and the market economy. This lets us drift towards the question of state-building and debates over its desired outcome. Anti-Eurocentrics might say “no” to both democracy and the market economy in general. Corrective modernists will do so, if they see a need for that, only temporarily, expecting the “developing” world to get to the mature stage where the developed world is today, by tomorrow, after a transition characterised by *creative* destruction even in the worst case scenario. That is the expectation that conforms to their uni-linear development hypothesis. Post-modern imperialists and human rights universalists both stand for the idea of democracy and the market economy. However, post-modern imperialists show readiness, in the name of pragmatism, to forge a compromise over democracy. Cooper’s remark that in the jungle we should operate according to the laws of the jungle may be quoted as relevant here

(Cooper, 2002: 16). Finally, mention has already been made of the ambiguities in statist thinking about the issue of human rights and, subsequently, democracy. As far as the market economy is concerned, the most positively approving view is held by those subscribing to World Bank-type IGO-statism.

Regarding territories that have become “stateless” not as a result of internal armed conflict, but purely as a result of the weakness of an IRG, only anti-Eurocentrics and post-modern imperialists have a clear policy recommendation – each their own. Respectively, it is either that we have to accept and live with, or panic because of and act against, the existence of such territories. In the end, however, post-modern imperialists may be ready to forge a compromise with cultural relativists, strange bedfellows, once they think their original goals cannot be realised – betraying their potential allies and fellow travellers, human rights universalists, in the process. The search for this compromise is a key feature of the current discourse over Afghanistan.

Of course, any research on “state failure” itself inevitably shows statist tendencies, by coding state weakness automatically as a negative and also by seeing the solution in strengthening states. Paradoxically, this statism is not incompatible with the anti-statism of neo-liberalism or, more specifically, with its *existing* practice. Neo-liberal thinkers, save for some with libertarian or anarcho-capitalist inclinations, do approve of strengthening states in their security-provider role, with the aim of facilitating the trouble-free operation of the global economy. However, they will only do so without revising their ideas about the sphere of the economy, the consequences of those ideas put into practice, and the selective way in which they are put into practice. This sort of approach might be endorsed by post-modern imperialists, whose aim might be interpreted as *correcting decolonisation to save globalisation*. However, we can hardly afford the luxury of selectivity in critical thinking and so we *may* not be content equating state-building with the assignment of revitalised “night watchmen” to their posts.

This is one of the main dilemmas raised by Fukuyama’s 2004 book on state-building, alternately seen as mild or harsh criticism of the neo-liberal project. Fukuyama criticises streamlining measures that were forced on poor countries’ state administrations, for the reason that their strength was reduced in even the most crucial dimensions – even their capability to provide public security suffered. This can be interpreted as a more general refutation of neo-liberal structural adjustment programs and as a call for an increased state role even in the management of the economy (= harsh criticism). Or it can be seen as merely a warning about measures that were not sufficiently selective in their impact (= milder criticism).

In a complex world, one has to beware of accepting the idea that universal solutions might exist and show sensitivity to local circumstances. This underlines a *need* for hybrid positions and inconsistencies in this wide and complex debate (the possibility of which was already emphasised in this study).

With that in mind, here follows an overview of the streams of thought discussed, organised into a chart (*Chart 1.1.*), showing their positions concerning three key questions: regarding whether the fragmentation of currently existing states be allowed, whether there is a need for intervention in some sense, in intra-state armed conflicts, and whether democracy and the market economy are the desired end-goals in state-building.

Chart 1.1.: Streams of thought and their policy recommendations

	Fragmentation, border changes?	Need for intervention?	Democracy, market economy ? / Is it the desirable outcome?
Post-modern imperialists	May have to be allowed	Yes, in our interest	If possible / Yes
Human rights universalists	May have to be allowed	Yes, in their interest	Yes / Yes
Corrective modernists	Should be allowed	No – better for everyone in the long run	Temporarily possibly “no” / Temporarily possibly “no”
Anti-Eurocentrics	Illegitimate not to allow	No – it’s illegitimate	No / No (at least not by Western instruction)
Traditional statist	Shall not be allowed	Yes, rebellions have to be put down	Maybe / Maybe
IGO-statists	Do not have to be allowed	Yes, rebellions have to be ended	Yes / Yes

Discussion and conclusion

In a highly interdependent world, states are building blocks of global stability. Their IRGs have to ensure that NSEs do not emerge from within their territory. States which are

dysfunctional, in the sense that their IRGs are incapable of ensuring this, pose a security threat to others, by their weakness. They undermine other states' endeavour to ensure their own security. This is why state-building is now regarded as an important institution of the contemporary society of states.

The threat of NSEs works as an impetus for re-taking direct control over parts of the post-colonial world, but such attempts almost inevitably run into resistance in some places. In looking to find the right global policy framework, one faces such basic questions as whether and when intervention can be legitimate? Should the fragmentation of currently existing states be allowed? And so on.

Managing a global process of fragmentation is something that many see as an inevitable task for global governance (e.g. Alger, 1998). There are also those, however, who think that the process, once started, could not be controlled. Their fear is that Pandora's box would be opened and it would eventually result in the creation of a large number of non-viable states. Then there is also the question of what, in the case of state-building, the desired outcome should be. Democracy? What kind of democracy? And, should democracy be promoted together with the transition to a market economy?

Rich democracies are ready to promote a global transition, but there are debates even within them as to what exactly should or could be done, and with what conditions? Meanwhile, their leading role is being debated – at times even contested or challenged – by others.

Regarding the kind of coordinated global action that could be imagined, beyond these larger questions, to reduce NSEs, it is also important to recognise that the different NSEs are not evenly securitised in the rich democracies that are setting the agenda of global governance. Terrorism, the drugs trade, and migration into rich democracies are the issues receiving most of the attention. A clear realisation, that NSEs tend to hurt low income countries the most, is lacking. For example, locust infestation, the spread of wheat stem rust, meningitis epidemics, the generally more rampant presence of destabilising armed conflict in one's direct neighbourhood (see Sesay, 2004) and many other similar issues, are all relatively rarely considered as threats. But they are all aggravated by weak state institutional capacities and scarce state resources which do not allow for responding to them effectively, exactly in the hardest-struck areas. To provide one illustrative fact here, according to USCRI's 2007 World Refugee Survey, among the top twenty-four refugee host territories, there was not a single OECD member state (WRS 2007: Table 8). Otherwise, regardless of which country

happens to be affected the most in terms of sheer numbers, poor countries are less well-equipped to deal with the challenges that are associated with the impact of NSEs, in any case.

State-building ventures are spectacular, arguably inevitable, but also complex and risky challenges to handle for global governance, as they are questionable in legitimacy. A modest suggestion could be that such efforts need to be complemented by less direct forms of assistance to weak states, where those may still work.

A global program of “cooperative threat reduction,” or CTR,²⁶ should, therefore, focus more on building support for the development of a whole series of global regimes that can contribute to its objectives in more indirect ways. From the Programme of Action countering small arms proliferation through the Global Rust Initiative to AIDS, TB and malaria relief, many worthy initiatives should be supported more than they are, in light of this.

CTR is thus deemed a crucial task of global governance. On the global level of security analysis, NSEs are securitised here as issue-specific deficiencies or insufficient performances of global governance, with the direct referent object being the state system itself, as a key security-provider for the world’s population. (In that way, individuals’ security becomes a referent object of securitisation in an indirect sense.) A notion of contemporary CTR may rest on three pillars:

- i) forms of state cooperation compatible with Westphalian sovereignty, i.e. *conventional CTR*;
- ii) forms of state cooperation that institutionalise a high degree of interference in at least one state party’s domestic affairs (as occurs in the case of international development cooperation between recipients and donors; or in the case of the Nunn-Lugar CTR program, mentioned in *Footnote 26*) – i.e. *unconventional CTR*;
- iii) state cooperation to reconstruct third-party states, or state-building – i.e. *irregular CTR*.

CTR does not necessarily transcend the more traditional interpretation of global governance as the evolution and operation of a system of international as well as, increasingly, transnational regimes (Young, 1999: 1-23). That is because even state-building tends to take place within the framework of regimes regulating issue-specific relations at least between the state-

²⁶ With reference to the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme, which contributes to safeguarding the ex-Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal (and other efforts) since the 1990s.

builders, albeit initially without the involvement of the missing participant: the state to be (re)constructed.

Even within the state-centric framework outlined here, measures, more drastic than the ones discussed so far, can be contemplated: for example, a more radical structural adjustment of the global economy through an adjustment of the regimes of world trade, aid, and debt relief. An economic order that allows for a more equal share of opportunities worldwide may mitigate the structural burdens weakening many of the states of the post-colonial world. However, the scale and the type of response by rich democracies, to the phenomenon of state failure, is likely to be a function of the changing degree of securitisation (within rich democracies) of the different NSEs that emerge from dysfunctional states.

Issues to be examined in the remainder of the doctoral dissertation

What follows in the dissertation after this point is an examination of the ongoing peace-building efforts in Afghanistan. Based on the more general outlook on state-building and the abstract theorising in this chapter, a number of research questions can be generated. Answering these with regards to the Afghan case will be a key goal of the largely qualitative analysis outlined in this doctoral dissertation.

Below is the set of the most important questions.

- 1) Is security interdependence truly global in scope and unlimited in extent?
- 2) Are threats originating from Afghanistan affecting all countries in the world?
- 3) Are these threats having the same impact on all affected countries?
- 4) Is Afghanistan truly a “source” of these threats?
- 5) What alternative concepts shall be introduced as a substitute for the concept of unlimited, global security interdependence, in order to better understand the way in which actually limited security interdependence functions?
- 6) Are interests truly the same for all countries in the world, when it comes to state-building Afghanistan?
- 7) In what way shall “interests” be interpreted in the case of the Afghanistan mission – for example from Hungary’s vantage point?
- 8) If one assumes converging gains for the participants of the Afghanistan mission, would that imply a lack of problems and debates connected to intra-coalition burden-sharing issues?

- 9) How do the different streams of the state failure discourse, described in this chapter, view the required and the actually applied strategy of state-building in Afghanistan?

Some critical points about the mainstream interpretation of state failure and state-building have already been put forward in this first chapter. For a moment, let us ignore them here, for the sake of formulating clearer hypotheses (*H1 to H6*), and several sub-hypotheses, stemming from the above listed questions – hypotheses that may be falsified later on. In fact, I regard their falsification so likely that these are rather “anti-hypotheses.”

H1: Security interdependence is unlimited.

H2: Mass refugee flows (*SH 2/1*), terrorism (*SH 2/2*) and drugs (*SH 2/3*) originating from Afghanistan affect all countries in the world.

H3: Countries are evenly affected by mass refugee flows (*SH 3/1*), terrorism (*SH 3/2*) and drugs (*SH 3/3*) originating from Afghanistan.

H4: Afghanistan is a “source” of mass refugee flows, terrorism and the drugs trade (*SH 4/1 to SH 4/3*), in the sense that it is exclusively an exporter of NSEs connected to these issues.

H5: Countries participating in the ongoing state-building efforts in Afghanistan all pursue the same interests, i.e. they are looking to counter threats by participating.

H6: There are no debates about coalition burden-sharing issues in the case of the Afghanistan mission.

Chapter Two

Issue-specific security complexes and Afghanistan policy: Why keep Pomeranian grenadiers in the Hindu Kush?

Introduction

This chapter presents the concept of issue-specific security complexes as an analytical framework that is useful in understanding the need for increased cooperation among states faced with such contemporary security challenges as the drugs trade or jihadist terrorism. With certain caveats, it is a framework more useful than the common concept of security interdependence, supposedly global in scope and unlimited in extent.

However, the chapter does, at the same time, caution that an issue-specific approach may lead to the analytical pitfall of trying to justify foreign policies as sets of separate interventions within distinct, issue-specific security complexes. This disaggregated, a-historical mode of analysis, attached to an arbitrarily chosen point in time (the present of such policy-analysis) leaves one with an unnecessarily murky picture of vague interests and a seemingly puzzling degree of counter-productivity.

As an example of this, the chapter outlines the case of Afghanistan policy, and how countries participating in the ISAF²⁷ coalition are not in a position to interpret their interests in the manner discussed. While I maintain that the concept of issue-specific security complexes may be useful as an analytical framework, policy-makers are encouraged to look at sets of issues, for example at the ones connected to Afghanistan, rather in a holistic fashion. This is important warning, as there is a documentable tendency in policy-making circles to look for simple, straightforward, issue-specific justifications in explaining policy, especially when having to communicate to pressure-wielding publics, opposed to a given policy. Such justifications tend not to work well in the long run.

Context

On many occasions I was asked why Hungary should be involved in the ongoing state-building, reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan.²⁸ Very often this question

²⁷ International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan).

²⁸ It is worth mentioning the Hungarian Ministry of Defence's relatively recent take (title: „Why is there a need for the NATO mission in Afghanistan?") on the issue of Hungarian interests in Afghanistan here – a document,

was asked by people who had a preconceived answer to it – i.e. that we have no real interests in Afghanistan and either we are foolish to be there or this involvement is a drain on our resources that was but forced on us. Hence the symbolic reference in the title of this chapter to Bismarck's famous remark. The term „Pomeranian grenadiers” refers here to the general tendency in public thinking to measure what goals may or may not be worth our soldiers' sacrifice.

This chapter argues that the success of the Afghanistan mission is vital even to Hungary's own national interests. It examines whether this can be presented in the form of hard facts in favour of a long-term commitment. After all, such hard arguments are most often demanded by critics and sceptics.

While work was in progress, fate offered two precious and at the same time substantially very different opportunities to openly formulate and put to debate my arguments about these issues (both came in May, 2008).

One of them was a two-day conference jointly organised by the Hungarian Society for Military Science (*Magyar Hadtudományi Társaság*), the German Association of Military Economy (*Gesellschaft für Militärökonomie*), the Czech Defence University (*Univerzita Obrany*) and the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University (*Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem*) with the title *Mission tasks from a defence economy perspective (Afghanistan in the focus) – A drain on resources or an investment into the future?*

The other opportunity came at a three-day research conference co-organised by the Forum for Security Studies and the Stockholm Network for Security Studies (SNSS) around the topic of *The External and Internal Security Policy Nexus: Beyond the Domestic–International Divide*.

the conclusions of which this study regards as only partly well-founded, for reasons to be detailed in the upcoming sections. The key section of the text, in my translation: „It is in Hungary's national interest that the situation in Afghanistan normalise as soon as possible, as the instability there affects our situation. If the bases of terrorism are not eliminated, we may live in fear. We would like to remind that in 2001, in New York and Washington, 3,000 innocent people died. In 2004 almost 200 died in Spain. The bomb attack (*sic! - singular*) in July 2005 in London took 52 innocents' lives (along with four of the bombers), with 700 wounded. It is also the international community's interest to roll back the worldwide spread of drugs. It is also important that as a member of NATO the Hungarian Republic is not merely a beneficiary of the security guaranteed by the alliance, but also an active participant of NATO's tasks, including NATO's most important mission...” Source: Összefoglaló az afganisztáni biztonsági helyzetről. Honvédelmi Minisztérium, July 23, 2008, available at http://www.hm.gov.hu/honvedseg/missziok/osszefoglalo_az_afganisztani_biztonsagi_helyzetrol, accessed on August 30, 2008.

The conference at the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University (ZMNDU) was focused essentially on a cost/benefit analysis of individual countries' role in Afghanistan, from the point of view of Hungary's defence economy and that of the Hungarian military. In a presentation there I outlined the following conceptual framework for identifying costs and benefits of foreign missions, schematised in *Figure 2.1.*, then explained below.

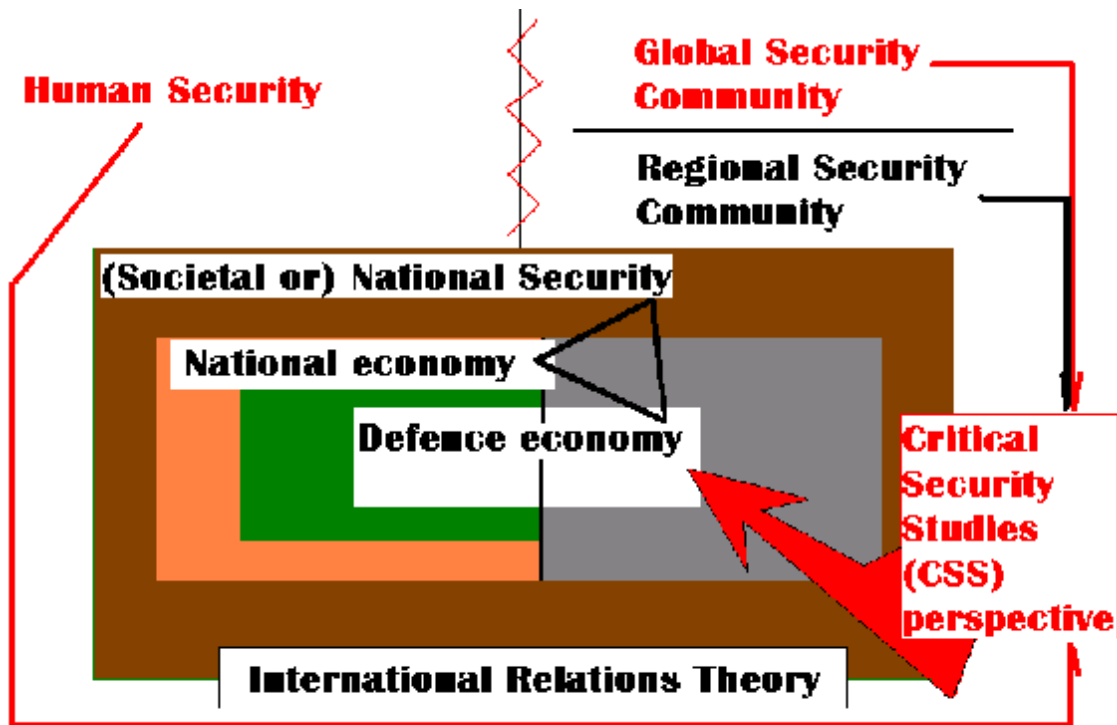


Figure 2.1. A conceptual framework for looking at mission tasks from a combined defence economy/Critical Security Studies perspective

The following basic considerations characterise this approach:

1. The concept of the defence economy is becoming increasingly vague. Its boundaries become blurred both conceptually and in practice. If interpreted as the provision of societal or national security, „defence” is no longer restricted to *border defence*. Its aim is wider: defending *homeland security*. That is a task beyond the military. It can only be managed by a networked multitude of all sorts of state agencies.
2. The level of analysis may be questioned. It is increasingly difficult to delineate an exclusively *national* defense economy. The level of analysis can be constructively altered therefore, in several ways. The following points (3-6.) clarify how.
3. In an interdependent security environment, the provision of homeland security is a common task for an extensive international network of state agencies. Costs and

benefits must be counted on this supra-national level as well. With this purpose in mind, the notion of security communities will be used later on in this paper.

4. The level-of-analysis issue can be an important target of somewhat idealist criticism. Part of the rationale for even the Afghanistan mission is *humanitarian*, based on human security-centred concerns about the past, the present and the future situation of Afghanistan. The contributors' costs and benefits may have only secondary importance from that perspective, when viewed *exclusively* from a humanitarian perspective.
5. When sufficient resources are not devoted to a mission in terms of „costs,” it makes no sense to expect „benefits” in the form of returns on investment. It is legitimate to characterise the ongoing efforts in Afghanistan as under-resourced. This was well-documented by the RAND Corporation and others (see in Godges, 2007; or Roi – Smolyneć, 2008). That the resources currently committed to the Afghanistan mission are not sufficient is a function of how much all the partaking countries collectively contribute to it. This is a further, important argument against an exclusively national-level analysis of costs and benefits.
6. Costs and benefits cannot be interpreted merely in an economic sense. *Security* gains and losses have to form part of both the present and the expected future balance. Even a direct conversion between economic and security gains/losses is possible to a degree. Security losses can manifest in the form of economic damage, as a result of harmful events such as terrorist attacks. Such damage can burden the (broadly interpreted) defence economy as well.

The theme of the other conference, the one in Stockholm, was the decreasing significance of the distinction between the „internal” and the „external” in the realm of security policy. It was, to a degree, the anti-thesis of the concept behind the other conference at ZMNDU, but of course the event produced much diversity in terms of how many different interpretations of its theme the contributors arrived to Stockholm with.

Some talked about a dissolution of the internal/external divide in the sense that one finds it increasingly difficult to tell how much given state agencies are oriented more to the „outside” or more to the „inside” of the state. More and more state agencies operate even beyond their respective state's borders. Think of a fictive „FBI-CIA merger” here as a none-too-deceiving concept, emblematic of what the rather esoterical „dissolution of the internal/external divide” might imply.

There was another commonly voiced view, that threats on the security agenda today are less unambiguously „internal” or „external” than before. One obvious reason for this is that the possibility of interstate conflict has decreased significantly in at least the European context. We talk less nowadays of clearly external threats from other states, while we talk much more of trans-national threats, such as terrorist or criminal networks reaching across borders. This fundamentally affects the character of contemporary security thinking on the continent.

In Stockholm, the following points shaped my own approach to the conference topic:

1. Empirically, a *conveniently direct* connection cannot be established between *internal threats* and their *external sources or drivers*. The most important consequence of this is that the necessity of involvement in foreign missions cannot be easily substantiated to the average citizen as a hard fact. It cannot be easily told in „folksy shorthand,” to cite a term used by Robert D. Kaplan in describing just this challenge.²⁹ This affects what the domestic audience of politics is told, as well as how the domestic electorate votes.
2. The domestic public’s thinking adapts to changing global realities only slowly and imperfectly, especially when no conscious effort is made by political leaders to shape its outdated tenets. The difficulties of – and the constant bickering over – coalition burden-sharing issues stem partly from this.
3. Stemming from points 1. and 2., no truly common, globally optimal strategy is implemented or even devised against contemporary threats, even though sound conceptual arguments could be offered in favour of such an approach.
4. The persistence of the „internal” or „domestic” sphere in people’s mind may guide attention to a further interpretation of what a dissolution of the internal/external divide could entail. Theoretically, there is a stage where we could stop looking at both

²⁹ „How to deal with this fractious world is Kaplan’s great question. Some years ago, he has written, after a conference where ‘intellectuals held forth about the moral responsibility of the United States in the Balkans,’ he took a cab back to the airport and was asked by the cabbie, ‘If there’s no oil there, what’s in it for us?’ This was, Kaplan says, ‘a question none of the intellectuals had answered.’ And shame on them, because ‘thousands of words and a shelf of books in recent years about our moral interest in the region do not add up to one sentence of national interest. . . . It is only from bottom-line summaries that clear-cut policy emerges, not from academic deconstruction.’ Kaplan once believed that something called ‘amoral self-interest’ should be the defining aspect of American foreign policy. His hope for the Clinton administration was that it could ‘condense’ a justification for Balkan intervention ‘into folksy shorthand,’ because ‘speaking and writing for an elite audience is not enough.’ ” - Excerpt from Tom Bissell’s „Euphorias of Perrier: The Case Against Robert D. Kaplan,” a critique of Robert D. Kaplan’s writings. Kaplan’s views, as summed up by Bissell, are quoted here as an illustrative example of the need, felt by some, to see policy legitimate only when it can be backed up by the above mentioned „folksy shorthand” for justification. (Bissell, 2006).

relative and absolute gains from cooperation with other states. At costs and benefits, in other words, vis-à-vis others; or at least vis-à-vis *some* others. This point, about the possible convergence of absolute gains and the irrelevance of relative gains, was one of the issues raised in the first chapter. It shall now be critically examined in the sections that follow.

In light of the arguments collected at the two conferences, this chapter focuses first on conceptual arguments in favour of working together with other countries in sustaining or defending one's security (*the section on „Common security governance”*). Then it gives an overview of possible, currently valid, issue-specific arguments in favour of the Afghanistan mission (*the section on „Issue-specific security complexes related to Afghanistan”*) – everything that can be brought up in this context. The aim is to establish some of the reasons why there lingers so much public scepticism regarding the Afghanistan mission, in spite of good conceptual arguments in favour of it. Subsequently, the chapter also deals with coalition burden-sharing issues, and why they are so problematic in the Afghan case.

The last section of the chapter outlines considerations that are relevant not merely from Hungary's perspective. Some of the conceptual innovations presented here – such as the analysis of *issue-specific security complexes* – may be of use in studying any topical issue of Security Studies in general and any other foreign mission's context specifically.

Common security governance: A theoretical framework

Prospects of internalising an exclusively global perspective of costs and benefits

The issue raised by the Stockholm conference, mentioned in the foreword, about whether the internal/external division can be sustained with regards to any kind of policy, not just security policy, is a natural reflection of the changing global environment. Governments are increasingly dealing with „intermestic affairs,” as opposed to clearly distinguishable „domestic” and „international” affairs. They try to manage not merely by trying to preserve some kind of autonomy even while internal decisions and external factors, as well as externally oriented decisions and internal factors, all get bundled up in the policy-planning process: on at least a set of issues they are trying to coordinate resources, measures and actions so that it amount to a kind of *common governance without a common government*.

Trying to grapple with the analytical implications of this by reformulating existing concepts for the description of the social world, through questioning old premises of our thinking, is required. The state-centric distinction of the internal and the external, or the domestic and the foreign or international, is one of the fundamental ideas to be critically examined. Such an effort questions the ontological bases of the International Relations Theory literature. It is shaky ground to cover both for IR scholars in general and for scholars of (International) Security Studies more specifically.

The existing conceptual repertoire of IR and International Security Studies is altogether not inept to deal with this challenge, however. It can be used to grab important implications of a comprehensive ignorance of the internal/external distinction: what it would mean in a world of states. In that way, it can show to what extent we are „not there yet.”

The next two sub-sections of the study conceptualise two ways in which the internal/external distinction could become irrelevant. The key concept used here will be that of *security community*. An important question is how such communities come into being. Another important question is whether within security communities it could be natural to look at issues purely from a common governance perspective. If the latter assumption is valid, a cost/benefit analysis with a view specifically to Hungarian interests in the Afghanistan mission may be illegitimate and dysfunctional. After all, Hungary is there in Afghanistan as a member of the trans-Atlantic security community.

Interstate security communities

One way for the internal/external distinction to disappear entirely, in the sense outlined above, is if the current world of states becomes a Deutschian *amalgamated security community*, or in other words if it becomes a *world state*. “Deutschian” is reference here to Karl Deutsch who introduced the concept of security community in the Security Studies literature decades ago. He did so with the North Atlantic alliance in mind, back during the Cold War. Needless to point out: at the time the alliance stood in conflict with a bloc of states – the Soviet-dominated Eastern bloc. Yet even in the midst of this context the alliance could only be regarded as a *pluralistic* security community, not even one that would have appeared to be headed to becoming an amalgamated one, even while political cooperation was taking place on an unprecedentedly wide spectrum among its members. Only political unions can qualify as truly amalgamated security communities, a possible example of which could be re-united Germany.

Short of complete political union and subsequently short of a disappearance of the internal/external distinction within it, the EU is an oft-mentioned example of the permanently „would-be amalgamated” security community. Some regard this as a major feature of its neo-medieval and *sui generis* nature (Bull, 1995: 225-247). The EU has some entirely common policies as well as some community-level policies that exist besides – and in the ideal case in mutual complementarity with – national-level policies. Crucially, however, from the point of view of theorising over the nexus of internal and external security, in the realm of justice and home affairs and in the domain of foreign and security policy, not even complementarity is granted in certain respects. Otherwise, EU states comfortably fit the criteria of Deutsch’s concept of a pluralistic security community: there are „dependable expectations of peaceful change” between them. We may also take Adler and Barnett’s rather formal or Wæver’s more flexible conceptualisation (1998) of *tightly coupled*, pluralistic security communities. No matter which definition we use, the EU does qualify as such a security community. In fact, Adler and Barnett, for their part, describe tightly coupled security communities tailoring their description after the EU, mostly through the definitional element of „possessing a system of rule that lies somewhere between a sovereign state and a regional, centralised government” (Adler – Barnett, 1998: 30).

At the same time, *relatively* tightly coupled security communities could also exist without a common „system of rule.” For instance, a group of states may try to coordinate policies in response to common, persistent and significant threats, designing „collective arrangements” to handle those, thus establishing a „mutual aid society” (of states). The terms in between quotation marks are again taken from Adler and Barnett’s work, and, importantly, they may fit NATO.

The interesting issue is what we see on the global level. One may ask whether global governance – the work of governments “doing internationally what governments do at home,” in Finkelstein’s words (1995: 369) – might amount to the emergence of a global security community?

Before answering that, it has to be remembered, from Adler and Barnett’s work, that per their description of „loosely coupled security communities,” such security communities exist with no expectations of „bellicose action” among their members (1998: 30). That is the key definitional element. Does it make sense then to demarcate the contours of loosely coupled security communities in a world of states where aggression is outlawed by the United Nations Charter? Or can we say that all of the world’s states together form at least a loosely

coupled security community today? Even if some groups of states are relatively more tightly coupled in their midst?

Yes would be the answer one could read out from Barry Buzan's seminal 2004 book re-constructing English-School IR thinking (Buzan, 2004). The book's point about some thicker societies of states existing within a relatively thinner, globally extending society of states, is very relevant here, given that today almost all states participate even in universal regimes of common governance, not merely in regional or bilateral ones.

Mentioning the concept of a global security community may still ring hollow because of the continuing threat of interstate war, persisting for all sorts of reasons around the globe. There are obvious fault-lines where previously I argued against the need for demarcating security communities from each other. Yet the consequences of these divisions among states are affected by the universal acceptance of the norm of non-aggression which influences the calculations of would-be aggressors and mitigates security dilemmas, even while it does not exclude the possibility of war.

This argument notwithstanding, the disappearance of any meaningful distinction between the internal and the external from a *government* – as opposed to a governance – perspective is conceivable only within amalgamated or within very tightly coupled pluralistic security communities. Historically, these tend to form on the regional and the sub-regional level, rather than on the global level.

The alternative: A tight security community on the primary social level

A problematic aspect of the Deutschian concept of security community and the way Adler and Barnett developed it into a theory of security community formation, is how it is bound to a state-centric framework. That lends itself to be taken under critical review. Ole Wæver, writing in a volume edited by Adler and Barnett, already uses this angle of criticism to approach the issue of European integration from a security community perspective (Wæver, 1998).

The formation of a security community may take place without formal international organisational structures established, or commonly joined, by the concerned group of states. The dynamics of identity formation on the primary social level, i.e. in the informal world of inter-subjectively evolving common identities, could play a major role in it. On a global scale, the security relevance of the internal/external distinction could dissolve completely if a *world society* would come into existence, where our primary identity would be that we are all human

beings. Alternatively, this process of security community formation could take place on a sub-global scale as well. An example could be if shared EU citizenship would come to primarily determine the political identity of the EU's population.

Thinking on the global scale is significant for the discussion here, as proponents of liberal interventionism are essentially proponents of global solidarity, which could in effect translate into a worldwide security community. This sort of interventionism applies an individualist, solidarist and human security-focused interpretation of global governance. It is interested in saving the greatest possible number of lives through aid *where objectively and critically needed* and intervention *where objectively and critically needed*.

The idea of such activism may seem to be easy to popularise. But it is difficult to build and maintain a critical amount of popular support for the practical measures that could stem from it. Humanitarian considerations can be only one factor in governments' decisions and actions, easily overridden by concerns over the welfare of the countries concerned, in an economic and a security sense. This reflects the public's true marginal readiness to make sacrifices in an altruistic fashion, which political leaders cannot disregard. The domestic public and one's fellow citizens are distinguished, primary referent objects of securitisation. This is in a clash with what would stem from a consistent focus on human security, which should be neutral to political boundaries. In stark terms: it may be a worthy goal to „save Darfur,” but if an x number of a country's soldiers have to die for that goal and the retention of a y number of hospitals cannot be financed in the intervening country, because of welfare spending traded off for the costs of an intervention, the percentage of people supporting intervention decreases. For example, in a recent Dutch internet poll, 60 percent of the respondents said that they saw the pull-out of [Dutch] troops [from Uruzgan province, in Afghanistan] necessary if the Dutch military casualty toll reached twenty-five there.³⁰

Further on this study does not reckon with the possibility that a critical majority of humanity might come to accept practices of unlimited altruism, based on a reinforced sense of shared world-citizen or human identity. It is discarded with regards to its sheer improbability and subsequent irrelevance. Although it shall be remarked that on the regional level – e.g. in the EU context – similar trends of identity transformation may take place with more likelihood.

³⁰ This was merely an internet poll (by MSN.nl), quite possibly not representative at all of Dutch public opinion. The way the question was formulated also likely affected respondents. (A source accounting of the results of the poll: *Terugtrekken uit Uruzgan bij 25 doden*. Leeuwarder Courant, April 21, 2008. Accessed at the Uruzgan Weblog on April 28, 2008, at http://oruzgan.web-log.nl/uruzgan_weblog/2008/04/terugtrekken-uit.html, where the original text was re-published on April 24, 2008.)

Global security interdependence vs. issue-specific security complexes

Tightly coupled, interstate security communities are possible on the regional rather than on the global level – as concluded in the earlier part of this chapter. Yet reference is often made to the need for a global (interstate) security community, and not only based on human security-focused or humanitarian concerns. There is a seemingly strong argument, resonant especially in the wake of September 11, 2001, that was already mentioned in the first chapter: states' security interdependence.

In the first chapter I conceptualised an *abstract* model of *interstate* security interdependence in a highly interconnected world as a situation in which Country X might spend whatever great amount of money on its security, it may still not be able to preserve it if meanwhile Country Y is a dysfunctional state which operates as fertile ground for negative spill-over effects. This is very relevant from a defence economy and a cost/benefit point of view. Consider for instance how much the United States spent, prior to September 11, 2001, on its defence, in spite of which it was unable to defend one of its major cities (New York) from jet airliners crashing into its economic centre, not to speak of the partially successful attack on its defence ministry just outside the capital Washington.

The abstract model assumes the highest attainable level of security interdependence. In such a security context, states would have a common stake in preserving, and, where necessary, re-establishing effective statehood – in maximising the territorially projectable reach of such effective statehood. This would call for *cooperative threat reduction*: cooperation, ideally by all states of the world, including even joint state-building, where functioning state partners cannot be found. Cooperation of this kind may offer converging gains for states, and the measurement of relative gains for individual states could be a non-issue in this setting. Based on these premises there would be no meaningful difference between the intervening states' security and that of Afghanistan. Moreover, what ISAF is doing in Afghanistan would theoretically serve not only Afghans', Western Europeans', Hungarians' and North Americans' security at the same time, but even that of China, Russia, sub-Saharan African countries etc. In fact, absurd as this may sound, state-building *is* often conceptualised in the literature based on such premises.

The obvious question to ask is whether that is a valid point of view? And if not, in what ways is it wrong? In what sense or aspects should it be invalidated?

Today's world can be characterised as highly interdependent. Yet this is not interdependence as complete as in the abstract model. What happened on September 11, 2001 was, in an indirect sense, a negative spill-over effect of the internal conflicts in Afghanistan, that happened to reach the United States on 9/11. The scale and the impact in this case was *extraordinary*. But that is exactly why it cannot be regarded as normal by today's standards – even while it certainly was not something entirely unexpected for those who were aware of al-Qaida's activities and ambition.³¹ This statement is elaborated in *Insert 2.1*, which provides an overview of patterns of terrorism originating from Afghanistan prior to 9/11.

After the insert, its overview is used to continue with the main argument about limits to security interdependence.

Insert 2.1. Was 9/11 a “black swan”? Nassim Nicholas Taleb, a mathematician at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at New York University, became well-known for his concept of the “black swan” (Taleb, 2004a). A black swan in his words is “an outlier, an event that lies beyond the realm of normal expectations.” This is exactly what the events of September 11, 2001 were like in Taleb's description (Taleb, 2004b). The name for his concept comes from his analogy of the formerly widely held belief that there existed no black swans, a belief that lasted up until the moment when the *cygnus atratus* was first sighted in Australia (Taleb, 2004a: 2).

This could have implications for security policy. If we were to accept that the possibility of September 11 could not possibly have been foreseen, it could be argued that there would have been no way of defending against it. In no way could costs of the necessary measures have been justified to the public.

In reality, it can be shown that September 11 was not really a black swan, for many. Political leaders' inaction merely allowed a situation to develop in which the majority of the public could, indeed, be surprised by the hijackers. This is not to say that 9/11 was “allowed” to happen as it is claimed in conspiracy theories. The exact scenario of the 9/11 attacks (e.g. the operational details such as date, attackers, targets, method etc.) was not foreseen. But the threat of al-Qaida, plotting operations virtually unimpeded in Afghanistan, was not acted upon in a sufficient manner.

³¹ At the time, I was writing a chapter of my B.A. dissertation about cross-border militancy in Indian Kashmir. Therefore I was aware of Afghanistan's importance. Which is not to say this was a big deal. To the contrary.

Shortly before his government was about to fall, in 1992, Communist leader Najibullah warned: “We have a common task – Afghanistan, the U.S.A., and the civilized world – to launch a joint struggle against fundamentalism (...) If fundamentalism comes to Afghanistan (...) Afghanistan will be turned into a center for terrorism” (quoted by Coll, 2004: 215).³²

Words from a political cadaver such as Najibullah went unheeded. But a year later there was more of a sense of urgency about the situation in Afghanistan, even in the U.S. On August 21-22, 1993, the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research wrote a report titled “The Wandering Mujahideen: Armed and Dangerous,”³³ in which they warned of the dangers of the possible “spill-over” (*sic!*) posed by the 4,000 to 25,000 non-Afghans who received more or less of combat training for the war against the Soviet Union and its local allies in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, current Polish foreign minister, then *National Review* correspondent, Radosław Sikorski also warned in a 1993 article that “With cheap travel and instant communications, terrorists can base themselves anywhere on the globe. A terrorist with a satellite phone, limitless revenues from the poppy fields, and access to Iran and turbulent Central Asia might be forgiven for preferring a remote Afghan valley to places like the Bekaa valley or the Libyan desert.”³⁴

One should not be amazed by such instances of foresight, even while commendable they may seem retrospectively, in a desert of ignorance. The events of early 1993 explain why. On January 25 that year a Pakistani veteran of the Afghan war, Mir Aimal Kansi drew his gun on CIA employees arriving to work at the Agency’s Langley, Virginia headquarters. Kansi killed two agents and wounded three. He then flew to Pakistan from where he may have fled for a while to Afghanistan. The next month, on February 26, the World Trade Center was attacked with a car bomb, with the aim of bringing down the towers by a well-

³² Just as the Soviet leadership, long before, also tried to convince the U.S. to work together with the SU, in the wake of the coming Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, in limiting the spread of „Islamic fundamentalism” – for example, then-foreign minister of the SU, Eduard Shevardnadze raised this point to Secretary of State George Schultz, in Washington, in September 1987 (Coll, 2004: 168).

³³ Memo, prepared by the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research, titled „The Wandering Mujahidin: Armed and Dangerous,” dated August 21-22, 1993.

³⁴ Radek Sikorski: Afghanistan revisited: Civil war between mujaheddin factions, *National Review*, August 23, 1993, available re-published at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_n16_v45/ai_13294519/pg_2, accessed on January 29, 2009. Document accessed at: http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mesh/files/2008/03/wandering_mujahidin.pdf on March 11, 2008, available on-line courtesy of the Middle East Strategy at Harvard blog.

positioned, somewhat lucky blast. The WTC attack in itself is quite significant for the argumentation here, since this was the very result of 9/11 that Nassim Nicholas Taleb wishes to call a black swan: i.e. something unseen before. Even the Afghanistan connection was already there in the 1993 case: chief organiser Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Kuwaiti citizen Ramzi Yousef and Palestinian Ahmed Mohammad Ajaj all had experience from Afghanistan. Ajaj, for instance, was trained in the Khalden camp in Afghanistan proper. Another participant, Mahmoud Abuhallima, received training near Peshawar, Pakistan, also during the anti-Soviet war.

The spill-over that the U.S. State Department was warning of, reached many countries throughout the 1990s. Among Central Asia's chief trouble-makers were for a long time the jihadists who joined the Tajik Party of Islamic Renaissance in the Tajik civil war, and then had some of their cadre go on to form the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU's leaders, such as Juma Namangani or Tohir Yuldashev, were also veterans of the fight in Afghanistan. In the Philippines, meanwhile, the Abu Sayyaf Group sprang up, splitting off from the Moro National Liberation Front, led by Abdurajik Abubakar Janjalani, another Afghanistan veteran. Indonesia's Jemaa Islamiyah was also reinforced with returnees from Afghanistan. Ridwan Isamuddin, a.k.a. "Hambali," the chief planner and organiser of the 2002 Bali attacks, himself was one of them. In Chechnya, Ibn al-Khattab's faction represented some of the most radical non-local Islamists³⁵ with Afghanistan experience. Meanwhile, in North Africa, the Algerian civil war was fuelled by the returning flow of jihadists and their markedly more radical Salafist ideology, parallel to which there was a flare-up of terrorism and small-scale insurgency in Egypt, too, up until about 1997. The Algerian troubles even spilled on to France in the form of the 1995 metro bombings, where some of the perpetrators were probably also trained veterans of Afghanistan (e.g. suspect Abdelkrim Deneche³⁶).

The chief victim of developments in Afghanistan's region was arguably India, which saw a great number of militants with Afghanistan training and

³⁵ The term islamism is used in this study in Shaun Gregory's words as „to refer to an Islamic revivalism usually characterized by literalism, moral conservatism, and an attempt to implement increasingly radical Islamic values in all spheres of life, particularly in the law and politics” (Gregory, 2007: 1027).

³⁶ Mary Dejevsky: „Arab arrested in Sweden over Paris Metro bombing,” *The Independent*, August 22, 1995, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/arab-arrested-in-sweden-over-paris-metro-bombing-1597387.html>, accessed on May 2, 2009.

experience infiltrating Jammu and Kashmir state, starting with the end of the 1980s – a shift in the area of operations for these militants that was clearly directed by Pakistan's Army and its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Certain major terrorist operations against India also connected back to Afghanistan in this period. In 1999, an Indian Airlines jet flying from Nepal was hijacked to Taliban-ruled Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, where the hijackers could negotiate with success for the release of three major operatives by India (including, for example, the setting free of Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a former student of the London School of Economics, who was later on an organiser behind U.S. journalist Daniel Pearl's kidnapping in Pakistan, in 2002). Importantly, in Kandahar, the hijackers were safe from any rescue attempt.

This shows how it clearly was not only the U.S. that was affected by the Afghanistan spill-over, even though in hindsight, the way al-Qaida's story is told, the narrative usually focuses on how Osama bin Laden arrived to Afghanistan with some of the old cadre of the so-called Bureau of Services (Miktab al-Khadamat) in 1996, from the Sudan, to set up what would later come to be referred to as al-Qaida. This narrative then usually enumerates mainly or exclusively the attacks perpetrated against American targets from then on. For example, the August 7 attacks against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, in which, once again, many Afghanistan veterans were involved (including people such as Tanzanian-born Ahmed Ghailani, or Wadih el-Hage; el-Hage's is a peculiar case: he fought against the Soviets in the 1980s and at one point became a U.S. citizen after that). The beginning of the year 2000 was then marked by the millennium plots (planned bombings in Jordan and in Los Angeles in the U.S.). Ahmed Ressam, a would-be perpetrator caught in L.A., at the airport, had received training in the already mentioned Khalden camp, while one of the chief organisers was Jordanian Abu Musab az-Zarqawi, later to become the notorious head of al-Qaida in Iraq, until his death in a U.S. air strike there in 2006. October, 2000 then saw the attack against the U.S. warship Cole in Aden harbour, in Yemen. The chief organiser of that attack, Abd al-Rahim an-Nashiri, was a veteran of both Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Finally, the overwhelming majority of the 9/11 attackers received training in Afghanistan, including members of the Hamburg and the 'Asiri sub-groups.

To remark an important pattern behind the attacks on U.S. interests: Ahmed Ressam received training for the operation he came to be involved in in 1998, while some of the 9/11 attackers received training in 2000. This could illustrate how Afghanistan by this time turned into a factory of terrorism, from which *only* black swans could be expected, i.e. not black swans in the sense Nassim Nicholas Taleb uses the term. Recruits were going there and were then coming back with dangerous skills and intentions, in a re-productive cycle.

What happened on 9/11 was extraordinary in terms of scale and impact and it was not foreseen in its details. But it was ordinary in that it was just “yet another black swan” from Afghanistan. That a mathematician named Taleb conceptualised the 9/11 attacks in *any* way, seems more extraordinary in fact.

For final illustration of the Afghanistan spill-over, see the telling – albeit imperfect – scheme presented by journalist John Cooley in his book *Unholy Wars* (2002: viii),³⁷ Map 2.1. The title of the original map, “Movements of CIA-trained guerrillas and drugs outwards from Afghanistan after the 1979-1989 Afghanistan war,” is deceiving. The CIA did not train the guerrillas themselves. It passed on equipment and know-how to Pakistan’s military and intelligence, for the purposes of training insurgents. Still, the map offers a useful visualisation of the Afghanistan spill-over:



Map 2 Movements of CIA-trained guerrillas and drugs outwards from Afghanistan after the 1979–89 Afghanistan war.

³⁷ By the way, Cooley’s book, a narrative of the spreading contagion of militant, radical Islamism, was itself published first already before 2001.

Instead of what could be logical to assume if one believed in global security interdependence, and even while the security interaction patterns described in *Insert 2.1.* covered a great part of the globe, the effects of terrorism clearly did not reach every corner of every state in the world.

The impact of jihadist actions and operations was quite different from country to country. Some have not seen any impact, some have seen bombings and insurgency, some have seen only bombings and other kinds of (minor or major) terrorist attacks, with widely differing, dispersed casualty tolls and impact. Ashraf Ghani³⁸ and Clare Lockhart write in their book, “Fixing Failed States:” “As 9/11 and subsequent attacks showed, people in prosperous countries can no longer take the security of their daily lives for granted” [Ghani – Lockhart, 2008: 4]. Is this true? Or is this just the sort of impression terrorists would want us to have?

One’s conceptual framework should reflect a critical examination of this. The way forward may be shown by Buzan et al.’s notion of regional security complexes, where “regional” shall eventually be replaced by something eligible to highlight other, different limits of security interdependence.

Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde argue (1998: 11):

„All of the states in the system are enmeshed in a global web of security interdependence. But because most political and military threats travel more easily over short distances than over longer ones, insecurity is often associated with proximity.”

Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde add later on that „the normal pattern of security interdependence across the international system is one of regionally based clusters, which we label *security complexes*” (still from 1998: 11). Let us put aside the claim about the anarchic nature of the international system, as well as some of the actual context of the quote. It then becomes very relevant here. It brings in the notion of „security complexes” in the place of security interdependence.

Security complexes are webs or systems of security relationships within which interdependence is higher than in general (though even within them it is not necessarily as high as in the abstract model). According to Buzan’s early (1991) definition, security

³⁸ Ashraf Ghani is a former finance minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and, at the time this doctoral thesis is being written, he is a presidential candidate for the 2009 presidential elections in Afghanistan.

complexes are “complex patterns of alignment and enmity.” It is also added that these patterns have to be “durable,” as that is the only way in which describing a structural existent, such as a security complex, can be meaningful. The alignments/enmities element shows how glued security complex theory is to the politico-military sector of a rather state-centric strain of security analysis. One would need to move away from this framework to be able to work with the concept on issues such as terrorism or the drugs trade.

Importantly, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde build in general on a disaggregated approach to the analysis of security relationships. They look at different sectors of security analysis (political, military, environmental, economic and societal). Summed up in a few points, below is the gist of their analytical approach, read out partly from the 1998 book, partly from Buzan and Wæver’s 2003 book on “Regional Security Complex Theory,” or RSCT (Buzan and Wæver, 2003). The third point in the list below already takes us half-way beyond the original RSCT framework.

1. Security complexes can be geographically demarcated from each other – more or less. The entire world can be divided up into regional security complexes.
2. Different sector-specific security complexes as such may be separate subjects of analysis, just as different regions can be.
3. It seems natural based on the previous points that geographical separation and sectoral disaggregation can be combined in analysis.

The present study employs the following modifications in light of this. Some are new, some have already been applied in the existing literature.

1. In order to discuss security issues such as terrorism or the drugs trade, one has to move beyond Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde’s categorisation of „sectors.” The appropriate association of the above named threats to any of the sectors is unclear. Therefore I am looking to examine *issue-specific security complexes* in this study, mostly related to peculiar, complex patterns of NSEs. This is not an entirely unprecedented approach. E.g. on one particular issue-specific security complex, the „hydro-political security complex,” work has been done by Schultz (1992), even if nominally that study still stuck to RSCT’s early foundations.

2. Issue-specific security complexes may be delimited geographically in some instances. The present study looks at issue-specific security complexes connected to the same geographical „major source:” Afghanistan.
3. The earlier point about the impracticality of sector-based analysis is also relevant with regards to security communities. The Deutschian concept does not leave much room for the consideration of security beyond the traditionally supreme realm of security policy, the politico-military sector. This is understandable for the context it was born in. But are dependable expectations of „peaceful change” and „no bellicose action” enough to constitute a security community? At a time when threats beyond aggressive or potentially aggressive state behaviour are supposedly more prominent in security considerations? Threats, such as that of global terrorism or communicable diseases? Can the fear of war against each other be the only, and the best, reason for a security community *today*?
4. Global security interdependence has been refuted as a valid argument for a global security community. Can we talk of issue-specific security communities instead, justified by the existence of issue-specific security complexes? Of security communities forming within issue-specific security complexes, either extending to the entire security complex or covering at least a part of it? Crucially, from the point of view of this study, *is the ISAF coalition an issue-specific security community?*

Points 3. and 4. call for quoting Christopher Freeman’s brief but illuminative essay about post-9/11 Europe here. Freeman concludes, shortly after the events of September 11 in time: “The Copenhagen School’s use of proximity as a clue to security interaction is largely outdated in the New World Order” (Freeman, 2001: 8). He also adds: “While complex interdependence may eliminate the risk of another European apocalypse, the security community is as far as this dynamic extends. A growing focus on outside actors and occurrences as security threats undermine the fundamental Copenhagen assertion that European security concerns and interaction are primarily intra-regional. The final conclusion, then, predicts the notion of a European security complex as a misperception of post-Cold War geopolitical themes” (Freeman, 2001: 9).

This shows the impracticality of RSCT beyond the traditional, state-centric interpretation of the politico-military sector. It also highlights the fundamental issue of how we identify “regions.” In the case of RSCT, they are supposedly neither geographical

regions,³⁹ nor are they regions based on a shared regional identity of their population.⁴⁰ They should be relevant *purely* from a security standpoint. Importantly, terrorism and the drugs trade, as well as to some extent even mass refugee flows, are all issues that can implicate countries across different geographical regions, just as they can affect people of different regional identities, travelling the long distances they sometimes do.

Dilemmas in the analysis of issue-specific security complexes

It is worth to ask if there may be a meaningful difference between issue-specific security complexes and issue-specific security communities. In stand-offs between military alliances, the answer is quite clearly yes. A group of states willing to wipe each other off the map at the slightest indication of aggressive intent by their respective adversaries will be very interdependent in terms of security, while it will constitute anything but a security community. However, in the case of other, issue-specific security complexes, such as those connected to terrorism, the drugs trade or mass refugee flows, the answer is not so clear. These are issues faced with which cooperation seems *normal*. Non-cooperation, on the other hand, is most likely dysfunctional from the perspective of any state's interests. This study will have to look at whether that is really the case.

A further point to consider is that it is not automatically clear if it is the actual, empirically more or less measurable, extent of a threat that matters when territorially delimiting security complexes. Or could it rather be the degree of securitisation in the societies concerned that matters? If it is the latter, it might be more appropriate to talk of *securitisation complexes*. These may not be in perfect overlap with issue-specific security complexes, ones that we could methodically identify by the use of indicators.

An example could be how the truly major threat to Europe's population all throughout the 19th century was the threat of cholera epidemics, originating mostly from India, where the disease was constantly present at the time. Even in Europe, millions died over the course of the century of cholera. Yet securitisation did not occur to a sufficient degree to get states to begin institutionalised cooperation for a long time. The first international sanitary convention was adopted only in 1892, by which time cholera posed only a lesser threat, thanks to advances in treatment on the continent. Thus, in this case, while Europe existed in a near-

³⁹ I.e. ones that could have their boundaries naturally marked by high mountains, the sea, major rivers or other geographical formations.

⁴⁰ For example, based on the idea alone of a „Central Europe,” the „Caribbean,” or a „Black Sea region.”

global security complex of cholera pandemics, European states were pre-occupied with defending their sovereignty from each other, even against synchronising quarantine and other measures in response to the threat of communicable diseases.

The way to surpass potential discrepancies between realities, perceptions and actions, is to work with a mixed, i.e. a deliberately incoherent epistemology, as Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde do. Following their approach I will consider both security and securitisation complexes from hereon, contrasting the two from time to time. This will be relevant with regards to all three issue-specific security complexes mentioned above.

One telling example advanced here could be how we could draw up a security complex over the issue of the illicit trade of cannabis. Doing so, we commit a speech-act securitising cannabis as a threat. Stemming from that speech act we may present countries such as the Netherlands, Afghanistan and the U.S. as part of a cannabis-related security complex. Yet these countries have quite divergent policies vis-à-vis cannabis, based on differing levels of securitisation. In the Netherlands the cannabis trade was first tolerated, then regulated. This is seen as both a threatening global loophole as well as something undermining the legitimacy of the existing counter-narcotics approach in the U.S., by the U.S. government. The latter often criticises the Netherlands' approach to the issue (see Reinerman, 2002). In Afghanistan, meanwhile, the production of hashish is merely discouraged by the government. This makes it problematic to judge, for example, if conversion from the production of opium to hashish in certain Afghan provinces is a success or a failure.

This is of fundamental importance for analysis. The existence of such wide differences in perceptions and actions may question the legitimacy of talking about a security complex at all, in given cases. That is why the look at the drugs trade security complex will be limited to the illicit trade of opiates in this study. Not in order to make a point about whether in my view the illicit trade in opiates is more of a threat than the trade of cannabis is, or about whether it is a threat at all, but because it is more commonly treated as a threat. Similarly, when talking about terrorism, I will discuss specifically trans-national jihadist terrorism, as the kind of terrorism more or less securitised by nearly all states of the world.

Sorting out these dilemmas allows for more accountability in using the notion of issue-specific security complexes in a policy-relevant way.

Policy-relevance stems from the possibility that one could operationalise the direct significance of events in Afghanistan for, among others', Hungary's homeland security, by looking at the relevant issue-specific security complexes and at how much, and in what sense, Hungary is a part of them.

Footnote 28 included the English translation of a relatively recent official take by the Hungarian Ministry of Defence about why the Afghanistan mission matters to Hungary. It was an illustrative example of the instinctive search for the most direct possible explanation to a country's involvement in faraway Afghanistan. To recap: reference was made in the ministry's brief to the need to help eliminate the bases of terrorism and to „roll back” the drugs trade in Afghanistan.

It might be critically asked if these arguments of the Hungarian MoD are well-founded. In order to answer the question, issue-specific security complexes – among them the security complexes connected to the illicit trade of opiates and jihadist terrorism – are studied extensively in the following sections of the study, as promised. At first, they are examined one by one.

Issue-specific security complexes related to Afghanistan

The nature of focusing on the Afghan „source”

Two critical points need to be made at the start, before a discussion of any of the issue-specific security complexes that will be identified here as related to Afghanistan. The most important of these security complexes will be the ones connected to mass refugee flows, jihadist terrorism and the illicit trade of opiates. The two points offered below are relevant with regards to all three of these.

1.) [*Non-synchronicity.*] Intuition may suggest that the three issue-specific security complexes mentioned are practically inseparable when it comes to Afghanistan, regarded as a major „source” within them. But in fact they are, to a degree, separable. They are connected to *not entirely synchronous* negative spill-over effects of political processes *affecting* Afghanistan (processes not necessarily restricted to within Afghanistan).

§ The largest Afghan refugee movements took place as a result of the persecution of regime opponents after the communist takeover of power in 1978. Subsequently they were triggered by oppression and the aggressive counterinsurgency measures by the Nur Taraki, the Hafizullah Amin, and, later, the Soviet-installed Afghan governments and their Soviet backers. To some degree, the population movements of the era can also be explained by a cultivation of „mohajir”-dom. The latter

concept is based on Islam's call for leaving one's land if it is ruled by an unacceptable regime, to move to Muslim lands, where one may loyally practice one's religion (Centlivres – Centlivres-Demont, 1988). The communist regime in Afghanistan was widely regarded as an "atheist regime," and they were indeed regarded by many Afghans as unacceptable.

§ Terrorist attacks outside Afghanistan, prepared specifically using the infrastructure offered in Afghanistan's Taliban-ruled part were carried out in the second half of the 1990s. During the 1980s, operations that fit into the narrower category of insurgent terrorism, were carried out *inside* Afghanistan, as part of the wider „jihad” against the Soviet-backed regime,⁴¹ with the direct or indirect aid of several state actors (among others, the U.S., their regional interlocutors Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia). Pakistan was involved in organising attacks even beyond Afghanistan from 1985, in Soviet Central Asian territory, according to Coll (2004: 104-105). After the Soviet troops left Afghanistan, the original „jihad” was not over, since the Soviet-backed Najibullah regime stood for three more years, until 1992. Later, it was the emerging civil war which still tied down many of the Islamists (sometimes mentioned as the „Afghan Arabs”) who fought in the armed conflicts in the country. The 1993 attack on the World Trade Center in New York, in which several Arab veterans of Afghanistan were involved, may also be interpreted partly as terrorism migrating from the autocratic home countries of the perpetrators, rather than merely as a spill-over from Afghanistan.

§ Drugs production, significantly increased after the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

However, one has to refine this picture, making two more important points to the contrary of the above proposition – one about refugee flows, and another one about the drugs trade.

Refugee flows. It is sometimes ignored in narratives of refugee flows that the Taliban's oppressive measures also triggered major refugee movements over the course of the 1990s, just as the imminent U.S. military action did in 2001 (along with the subsequent fighting that swept across the country). Moreover, mass refugee flows are usually lasting spill-over effects

⁴¹ When I defended the draft of this doctoral thesis, one of the reviewers raised the point that Afghan guerrillas were fighting a legitimate war of liberation against the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and so it is inappropriate to talk of terrorism in their case. Yet the rampant killing of school teachers, among others, by certain insurgent factions, can hardly qualify as anything else. The targets were unarmed civilians, they were killed by non-state actors for political purposes, and the killings were intended to have a terrorising psychological effect. According to one source, by 1986, over 2,000 Afghan teachers were assassinated (Giustozzi, 2000: 23).

that matter not only at the time they are triggered, but for long afterwards, too, as sustaining “push” factors are often at the works in the source country – just as there are factors “pulling” (back) refugees in the host countries.

The drugs trade. Drugs production did not really *start* in Afghanistan after the U.S.-led intervention in October 2001 – again, this is forgotten sometimes. It started much earlier. It increased even, during most of the time following the Taliban’s rise in the mid-1990s. Contrary to popular belief, the Taliban have not objected to poppy-growing from the moment they took power.

With regards to terrorism, it has already been shown that it had a presence, of an evolving nature, from the 1980s on. Still, the earlier points about the at least *somewhat* non-synchronous nature of spill-over effects from Afghanistan may appear to substantiate the validity of a disaggregated analysis of Afghanistan-related security complexes. For now.

2.) [*Bi-directionality.*] The other critical point I indicated in advance is that negative spill-over effects take place not only in one direction, as already discussed in Chapter One. This is observable within all the issue-specific security complexes discussed here. Some spill-overs originate from countries that are identified in the West-centric discourse as „target countries,” affecting the so-called „source countries,” such as Afghanistan. The common, supposedly clear-cut, normative distinction of „target/destination” and „source,” as „passive, innocent victim” vs. „evil, criminal perpetrator,” is not empirically verifiable. The roles may be reversed or synchronously shared.

For example, the demand for drugs, motivated partly by human desperation, partly by human curiosity and pleasure-seeking, is one of the actual sources of the drugs trade. Of demand, weighted by purchasing power, the most is found in the per capita richest countries. From these very countries precursor substances and arms move the opposite way along the drug trail than drugs themselves do. These items are indispensable in the production, the protection and the trade of drugs. Partly these flows make the drugs trail sustainable. Terrorism itself is something of which arguably more was exported to Afghanistan over its history than what emanated from it. To make an illuminating point, suicide bombings are a new, post-2001 phenomenon in Afghanistan. The first suicide bombing took place in the country on September 9, 2001, against Shura-i Nazar commander Ahmed Shah Masoud, and it was committed by Arab assassins. Finally, as to refugees, they are *pulled* by certain factors, not only *pushed*. When ex-migration occurs on a scale as it did in Afghanistan, emigrants’

departure can also be interpreted as a negative security consequence for the country thus deprived of its brightest minds and its most able working hands.

The refugee flow security complex: A contained security complex

Refugees leave behind states that have failed them from a humanitarian perspective – either by not providing them with security or, in accordance with the more „conventional” interpretation of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, by „persecuting” them. Consequently, a refugee is a person who, „owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [*sic!*] nationality...” (CRSR, 1954)

This means that the regime in the source state is either too weak or too oppressive. In either case, while its territory will be part of the refugee flow security complex, the state in question will not be part of any security community dealing with the issue. At least as long as conditions within it do not normalise – this can happen if oppression or state weakness, whatever is the case, is overcome in the source state.

The emergence of an issue-specific security community may be a possible development at least among the states that take in the refugees. Theoretically it could cover the whole of the security complex minus the failed or non-cooperative source state. For that to be a security community as opposed to a securitisation community, however, refugee flows have to be large enough to truly, critically burden the community’s member states. Calls addressing the moral conscience of the West often suggest that there is an inverse relationship between the changing level of „securitisation” and the level of the actual threat refugee flows present, when portrayed on a distance to source function. See the resulting mirror trends in *Figure 2.2*.

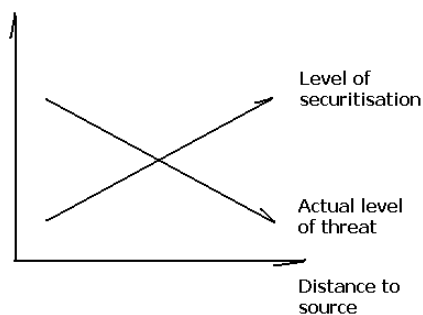


Figure 2.2. Abstract scheme of a possible contrast between securitisation and actual threat in the case of refugee flows

States neighbouring on the source (the primary hosts) will generally take in a lot more refugees than do non-neighbouring states, especially the more distant ones. They may have to take in members of ethnic groups or tribes related to a part of their population. This may have a destabilising potential at times.⁴² Conflicts *within* refugee populations are also more common in the extreme circumstances of larger camps in poorer states.⁴³ Primary host countries admit a mass of refugees with a lot of women, children and elderly among them (people who are more dependent on aid). Meanwhile, the able, young, male labour force from within the original refugee population may venture on for better livelihood to distant, richer states, leaving the rest behind (though often helping them by remittances).⁴⁴

In general, the primary hosts of refugees certainly do have to reckon with more serious security consequences, while very often they do not have the power to stop refugee flows.⁴⁵ For example, they may be dependent for financial assistance on donor countries and hence not in a position to deny in-coming refugee flows.⁴⁶ It is hard to say if an issue is securitised once

⁴² At other times kinship ties might make a refugee flow more tolerable. A major part of the early Pashtun refugees arriving in Pakistan towards the end of the 1970s went not to refugee camps. They became guests of their tribal kin, who received them in the spirit of *nanawati* (hospitality in essence).

⁴³ But clashes can take place elsewhere as well. In March, 2008, Afghan and Georgian inhabitants of the Debrecen refugee camp clashed with each other; two Afghans and one Georgian were seriously hurt in the incident.

One specific problem in the case of the Debrecen camp was that a lot of the inhabitants there are persons enjoying so-called supplementary protection. This entitles them to a personal ID and the chance to work. However, the legal rules guiding Hungarian public administration did not at the time allow for issuing these personal documents to asylum-seekers under supplementary protection, even though other legal rules governing refugee protection, that had already entered into force, did. This clash of legal rules resulted in many asylum-seekers waiting endlessly for personal documents they were told they were entitled to have. On June 11, 2008 the hold-up led five Afghans of the Debrecen camp to climb a telecommunications transmission tower in protest. They only came down from the tower after they were promised they would get the personal documents they wanted.

⁴⁴ Refugee flows may constitute both positive and negative spill-over effects. For employers in a host country, refugee flows might make available cheap, informal labour. That, on the other hand, may hurt the interests of the native labour force in the host country. For the host state it may mean both a loss of revenues because of the non-taxed income of informal workers, and an increase in revenues if the economy performs more competitively in export markets thanks to the availability of cheap labour. The exact, complex impact (whether it is negative or positive overall) has to be measured *carefully*.

⁴⁵ For example, the Iranian-Afghan and the Pakistani-Afghan borders both run through difficult and sparsely populated terrain that is very difficult to control.

⁴⁶ To nevertheless mention one country that could afford to arrest a major refugee flow at its borders, there is the example of Turkey during, and in the wake of, Gulf War Two in 1991. Crucially, Turkey was an ally of the United States. Moreover, it has securitised the incoming refugee flow not because of the potential burden of accepting the refugees *per se*, but because the refugees concerned were predominantly Kurds.

In the Afghan case, Pakistan effectively could not stop refugee flows at its border. It did receive major international support to deal with them later on, however. Such support came not only through international support for refugee protection and through UNHCR's and NGOs' work. It came through support to the Afghan guerrilla war as well. The war itself was fuelled by the arrival of a large refugee population in Pakistan. People from the ranks of this refugee population were recruited to fight the war that the Pakistani army was able to cash in on, while the anti-Soviet jihad itself sustained the inflow of refugees. This was the vicious circle of the refugee issue in Pakistan in the 1980s.

there is no choice about it. Moreover, primary host countries are mostly found in Africa and Asia, where the major source countries are, and these countries are generally less likely to be genuinely democratic. Often they have rather fragmented societies. A truly „nation-wide” discourse, through nation-wide-influential speech-acts, is unlikely to take place under these conditions. Processes of securitisation will hardly conform to what securitisation theory rather Euro-centrally suggests.

The main primary hosts of Afghan refugees, Pakistan and Iran, show a number of peculiar features in addition.

Firstly, refugee flows in their case are empirically very hard to set apart from otherwise regular population movements connected to nomadism, labour migration or mobility within one’s ethnic or tribal kin’s territory. These movements are also bi-directional. For example, in the 1980s, many Hazara refugees/migrants worked the coal mines in Iran over the winters, to then join the fighting against the Soviet forces between spring and autumn (Adelkhah – Olszewska, 2007: 140). In the same period, many Pashtun refugees went to Pakistan regarding themselves as *mohajirs* (i.e. following religious duty, as indicated before). Some of them could also enjoy the position of being tribal guests on the other side of the Durand Line. Many of these men periodically returned to fight in Afghanistan as *mujahideen*, again fulfilling religious duty by doing so (Centlivres – Centlivres-Demont, 1988: 144-145).⁴⁷

Generally more data are available with regards to Pakistan, or more specifically about the Pashtun refugees there, than about Iran, and about refugees of any other ethnicity (Strand – Suhrke – Harpviken, 2004; Adelkhah – Olszewska, 2007). This affects the empirical visibility of the security/securitisation complex. What can be safely noted is that some securitisation of Afghan refugees has occurred in both Iran and Pakistan. This, mostly since the 1990s, translates into frequent mistreatment of refugees by authorities, their deprivation of social benefits, their forced or not altogether spontaneous returning to Afghanistan, and even widespread negative public attitudes towards them. The latter may be evidenced for example by a popular Iranian TV series consistently presenting Afghans in Iran in the role of villains (Adelkhah – Olszewska, 2007: 138).

A contrary example from the region, Tajikistan was able to hold up a smaller Afghan refugee wave at its vaguely delimited border on the Amu Darya (Pyandzh) river, in 2000. It was triggered by the Taliban’s incursion into the northernmost parts of Afghanistan. Since they could not enter Tajikistan proper, the Afghan refugees had to settle on the islands of the Amu Darya. After their arrival there a debate ensued between UNHCR and the Tajik authorities, concerning whether these refugees could qualify to be „refugees” strictly in an international legal sense. If yes, they would have deserved better protection inside Tajik territory. The counterargument from the Tajik side was that the refugees were either in „no man’s land” (i.e. no country’s land) or still in Afghan territory (in that case as internally displaced persons) [Overland, 2005].

⁴⁷ With regards to the identity of Afghans in Iran see also Glazebrook – Abbas-Shavazi, 2007 and Tober, 2007.

However, refugees may become the subject of a securitising mode of speech in the richer countries in the West, too. Such speech might imply a choice about their acceptance as refugees or about accepting their being, or remaining, deserving of refugee status. Meanwhile, Western countries are the ones that otherwise take in fewer refugees – countries that are better suited to deal with the challenge of any refugees.⁴⁸ Even so, a morally condemning depiction of the countries concerned, in the spirit of *Figure 2.2.*, ought to be reconsidered. Securitisation is a fuzzy concept, and that there is a „securitising” discourse over refugees may not mean that really – *comparatively* – extraordinary measures are taken concerning them.⁴⁹

Any refugee flow security community will in most cases be a weak one, however. The financial assistance provided through various channels by richer states to the primary hosts functions partly to outsource refugee protection in a cost-effective way, within a security complex that is potentially global in reach. The refugee flow security complex is thereby *contained*. In the Afghan case it is made up primarily of Iran and Pakistan. It was estimated by the Congressional Research Service in January, 2007 that there remained about 3.5 million registered and non-registered Afghan refugees in these two countries. Around 2.5 million were in Pakistan and 900,000 in Iran (Margesson, 2007).

The securitisation complex reaches further of course. The presence of Afghan refugees who have moved on, beyond Iran and Pakistan, evokes concerns elsewhere as well, even absent any credible threat (as the example of Kalocsa, mentioned in *Footnote 49*, shows). However, as noted, the exact reach of any securitisation complex depends on how relaxed a definition of securitisation we employ.

Western politics regarding Afghan refugees transformed in a remarkable way following the 2001 intervention in Afghanistan. Countries involved in Afghanistan’s reconstruction were not interested in too quick a repatriation of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan. To avoid putting untimely burden on Afghan institutions, as well as on the Western militaries and state agencies, and the international organisations involved in

⁴⁸ Some data on Hungary. Hungary admitted the largest number of refugees during the years of the Balkan wars. Even then it was not an overwhelming flow, however. After the 1990s, 2001 saw another (lower) peak. In the first ten months of that year 3,409 people requested refugee status in Hungary. Of these, by far not everyone who requested refugee status was eventually granted it. In 2006, the number of people receiving refugee status in Hungary was 99, and in the first three quarters of 2007 only 90. The number of people granted so-called „supplementary protection” was 99 in 2006, and 62 in the first three quarters of 2007.

⁴⁹ An example regarding securitising speech acts in Hungary: shortly after the 2001 intervention in Afghanistan, the Hungarian government decided to open a new, temporary facility for Afghan refugees in Kalocsa. The decision met significant protest locally. Local politicians claimed the camp would be a threat to national security, with Hungary’s only nuclear power plant (in Paks) only 8 kilometres from the area (albeit on the other side across the river Danube). Citizens of Kalocsa were also concerned about a potential loss of revenues from tourism. In the end the government was forced to reconsider its decision (see e.g. *Hetek*, 2001).

Afghanistan, they were interested in a more realistic scheduling of refugee returns from the two countries: in a process sensitive to local conditions. Through their presence on the ground, they became part of the refugee flow security complex, rather than just a securitisation complex, constituted originally by Afghanistan and its neighbours. Ironically, this did not necessarily translate into tolerance of Afghan refugees in the territory of the “state-builders” themselves.⁵⁰ Meanwhile,

“European governments have also started working much more closely together in recent years to inhibit new Afghan refugees’ entry into Europe and to encourage their voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan. For instance, they launched the Return for Qualified Afghans Program, co-funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Organization for Migration. This program offers comprehensive assistance packages to qualified Afghans now residing in the European Union, to encourage them to return to their country. It is hoped this could facilitate reconstruction and capacity-building in Afghanistan, by making available better human resources.” (Zombori, 2008: 24-26, footnotes omitted – *P.M.*)

Cooperation over the scheduling of returns, between the West and the rest, is less than perfect. Based on this, the existence of any issue-specific security community is questionable. For example, over the course of 2007, Iran has at times pushed for accelerated returns. Iran did so in such a way as to indicate harassing potential. That, in turn, concerns the security dilemma between Iran and the United States, a key dynamic within the post-1979 military security complex of the Gulf.

In the meantime, armed conflicts flared up in Pakistan. The intervention and the continuing presence of Western troops in Afghanistan have pushed the Taliban and other militants out to Pakistani territory where they could establish new bases for themselves after 2001. Already by 2007, there were Pakistani refugees arriving to Afghanistan, from Kurram Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. They were fleeing fighting between Taliban-backed Sunni and opposing Shiite militias. By February, 2008 their numbers reached 10,000. A reversed refugee flow was thus taking place, and it continued to grow over the course of 2008, as Pakistan launched major military operations in Bajaur Agency, also in the FATA.

⁵⁰ For example, Australia was rather quick to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed with Afghanistan, in May, 2002, about the promotion of the “voluntary repatriation” of under a thousand Afghan refugees in Australian camps at the time (some of these were literally off-shore camps, on Pacific islands) – most of the refugees in this case were Hazaras).

The jihadist terrorism security complex: A deflected security complex

A central argument of this section is that globally oriented jihadist terrorism takes place currently – primarily – in a quadrangle of relations between four different types of polities: secular autocracies, liberal democracies, weak states hit by Islamist insurgencies and Islamic or Islamist-influenced states.

That is how the security complex can be schematised in a sweeping concept. This is simplification of course, deliberately oblivious to the historical details of, for instance, the birth of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the more radical Islamist groups all over the world that sprang up subsequently. Still, looking at all of the different types of polities mentioned above is definitely necessary to understand the dynamics of the security complex within which Afghanistan became something like a hub for more than two decades now.

Re-telling a truly nuanced history of jihadist terrorism in terms of the four-polity quadrangle may prove to be difficult. The concept may be useful nevertheless to consider the various links between the quadrangle's tips in an analysis of the structure of the security complex. It may also be superior to several of the even more simplistic, and yet common, narratives explaining the emergence of terrorism. For example, it is suggested at times that jihadist terrorism emerged from the context of relations between pro-Western, secular autocracies in the Middle East (such as post-Sadat Egypt) and the liberal democracies of the West. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood was born long before the Socialist Nasser regime, which took harsh measures against it and was not an ally of the West at the time. The two-polity structure is not a suitable interpretive framework to deal with the changes in the wake of 2001, either. With the elimination of al-Qaida's bases in Afghanistan, one could counter-intuitively say that such a supposedly two-polity security complex has „expanded,” engulfing a weak, insurgency-struck state, Afghanistan. But of course Afghanistan under the Taliban was already part of the terrorism security complex – more accurately speaking, it was at that time part of the threat itself, as it was a country led by radical, Islamist forces, its leadership willingly hosting terrorists from around the world.⁵¹ For a change that did occur, Afghanistan has become a key *target* for terrorists after 2001.

The example of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan may draw distinguished attention to the fourth type of polity mentioned in the four-item list – these are what could be called the

⁵¹ A significant number of militants left behind Afghanistan after the 2001 invasion. A new wave of migration to Afghanistan started as the Western intervention there failed at stabilising the country and protecting it from infiltration from Pakistan's tribal areas; and after Iraq and Saudi Arabia became inconvenient operational theatres for al-Qaida. (On al-Qaida's campaign in the Saudi Kingdom see Hegghammer, 2008.)

elusively diverse category of „Islamic and Islamist-influenced regimes.” They play a role in facilitating the operation of the whole security complex. The countries concerned may offer safe haven areas as well as opportunities for financing and recruiting to jihadists, either as part of, or independently from, state policies (think of Sudan in the 1990s for an example of knowingly provided safe haven). The intervention sometimes drawn in response, led by, or supported from, the West, as it occurred in the cases of Afghanistan in 2001 and in Somalia in 2007,⁵² might replace the regimes concerned with insurgency-challenged, grey-zone polities somewhere along the spectrum between procedural democracies and secular autocracies.

The truly elusive special cases related to the category of „Islamist-influenced regimes” are those of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan, according to its constitution, is originally a secular, and since shortly after an Islamic democracy. It has been dominated by its military establishment more or less overtly throughout its entire history. A majority of its society holds core Islamic values dear – although with diverse interpretations. Saudi Arabia is a kingdom – an absolute monarchy – influenced by radical, Wahhabi thinking from the start of its history. As states, both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are strategically allied with the U.S. and the West, even while many within their society and even within their security sectors see this as contrary to their values or even their interests. In both states, Islamists do have the opportunity to provide support to jihadists, albeit contrary to official intentions and measures.

The links between the different polities in the security complex – between secular autocracies, liberal democracies, would-be democracies, and Islamic or Islamist-influenced countries – can be explained at least partly by reasons that are beyond terrorists’ political (dis)preferences, and beyond the way they ideologise the relationship between liberal democracies and the secular autocracies of the Islamic world.

Ideology does, however, play a crucial role (see e.g. Zambelis, 2008: 6-9). Even pro-Western, secular Middle Eastern regimes can capitalise on playing to anti-American or anti-Western sentiments at times, to gain or preserve legitimacy. This is ironic: Western democracies are symbolic-value targets for jihadists partly because of the support they are seen as lending to secular autocracies in what is referred to as the „Islamic world” – support, that is given for various reasons; the intention to counter or contain the influence of Islamists within the polities concerned being one of them.

⁵² The U.S.-backed, Ethiopian-led intervention on the side of Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government, against the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), bears some resemblance to what happened in Afghanistan. The ICU has lost the territories it controlled, but an insurgency flared up in the wake of this. On January 21, 2007 even an American citizen, Daniel Joseph Maldonado was captured by Kenyan troops in Somalia, trying to flee the country where he allegedly received training at a terrorist training camp.

Terrorist networks have also received a boost over the course of history as foreign policy tools of states. According to the debatable term introduced by William Lind (Lind, 2004: 12-14), terrorist groups can be assets in „fourth generation warfare” or 4GW. 4GW is the use of irregular means of subversion in an interstate conflict through more or less dependent agents by a state. These agents provide the employer state with the cover of plausible deniability. The standard script is that militants strike, and then their sponsors consistently deny any link to them, even while calling for addressing the “root causes” of terrorism faced by the victim, stopping just short of deeming the attacks legitimate.

4GW has been used, to point to just a few historical examples, by a number of Middle Eastern states against Israel, as well as by Pakistan against India and by India against Pakistan in the past. One could claim that in general there are not many precedents for the use of jihadists as state agents, but there is the colossal exception of Pakistan’s extensive use of them against the Soviet Union and the Soviet-backed Afghan regime, at U.S. instigation, and the subsequent use of some of the same jihadists, as well as newly trained ones, against India.

Not a definitive alternative example, but something that ought to be mentioned, is the case of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing – one of the perpetrators of that attack, Ramzi Yousef, entered the U.S. with a false Iraqi passport, while one of the bomb-makers, Abdul Rahman Yasin, was Iraqi himself. Yasin returned to Iraq after the FBI had released him from custody in March, 1993. There he was, however, arrested later on, under unclear circumstances. This incident may be ground for speculation, but no definitive proof of official Iraqi involvement has been offered so far. Another example of 4GW waged against the U.S., with jihadists employed, could be Syria’s and Iran’s suspected role in facilitating the Iraqi Sunni Arab insurgency which was joined by a great number of non-Iraqi jihadists over the years.

Saudi Arabia has been a source of support to Islamists in other ways, already since the times of Nasserite and Baathist Arab Socialism, when the Saudi kingdom gave refuge to émigré members of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the most important support to militancy is coming from the Kingdom through the financing provided to religious charities. Most of the money in question is not given by the donors specifically as *direct* support to militant organisations, but there is not much apprehension about who the end-users are on the part of many of the generous supporters.

Saudi financial support to radicals has grown considerably as a result of the oil-price hikes in the 1970s, but since the 1990s, after Islamists turned increasingly critical of the Saudi Kingdom, the regime governing charities’ operation has gradually become stricter. This made

providing financial support to militants more troublesome for all the actors involved. Although there is not such an extensive network of terrorist financing as the 1980s' Golden Chain⁵³ used to be, there is still a steady flow of funds to radical organisations worldwide, including in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The factors named so far – ideology, states' strategic use of jihadists as agents of 4GW, and the financial support jihadists receive – are very important, but they do not yet add up the entire picture regarding why jihadist terrorism, originating partly from secular, Middle Eastern autocracies, is flowing to the West. Further factors need to be named, and for this a bit of a detour is needed, to present some of the theses from Enders and Sandler's 2006 book, *The Political Economy of Terrorism*, a key focus of which is to explain trans-national flows of terrorism.

In their comprehensive overview of the political economy literature of terrorism, to which they themselves have been significant contributors, Enders and Sandler show how democracies are generally more frequently associated with the presence of terrorist activity within their territory (Enders – Sandler, 2006: 28-29). Some of that terrorism is of migratory origin. Attacks are carried out or threats are voiced by groups seeking to pressure democracies, ones not necessarily indigenous to the countries in question. Democracies are normally more sensitive to violent pressure, and may re-shape their policies favourably to terrorists' interests; this perception has been the traditional motive for applying terrorist strategies against democracies for the attainment of political objectives. At the same time, the terrorist groups concerned are, in a purely technical sense, also aided by the comfort of democratic freedoms in their operations.

Enders and Sandler consider the possibility that autocracies may underreport terrorist attacks. This might distort the statistical picture somewhat. It raises the question if democracies are only *seemingly* associated with hosting more terrorist activity (2006: 29). Enders and Sandler's argument is that an autocratic regime may protect its legitimacy by hiding manifest signs of opposition. Here their logic seems questionable. Terrorism is not necessarily a widely legitimate form of resistance; not even against an illegitimate regime. Publicising terrorist attacks and the brutality of regime opponents may offer rewards for an autocracy, both in gaining external legitimacy, especially in the post-9/11 context, and in gaining domestic support for measures further restricting political freedoms.

⁵³ This was the network providing much of the financing for the operations of the so-called *Miktab al-Khadamat* (Bureau of Services), the organisation arranging recruitment and recruits' affairs, to help the non-Afghan manpower supply of the anti-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan. In retrospect, the bureau could also be described as a predecessor of al-Qaida.

For example, in 1999, Uzbekistan was hit by a series of terrorist attacks likely perpetrated by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU's activities have, over the years, also affected other Central Asian states, including Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Therefore the Uzbek regime of Islam Karimov can, up to nowadays, find it useful to refer to the IMU's threat as an argument in favour of stable *and* heavy-handed rule. Even up to today, although the IMU is by now much weaker and less able to strike in Central Asia proper than it used to be.

This conforms to Enders and Sandler's originally liberal democracy-specific concept of the civil liberties/protection trade-off (Enders – Sandler, 2006: 31-36). In fact, the concept of the trade-off might suggest that restrictive measures lose their authoritarian taste when a country implements them to defend against the threat of terrorism. If the trade-off is indeed empirically valid, we shall consider polities not as isolated units of analysis but pay attention to the relationship between them. Differences in the level of restrictions across countries will be a crucial factor influencing international flows of terrorism. In Enders and Sandler's interpretation (2006: 20):

„If defensive measures taken by one country divert a terrorist attack to another country, a transnational externality occurs. (...) ... a negative externality, where countries engage in too much security in an arms race-like attempt to deflect attacks.”

Afghanistan is clearly affected by a deflection of *terrorists as well as terrorism* to a degree. It is a country where state weakness provides an especially fertile environment to prepare and carry out terrorist operations against Western interests: an environment more fertile than what Western democracies themselves used to offer, prior to 9/11. In other words, in the above mentioned „race,” Afghanistan is a loser in the post-9/11 environment.

Even deflection is only a part of the reason why Afghanistan is affected by transnational, jihadist terrorism. It is seen more appropriately if thought of as a by-product of the interplay of various different factors, of which the deflecting effect of restrictive measures is but one.

For example, another basic factor is that Afghanistan is a symbolic-value target. It holds symbolic value in Islamists' eyes because of Western democracies' involvement there, and because of the political outcome Islamists would like to see in Afghanistan, instead of a Western-backed, modernising state. The ongoing militant struggle also helps terrorist networks to carry out propaganda, to find a new generation of recruits and to draw financial support for their cause from impressed, wealthy backers. In addition, by attacking

democracies' citizens (civilians as well as soldiers), jihadists can maintain pressure on the democracies concerned, too.

Examining the relations between the different poles of the secular autocracy/liberal democracy/weak state triangle – or along the „deflection chain” – we get a vague picture as to whether there is any security community to talk of in this case. This all the more underscores the need to move beyond the conventional use of the term „security community.” Beyond its conventional interpretation, attached to the political and the military sectors of analysis, the picture is too contradictory to be ignored.

Between Western democracies and several secular, Middle Eastern autocracies, we often find something akin to a security community in the conventional sense, in the political and the military sector, just like with countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The security community with Pakistan is the most precarious of these, with concerns that a major part of U.S. aid to the country might be diverted to finance the insurgency in Afghanistan, or that informal nuclear proliferation from Pakistan may let nuclear technology leak to states hostile to Western interests.

On the societal level of analysis – where Islamist influence has most of its impact – one finds a markedly more negative picture. Between Western democracies and secular, Middle Eastern autocracies, immigration is a particularly interesting form of „increased interaction” – this is ironic, since the latter is one of the features of a security community in Adler and Barnett's description, and yet it does not necessarily lead to better inter-cultural understanding and solidarity.

The permissive environment in democracies with already significant Muslim communities is regarded as an acceptable destination for *hijra*, or emigration, even by many contemporary Islamists (Roy, 2004: 126-127). Put simply, it is thought that one can live in the West without becoming a Westerner. This permissive environment complicates the structure of the security complex with the emergence of „home-grown” terrorism in European countries. With this development, the democratic pole of the quadrangle is becoming more of a source itself, too.⁵⁴ In fact, at times in the past the democratic pole has even served as an

⁵⁴ According to a recently leaked report by MI5's Behavioural Science Unit, based on „hundreds of case studies:” in the UK, „the majority [of radical Islamists] are British nationals and the remainder, with a few exceptions, are here legally. Around half were born in the UK, with others migrating here later in life. Some of these fled traumatic experiences and oppressive regimes and claimed UK asylum, but more came to Britain to study or for family or economic reasons and became radicalised many years after arriving.” Understanding radicalisation and violent extremism in the UK. MI5 Behavioural Science Unit Operational Briefing Note. Report no.: BSU 02/2008. – As summarised by: *MI5 report challenges views on terrorism in Britain*, by Alan Travis, The Guardian, August 21, 2008. URL: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism1>, accessed on August 22, 2008.

enabler of militancy against both secular and Islamist autocracies, as militants have found refuge in the more tolerant environment of liberal polities. Take the example of Saudi Islamists, some of whom have relocated of all places to London after a crackdown on the Islamist opposition in Saudi Arabia in 1993.

Meanwhile, there clearly is a kind of security community between the democracies that intervened in Afghanistan *and* Afghanistan, i.e. the state they are trying to reconstruct, even while the latter is struck by terrorism that has migrated to its territory partly as a result of the October 2001 intervention deposing the Taliban regime, and while that terrorism is partly even originating from the West (see *Insert 2.2.* regarding this). Talking of a migration of terrorism to Afghanistan may appear inappropriate to some. But the reason why it seems so is simple. In the case of Afghanistan one has to start the clock *way before* the Taliban's removal from power: before the Taliban's ascension to power. For terrorism to find itself the kind of base it had in Afghanistan, external state support was necessary.

This state support came in the form of support to create a staging ground for militants taking part in the Afghan jihad, as insurgents, as well as through the purposeful radicalisation of a whole generation of Afghans, in Pakistani refugee camps. This process was accomplished in a sense when the Taliban movement overcame the fragmentation of southern Afghanistan at the end of 1994, and subsequently managed to spread its dominance into almost every corner of the country. Somewhat debatably assessing this, the CIA had come to the conclusion by 1998 that Afghanistan became, instead of a state sponsor of terrorism, a state sponsored by terrorists (Gutman, 2008: 164). By 1999, Phyllis Oakley, a former Afghanistan desk officer of the U.S. State Department and head of Foggy Bottom's Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the time, referred to Afghanistan as a "hijacked state" (Gutman, 2008: 161).

A simplifying narrative could present this as a result of both an over-exportation and an over-deflection of radical militancy from Middle Eastern autocracies, assisted by some Western democracies and a number of other states in the process. In the end, the transnational flows in question re-wrote the identity of a key state agent within the security complex, contributing (indirectly) to bringing the Taliban to power and then (directly) to keeping it there, creating a veritable hub for the security complex.

Beyond identifying the interaction of different polities as a key to understanding the jihadist terrorism security complex, looking to describe its exact geographical reach and the geographical patterns of related interdependence is challenging for several reasons. Merely delimiting a contiguous body of territory, or even identifying groups of not necessarily neighbouring states, is insufficient.

Firstly, the terrorist threat, and related activities of an auxiliary function, can „travel” in many ways. Air traffic or the *hawala* networks of informal, intermediary-to-intermediary money transfer create „security complex wormholes” of a kind. Secondly, the spread of ideologies is also, very much, a trans-state phenomenon. Thirdly, images of the global media flow virtually unaffected by borders, too.

In the case of Afghanistan, the role of the media is particularly relevant. It is possible to put pressure on democracies both in a moral sense, by bogging them down in the dirty *small wars* there, and financially, by draining their human and financial resources through insurgent warfare. Merom (2003) sees this as the decisive factor in turning domestic politics against foreign policy and foreign commitments in general, in democracies. The media, as a transmitter of key images, is an important enabler of those looking to achieve this. As a result, many researchers (e.g. Iyengar and Monten, 2008) have attempted to quantitatively show an „emboldenment effect:” a direct statistical relationship between media coverage and terrorist as well as insurgent attacks. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address this in methodological terms. Suffice it to say that terrorists and insurgents do very much take into account the role of the media. But in fact they do so in much more sophisticated ways than just attacking more when paid attention.

This is part of the reason why deflection is taking place – terrorists’ partly reactive, partly pro-active strategic calculus, resting as much as it is on the media’s behaviour, is a vital explaining factor behind the process. As Duane R. Clarridge, the first director of the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center (created on February 1, 1986), put it, long before al-Qaida’s arrival on the scene: „[terrorism] never fits one particular piece of real estate. It is effective precisely because it spreads all over the map” (quoted by Coll, 2004: 140).

Importantly, with all the words shed on the phenomenon of deflection, it must be made clear that this study does not suggest – and hopefully this does not even seem otherwise – that deflection-as-a-phenomenon can dictate anything like deflection-as-a-policy. A deflection of terrorism in the direction of Afghanistan is not sustainable at (our) will. Moreover, what the West achieves in Afghanistan is symbolically important, and success there weighs a lot more than any short-term security gain from deflection. The latter may be erased if the West destroys its credibility in Afghanistan.

At the same time, deflection does not cease or suspend the threat of terrorism even as we speak. An indication of this was the foiled attack in Barcelona in January, 2008 – French intelligence uncovered a plot by Pakistani men planning to bomb Barcelona’s subway. Great Britain has to monitor elements within its large Pakistani community on a near-constant basis,

because of plots in various phases of planning that the security services have knowledge or suspicion of. Restrictions do not necessarily impede would-be attackers to a critical degree, even after the July 7, 2005 London bombings. At the same time, an unnamed British intelligence official is reported to have revealed that “four out of 10 CIA operations designed to thwart direct attacks on the U.S. are now conducted against targets in Britain.”⁵⁵

The possibility that experienced jihadists may return from faraway battlegrounds is also a concern. For example, this prompted French authorities to arrest members of the „19ème arrondissement” group a few years ago (see *Insert 2.2.*). German authorities are equally concerned with the „wandering mujahideen” scenario, as a result of the growing activity of the Islamic Jihad Union (supposedly a splinter group of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan). The IJU has had some of its European and other members trained in terrorist training camps in the Pakistani tribal areas in the past.

The latter, the FATA, are the new hub or centre of gravity within the jihadist terrorism security complex. Europol’s 2008 terrorism report notes this threat as well, even while registering a 34 percent decrease in the number of suspected Islamist terrorists arrested in Europe, from 2006 to 2007 (TE-SAT, 2008).⁵⁶ A worrying trend is that the FATA is more and more the destination for willing recruits *all over Europe*, with now French and Belgian Muslim recruits travelling there as well (traditionally, British-born Pakistanis were the ones generally more likely to do so) [Cruickshank, 2009: 4-8]. Currently there may be as many as over 150 training camps in the FATA (and in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province), according to U.S. military sources, serving the needs of the Pakistani Taliban movement (the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, led since February 2009 by the United Council of Mujahideen) and Lashkar al-Zil (al Qaida’s Shadow Army).⁵⁷

Insert 2.2. Some examples of Western jihadists who have gone or at one point prepared to go to Afghanistan, Pakistan or Iraq – Source: Zombori, 2008: 34-35; footnotes omitted; the original text used here with the author’s permission.

⁵⁵ Tim Shipman: „CIA warns Barack Obama that British terrorists are the biggest threat to the U.S.” *The Telegraph*, February 7, 2009, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/4550144/CIA-warns-Barack-Obama-that-British-terrorists-are-the-biggest-threat-to-the-US.html>, accessed on February 7, 2009.

⁵⁶ Down from 257 arrests to 201, with only 13 percent arrested for attack-related offences in 2007.

⁵⁷ Bill Roggio: „US airstrike targets Taliban training camp in South Waziristan.” *Long War Journal*, April 19, 2009, available at http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/04/us_airstrike_targets.php, accessed on April 22, 2009. The Shadow Army inherits the role of the 055 Brigade, being a more conventional paramilitary force of Arab volunteers, set up to fight with insurgents in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In January 2002, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh (27), a British citizen, who once used to attend the London School of Economics, is a veteran of Bosnia and Kashmir, and was released in 1999 from an Indian jail in exchange for passengers of a hijacked Indian Airlines plane, masterminded the kidnapping and murder of U.S. journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan.

In 2005, seven people, including Farid Benyettou (27) and Boubakeur el-Hakim (24) were arrested in France. They were members of a group calling itself the „19ème arrondissement” after the district of Paris where most of the members grew up. They were recruiting candidates to go and fight in Iraq. Boubakeur el-Hakim’s brother was killed in Fallujah, Iraq and he himself has fought in the country. Over the course of its activity, the group managed to recruit about a dozen people who were sent to al-Qaida training camps.

Muriel Degauque (38), the first woman to stage a suicide car bomb attack in Iraq on November 9, 2005, was born a Catholic in Belgium. She converted to Islam when she was in her thirties.

In May, 2006 three German women were prevented by German authorities from travelling to Iraq. According to intelligence sources, one of them had announced on her website that she was planning to blow herself up in Iraq.

In 2007, Izhar Ul-Haque (24), an Australian citizen and a medical student from Sydney, was charged with training with a terrorist organisation, Lashkar-e-Taiba, in Pakistan. In January and February, 2003 he allegedly spent twenty-one days at the al-Aqsa training camp in Muzaffarabad. When he returned he was intercepted by customs officers with notebooks containing information about various kinds of weapons and books about fighting a jihad in Pakistani Kashmir.

In March, 2008, the 28-year-old German-born Turkish citizen Cüneyt Çiftçi blew himself up outside a guard post in Khost province in Afghanistan, killing two U.S. soldiers and two Afghans.

In April, 2008, two men from Germany, identified as Eric Breininger (20), a German Muslim convert, and Houssain al-Malla (24), a Lebanese native holding a German passport, were declared wanted by Germany, on suspicion of planning a bomb attack against German targets in Afghanistan. Just like Cüneyt Çiftçi, they were members of the Islamic Jihad Union, a group that in 2007 was planning attacks against U.S. bases in Germany.

The illicit opiate trade security complex: An anchored security complex

The illicit opiate trade security complex is *anchored* in rich countries. More specifically, as far as opiates from Afghanistan are concerned, it is anchored in European countries. The European population is driving demand on the world market of heroin. This demand is fairly persistent and it is hard to question its continuing existence even in the long-run. Therefore the illicit heroin trade security complex might merely shift or migrate if a given source is tackled successfully.

It would still be wrong to accept an entirely demand-focused, structural explanation for the existence of the illicit heroin market. Market actors on the supply side are constantly involved in creating and sustaining the market for their products. From price regulation by way of hoarding and flooding to organising supplies to yet untouched markets, a number of means may serve their ends. That is how the „anchor” of a drugs trade security complex may migrate itself, too. A good example is the cocaine market’s recent re-organisation, supposedly in reaction to effective counter-measures in Mexico, as a result of which the flow of cocaine has turned more towards the European market than before. Traders have managed to establish staging posts along their new, West African trading routes (UNODC, 2007a.; UNODC, 2007b). At the same time, any success in Mexico must have been temporary, since the cocaine trade is booming there as well. Some claim meanwhile that as a result of stepped-up airborne and maritime interdiction in the Caribbean and in the Mexican Gulf, now a much higher amount of drugs is smuggled on land, across Central America, than in the previous years (Meiners, 2009). If one does not look to manufacture an all-encompassing narrative to describe the bigger picture, on a cursory level of inquiry this shows the agility of the profit-based organisations involved in the trade – they are evolving all the time.

When it comes to Afghanistan, however, structural variables have truly great significance. Historically, the production of opiates has gradually shifted to Afghanistan from areas where U.S.-sponsored crop eradication efforts (e.g. in Pakistan), the legalisation of some of the earlier production (e.g. in Turkey), general economic development (e.g. in Southwest Asia) and/or a conversion to the production of other, synthetic drugs (e.g. in Southwest Asia) has terminated or significantly reduced poppy-growing (see e.g. Chouvy, 2006: 21-24; Fazey, 2005: 104-107). Entirely new actors were brought into the trade in this way.

This historic inevitability of the illicit trade – that demand creates new suppliers – is what leads a strong critic like Sheptycki to claim that the post-Cold War era’s shift to Intelligence-Lead Policing (ILP) in international police work, and the prominent position of

organised crime on ILP's agenda, can only disrupt, and not cease, illicit markets. In Sheptycki's view, international policing efforts amount merely to a kind of „global protection racket” (Sheptycki, 2003: 51-53).

As it may be evident from this, the differentiation of a security and a securitisation complex is relevant with regards to the drugs trade as well. The very first problem one has to deal with, when one tries to objectively describe the security complex, is that few actually reliable data are available for reliable conclusions. MacDonald shows how the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the U.S. State Department, relying partly on the same U.S. satellite data, came to estimate differing growth rates, from 2002 to 2003, of merely 8 percent and as high as 50 percent in Afghan poppy cultivation (MacDonald, 2005: 93). For another example, Swanström argues that China's official statistics misleadingly show heroin as coming to China largely from the Golden Triangle. The available statistical data cannot account for all of the heroin consumed and transited across China. This likely signals an underestimation of the Afghan source in the Chinese case (Swanström, 2006: 122). Few data are systematically collected and analysed on international organised crime on a structural level – for example neither INTERPOL nor the World Customs Organisation is too preoccupied with that (Burnham, 2003). On the consumer market, we have only scarce knowledge regarding how many users there are and how much demand there actually is (Caulkins – Reuter – Iguchi – Chiesa, 2005). One has to rely largely on projections and estimates regarding what is produced, through what route it is trafficked, by whom, for consumption by whom, and regarding where consumption takes place.

The discourse over the drugs trade reckons with two main routes of Afghan heroin to Europe, the prime market. Both of these routes bear some resemblance to the ancient Silk Road(s).⁵⁸ One of them leads through Iran and Turkey, the other through Central Asia and Russia. The latter route increased much in significance after the collapse of the Soviet Union saw vast segments of Central Asia's population end up in impoverishment. People from Central Asia were spread all over Russia as a result of economic migration within the post-Soviet space, and they had to turn to sources of income that were available to them at the time. This included the drugs trade.

With regards to the trade routes, we cannot just talk of a Silk Road security complex, even if just that is what is usually suggested by the discourse. For a different take on the issue, according to an estimate by the Senlis Council, 33 percent of Afghan opiates departs via

⁵⁸ When UNODC refers to the „Silk Route,” it refers primarily to the trail crossing Central Asia, Russia and other East European countries.

Pakistan, while only about 15 percent leaves Afghanistan via Central Asia.⁵⁹ The 2008 World Drug Report also notes an interesting trend (UNODC, 2008/1.: 45):

„Global morphine seizures amounted to 46 mt, up 45% on a year earlier. Most morphine seizures took place in Pakistan (70%) and Iran (23%). This suggests that important amounts of heroin are produced outside Afghanistan, as morphine does not have a large user base. The Pakistan authorities reported the dismantling of 8 heroin laboratories in 2006, the first identified laboratories since 1997.”

Based on this, it seems fair to say that Pakistan receives too few attention in conventional accounts of trade route structures.

As to Hungary, Hungary itself is also a transit country. It lies near the so-called „European Balkan” sub-route, and the „Northern Black Sea” sub-route leads to it as well.⁶⁰ The European Balkan trail is usually described as leading from Istanbul through Sofia and Belgrade on to Zagreb. It is generally thought that over the 1990s the armed conflicts in the Balkans have diverted some of the traffic from this route.⁶¹ At the beginning of the 1990s, when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia still had not disintegrated, about 60 percent of European heroin seizures occurred there (UNODC, 2008/1.: 48). The later diversion of traffic in the 1990s saw increased volumes crossing Hungary even. According to one source, the car bomb attack in Aranykéz street in Budapest in 1994, connected to underworld rivalries, may have been partly related to dividing up the spoils of this increased traffic. Since 2001, sources claim a general rejuvenation of the European Balkan Route. An increasing amount of heroin is being seized along its section in the Balkans. The amount intercepted by Albania grew from 4.5 kg to 120.041 kg from 2001 to 2006; heroin seized in Serbia and Montenegro grew from 62.518 kg to 696.556 kg in the same period (UNODC, 2008/2.: 13th p.).⁶² In 2006 the Southeast European region accounted for 12 percent of heroin seizures worldwide – it took

⁵⁹ Data available at the *Afghanistan Conflict Monitor*, at http://www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/senlis_traffickingroutes.jpg, accessed on May 10, 2008.

⁶⁰ These routes are described in: UNODC, 2008/1.: 48.

⁶¹ There are dissenting voices as well, regarding whether a diversion during the 1990s took place indeed. The armed conflicts of the Balkans may not have hindered heroin traffic so much really. Rather, they may have made it less visible.

⁶² Besides UNODC, the World Customs Organisation predicted that the European Balkan route was to gain in importance. Excerpt: „... the 'Northern Balkan Route' increased significantly in 2006. All the following countries succeeded in significantly increasing the volume of heroin seized – Turkey reported 15 seizures amounting to 1,616 kg, Bulgaria: 38 cases, 475 kg, Serbia: 5 cases, 205 kg, FYROM: 3 cases, 150 kg, Croatia: 6 cases, 68 kg; and Romania: 2 cases, 5 kg.” (WCO, 2006: 20)

second place behind the large area referred to as „Near and Middle East /South-West Asia,” which accounted for 60 percent of what was captured in 2006 (UNODC, 2008/1.: 54).⁶³

This is relevant from Hungary’s perspective. Conventional wisdom holds that the stabilisation of the Western Balkans is of much more concern to Hungary than state-building in Afghanistan. Here, then, is an example of how the two challenges are interlinked to a degree. Corruption and state capture related to trafficking do not necessarily threaten the prospects of political stabilisation itself. Nevertheless they do undermine effective governance structures and indirectly that is a threat.

Another country where Hungary (along with Southeast Europe) is interested in seeing less trafficking in the future is Turkey. Turkish groups play an important role in the trade. Europol maintains a database specifically devoted to monitoring these groups. This is the MUSTARD Analysis Working File (AWF). It is among the Europol AWFs currently involving the most law enforcement and other officials in Europe – MUSTARD involves over 20,000 of them according to one source.

The transiting traffic led to the strong securitisation of drugs in several of the countries concerned. For example this is the case in Iran. It is bogged down literally in a war with traders along its Afghan frontier (see Samii – Recknagel, 1999; Samii, 2003). In other countries, by contrast, for example in Russia, the problem does not seem to have become a central concern for the security sector for a long while, in the view of some observers (e.g. according to Shelley, 2006: 16). Whatever was the case up till the recent years, by 2009 Russia is clearly concerned with the effects of the Afghan heroin trade, and constantly takes opportunities to address the issue, for example on fora where it can urge NATO to be more pro-active about it.

Meanwhile, one should not study only the contiguous body of territory that the flow of drugs crosses. Here again, just like in the case of terrorism, one can find security complex wormholes. There is the air transport option for the smuggling of drugs, for instance. It is risky, as there is a great chance of discovery. But the profit margin is sufficient for couriers⁶⁴ and networks to take the risk from time to time, even with the alternative, overland transport routes and risks – the alternative cost – incalculated. E.g. even heroin is transported by air, for example from Pakistan to the UK.⁶⁵ The wormhole of financial transactions plays an

⁶³ Though it should be noted that „West and Central Europe” do not lag far behind, at fourth place in the rankings, accounting for 8%.

⁶⁴ Called “mules” in the informal law enforcement discourse.

⁶⁵ In the case of air transport, the most common method used is sending the drugs by mail, but couriers also play a role sometimes. Importantly, unlike cocaine, heroin is typically not smuggled in body cavities.

important role as well. Typically, revenues from the drugs trade go through a cycle of money laundering. Countries with more developed banking systems are the preferred venue for this. This, again, may question our assumption of a clear division of roles between „sources” and „destinations” of the drugs trade.

With regards to the latter point: as already mentioned, certain basic items of the drugs trade, e.g. precursor materials and arms, are trafficked in the opposite direction than drugs are. Fenopetov names the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Belarus, the Ukraine, Russia and China as the main sources of precursors (Fenopetov, 2006: 7). These may or may not be trafficked by the same networks. Townsend, in interviews with Central Asian law enforcement officials, found that such potential links were downplayed by them as not actually existent in reality (Townsend, 2006: 85). There also are findings contradicting this, however, signalling a strong connection between the trade of arms and drugs.⁶⁶

The actual burden of the drugs trade, as in the case of refugee flows, is shared unevenly in both a quantitative and a qualitative sense. The impact on individual countries depends on the distance from the „source” to a great degree: different consequences are to be expected along different points of the trail.

Drugs production, especially poppy-growing, thrives in insecure areas. There it may be the only viable option for farmers who have to do without a functional agricultural market infrastructure, in the midst of an asymmetrical armed conflict (Felbab-Brown, 2005 and 2007; Rubin – Sherman, 2008). At the borders of the source country, smuggling takes place partly under armed protection, e.g. on the Iranian-Afghan border; but back in the 1990s Tajikistan was another example of this phenomenon. Elsewhere, smuggling is undertaken rather in the form of concealed shipments, or by way of stealth, or by corrupting officials. Corruption itself happens all along the trail. With shipments broken down to smaller portions nearing the primary market, and with generally poorer countries nearer the source, this corruption has more of an effect „upstream.” There it may more easily amount to „state capture,” i.e. the capturing of local and central government posts by criminal groups. (See the case of Kyrgyzstan as studied by Marat, 2006, 93-111; in general see Cornell, 2006). Harmful effects of drug abuse and other related health problems, such as intravenous heroin use spreading HIV, TB and other infections, are also a concern all along the trail. So is market-related crime. Acquisitive crime by addicts or heavy users is proportionally more of a concern in

⁶⁶ *Drugs for guns: how the Afghan heroin trade is fuelling the Taliban insurgency*, by Jerome Starkey, The Independent, April 29, 2008. URL: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/drugs-for-guns-how-the-afghan-heroin-trade-is-fuelling-the-taliban-insurgency-817230.html>, accessed on May 2, 2008. The article describes direct connections between the arms and the drugs trade in Tajikistan.

countries where there are more consumers and where consumers represent more purchasing power and the retail trade value of heroin is thus higher.

Regarding the issue of harmful health effects, one has to point out peculiar Iranian habits of opiate use. Iranians consume almost *all* of the *opium* prepared from Afghan poppies. Heroin use exists in Iran, too, with something akin to a rural/urban faultline determining distinct preferences, but opium is consumed by more people (regarding Iranian consumption patterns see Ahmadi et al., 2004; regarding the trade see Samii – Recknagel, 1999; Samii, 2003). In any case, opiates may be deemed a major challenge for the Iranian state. This is illustratively shown by the example of the aftermath of the Bam earthquake in 2003. Humanitarian transports had to include a significant amount of methadone for the treatment of addicts in the disaster zone. Iran's rate of opiate addicts is in fact the highest in the world, estimated at 2.8 percent of the population in 2005.⁶⁷

Yet, consequences of opium consumption are more benign than those of heroin use. Opium is consumed in non-intravenous use, and there are less overdose cases. If harm reduction is a leading principle in policy-making, then the Iranian state's objective interest is not necessarily easy to define.

A drying up of the Afghan opium source, as it happened during the short-lived Taliban-introduced ban in 2000/2001, leads only to increased intravenous drug use and more overdose deaths, as heroin, easier to conceal and smuggle, may become relatively more available. E.g. Jelsma (2005: 99) noted a 60 percent increase in overdose deaths in Iran comparing identical periods in 2000 and 2001, from March 21 to July 21. Such considerations notwithstanding, Iran is engaged in a war-like struggle, as noted before.⁶⁸

This is one of the major concerns behind debates over the rights and wrongs of a law enforcement approach to counter-narcotics. The elimination of a source may, over time, lead merely to its substitution by other sources. It may also result in a conversion to the use of other drugs by some of the affected users – for example to the use of synthetic drugs, some of which may be more harmful than illicit heroin. During the 2000/2001 period, when the Taliban ban took its effect on the trade, such conversion to synthetic and other drugs was observable in reaction to the resulting drought from Pakistan all the way to Estonia.

⁶⁷ *Opiates of the Iranian People – Despair Drives World's Highest Addiction Rate*, by Karl Vick, The Washington Post, September 23, 2005. URL: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/22/AR2005092202287.html>, accessed on May 4, 2008.

⁶⁸ See *Breaking the border*, by Jason Burke, The Observer, September 9, 2001. URL: <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/life/story/0,,548810,00.html>, accessed on May 2, 2008.

The debatability of whether there is an actual threat, and in what sense there is one, as well as the questionable possibility of offering viable measures against it, raises the question if there is merely an inter-subjective securitisation complex in the case of the drugs trade – rather than an objectively existent security complex.

Even if one agrees to the securitisation of drugs as a threat, it is not at all guaranteed that fighting against them more heavy-handedly decreases this threat. Lowenthal retells a U.S. national security briefing about the global narcotics trade where an undersecretary was told by the intelligence officer giving the briefing: „there is very little you will be able to do with this intelligence (...) you have no policy levers with which to react.” Asked why he said so, the intelligence officer answered that he merely wanted the undersecretary to be prepared for this „at the outset of their relationship so as to avoid problems later on” (Lowenthal, 2003: 147).

Indeed, the most important “intervention” of the last decade, the one change having the greatest impact on the drugs trade, has been globalisation, including the great expansion of world trade – in a negative sense, of course. As Naím writes (Naím, 2007: 77-79):

“During the 1990s the number of reported drug seizures worldwide which had been stagnant at around 300,000 tons per year, more than quadrupled to 1.4 million in 2001. This explosion should come as no surprise, for the entire legal and technological apparatus of globalization has made the illicit drug trade faster, more efficient, and easier to hide.”

Added to this, one also has to take account of the effects of information technologies. These had an impact not merely on the logistics of the drugs trade, but on that of money-laundering as well. Informal regimes of value transfer, such as the Black Market Peso Exchange in Latin-America, or the *hawala*-based systems of the Middle East, work much more efficiently with the aid of new communication tools, for example.

Further Afghanistan-related, issue-specific security complexes

At least two more issue-specific security complexes may be discussed in an Afghanistan-centred analysis. One of them is connected to poliomyelitis, or polio, and the other is related to energy issues, or, more specifically, the worldwide supply of natural gas – I will look at the latter specifically from a Western, interests-based perspective, which forms the basis of claiming a securitised nature for the issue.

Polio

The „war” on polio, the aim to completely eradicate the disease, was declared in 1988. At that time, some 350,000 cases occurred annually worldwide. By 2003, with less than 2,000 cases throughout 2002, it became possible for WHO to shortlist the few countries where cases still expectably occurred (as well as those that were still more at risk than others). This came one and a half decade and \$2 billion into the polio eradication effort which was originally set to achieve its overall objectives by 2000. Seven countries were included on the WHO shortlist as remaining source countries. Three of the seven accounted for 99 percent of all cases at the time. These were India, Pakistan and Nigeria.⁶⁹ Not coincidentally, these are countries affected by the challenge of either localised armed conflict or weak or absent central government control in *some* parts of their territory. These „pockets of polio transmission,” as WHO calls them, are the key remaining epidemiological challenges when it comes to polio. Because of their persistence, twenty-five otherwise polio-free countries have re-imported the disease between 2003 and 2005 (WHO, 2008).

After armed conflicts in Afghanistan gradually flared up by 2005, concern rose regarding the polio situation. The areas most affected by the fighting in Afghanistan were the ones directly neighbouring on Pakistan’s tribal areas. There the disease still regularly appears. Then Pakistani health minister, Nasir Khan, declared in February 2007 that „in terms of polio eradication, the two countries [Afghanistan and Pakistan] are one.”⁷⁰ Worryingly, in parts of Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas, such as Bajaur Agency, just like in conflict-torn southern and eastern districts of Afghanistan, vaccination campaigns are either regularly hampered by fighting and religious opposition to them, or altogether impossible to carry out. This is a concern, since polio is very infectious and spreads rapidly in unvaccinated populations. Mobility through air travel opens a wormhole for this security complex as well. This is illustrated by the case of Zaheer Ahmed, a Pakistani guest student in Australia. A Punjabi by birth, Zaheer Ahmed contracted polio while on a trip in the Swat valley, a predominantly Pashtun part of Pakistan in the North-West Frontier Province, near the tribal areas. He then returned to study in Australia, carrying the infection with him.⁷¹

Regarding the general trends over the latter years in Afghanistan and Pakistan:

⁶⁹ WHO steps up polio fight, BBC, July 29, 2003. URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3106607.stm>, accessed on June 4, 2008.

⁷⁰ Afghanistan-Pakistan: Polio knows no borders, IRIN News, Islamabad, March 22, 2007. URL: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=70863>, accessed on June 4, 2008.

⁷¹ Pakistan polio case in Australia, by Ashfaq Yusufzai, BBC, July 30, 2007. URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6922991.stm, accessed on June 4, 2008.

„In 2006 there were 40 confirmed cases of polio in Pakistan and 31 in Afghanistan. This year [*in 2007 – P.M.*], there have been 11 confirmed cases in Pakistan, including four in Sindh Province, two in Balochistan and four in Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province,”

according to an IRIN report.⁷² This did not amount to the same, alarming worsening of the polio threat that was seen from 2005 to 2006. Even so, trends did not present an overall reassuring picture. That is why it was important that the Taliban eventually agreed, in September, 2007 to let polio vaccination go ahead in various troubled southern Afghan districts, including even Musa Qala in Helmand province. The latter was, at the time, mostly under insurgent control. This, however, is not the end of the polio threat in the areas concerned, since multiple, repeated vaccinations are required for effective protection against the disease. This seems problematic in the absence of regularly and reliably granted access.

Natural gas supplies

Finally, the issue of energy supplies may be tentatively brought up within the analytical framework of this paper. There are plans, distant as yet, for a Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan pipeline, possibly connecting to India even, and thus mentioned as TAPI.⁷³

TAPI could be strategically important directly to India, and indirectly to both the European Union and the U.S. This new access route could diversify distribution channels for Central Asia’s natural gas. Subsequently it could mitigate Russian influence over the region and its resources somewhat, at least with its planned potential capacity of 33 billion cubic metres per year in mind.

With this strategic purpose in focus, the nominally EU-favoured Nabucco project seems too vulnerable in the case of conflicts in the Caucasian region, therefore other routes, such as TAPI – or any other route leading to China – may seem like better options at the moment (see LeVine; Kushner; Tálas; all 2008). If only they could be realised somehow.

Instability in Afghanistan is hampering even the planning for this project. The U.S. company Unocal and the Argentinian company Bridas have earlier, in the 1990s, dropped their respective plans for building a version of TAP. At this point, the Asian Development Bank seems ready to take part in financing the project,⁷⁴ with the pipeline’s construction set to

⁷² *Afghanistan-Pakistan: Cross-border polio campaign targets 40 million children*, IRIN News, Islamabad, August 7, 2007. URL: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=73615>, accessed on June 4, 2008.

⁷³ It is also often mentioned as TAP, as the *Trans-Afghan Pipeline*.

⁷⁴ News reports indicate an agreement reached between Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, that their national oil companies will form a consortium that would construct the pipeline. The current plan is to float a so-called Special Purpose Vehicle on international financial markets to draw additional financiers, perhaps some bigger companies as well, into the project. Source: *GAIL to lay TAPI pipeline*, The Financial Express, April 28,

begin in 2010, although the prospects for the completion of the section in southern Afghanistan look *more* dubious than they did between 1996 and 2001, when the Taliban was in stable control of the areas concerned.

For some radical critics these vague plans are, nevertheless, enough to identify the key U.S. foreign policy interest in Afghanistan as the realisation of the trans-Afghan pipeline (see e.g. Foster, 2008). One could dismiss such ideas as unreal, but the issue merited attention here: any kind of strategic disadvantage persisting for the West partly because of the current situation in Afghanistan *could* be viewed as a negative external effect of the ongoing conflict there.

(Re-)conceptualisation: Issue-specific security complexes vs. NSEs

Having discussed five different issue-specific security complexes, one may begin to see an added advantage of using the concept of issue-specific security complexes in general. It not only has advantages over talking about extremely (and evenly) high global security interdependence, which is an absurd proposition itself. The concept also has some edge over the concept of NSEs, or negative spill-over effects, introduced in Chapter One.

Consider how stepped-up interdiction efforts impeding the trafficking of drugs divert related NSEs to a degree, for example from the Mexican Gulf and the Caribbean region to Central America. Or consider how terrorism may be trans-nationally deflected by anti- and counter-terrorist measures, for example from Western Europe to Afghanistan. Or consider how refugees may be pushed back from certain countries, and thus move to, or stay in, other, third countries, by necessity.

These examples illustrate how a deeper, structural understanding of the scale, the nature and the direction of NSEs could be lacking if one would simply look at pairs of countries and measure NSEs between them, as they are at any given moment. Such a static approach may be deceiving, and more is necessary for truly profound analysis.

The description of issue-specific security complexes is necessarily more than the adding up of issue-specific patterns of NSEs: one also needs to describe the mechanisms that dynamically shape them, by explaining how qualitative, quantitative and directional shifts of the NSEs concerned have come to occur, and what predictive models we may use in analysis, to foresee similar shifts in the future.

2008. URL: <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/GAIL-to-lay-TAPI-pipeline/302677/>, accessed on August 20, 2008.

Conceptualisation: Security and policy community fault-lines

One of the questions pondered in the previous sections has been if one might talk of security communities within the security complexes outlined, in an issue-specific sense. The tentative answer in the previous passages has been that if there is any such community in these cases, in between any group of states, it is a rather weak one.

To conclude that with more confidence, a more elaborate conceptualisation of issue-specific security communities is required.

Such a security community of states would, in the ideal case, need to have a common policy vis-à-vis common threats. If the threat is *not* common, or if it is doubtful if there is a threat at all, a common policy might not make sense at all from a „Realist” or rather a selfishly rational perspective. If the threat *is* common, a common policy may seem only natural. For a security community to emerge as a result, coordination and equitable burden-sharing would be required against the given threat. Coordination implies that measures, when carried out independently, by the individual members of the community on their own, shall do no harm to the other members of the community. It also necessitates that this be taken into account in an explicit form even in the policy-planning process. In the cases observed this is hardly true.

As to terrorism, the September 11 attacks led to some convergence in terms of the general, West-wide toughening of *anti-terrorism*. No country’s relatively lax approach may be as threatening to other democracies as previously. Such a relatively lax approach is now more of a threat to the country that maintains one. But when it comes to the debate over the right *counter-terrorism* strategy, or even the need for *any* counter-terrorism strategy, views widely diverge.⁷⁵ Claims of counter-productivity are made. The lack of unity undermines efforts at whatever common goal there is, be it the lowest common denominator.

With regards to drugs, the example of the debate between the Netherlands and the U.S. has already been mentioned. For another example, Iran’s interdiction efforts are focused, in a tellingly one-sided way, on trying much more to stop the inflow as opposed to the cross-flow of drugs from Afghanistan.

⁷⁵ To make the difference implied here clear, in NATO terminology, anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism are interpreted the following way. Anti-terrorism is „the use of defensive measures to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property to terrorism.” Counter-terrorism on the other hand is „offensive military action designed to reduce terrorists’ capabilities.” Source: *NATO’s military concept for defence against terrorism*. October, 2003. URL: <http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm>, accessed on July 1, 2008.

Also of interest here is the often-heard argument about the U.S. that its active war on drugs may distort the policy mix of source and transit countries through its push for more law enforcement in general. A law enforcement-heavy approach is said to be typical of the U.S. in its domestic policy, too. A study by the RAND Corporation cites certain cost-effectiveness calculations regarding this – these seem to verify that there is, indeed, a tilt in spending towards law enforcement in the U.S., not justified by proportionally greater cost-effectiveness. Purely in terms of effect, it shows treatment to be the best (the most cost-effective) option. Definitive conclusions are hard to reach, however, because of the interrelated nature and effect of the full spectrum of available policy tools: law enforcement, treatment and prevention (Caulkins – Reuter – Iguchi – Chiesa, 2005: 15-19).

Law enforcement efforts are usually regarded by critics as stemming from a moralising approach to counter-narcotics. This is not typical of the U.S. alone, however. Many other countries, for example Iran or China, appear to share belief in such an approach (on Iran see *HVG*, 2008; on China see Malinowska-Sempruch – Bartlett, 2006).

As to the case of Afghanistan, there is more of a contrast with U.S. policy (Rubin – Sherman, 2008). The U.S. seems to favour a less cautious approach to counter-narcotics. The Bush administration was even willing to see crop eradication enhanced by ground-based or, possibly, aerial spraying in Afghanistan (U.S. CNS, 2007). The Afghan government's own strategic document on the other hand strongly emphasises the pitfalls of a strategy led by forced eradication, even while stating that, once opportunity for alternative livelihood exists somewhere, eradication could still be useful (NDCS, 2006).

Such divergence with the Afghan government's views may be regarded as a measure of U.S. willingness to outsource law enforcement with its possible collateral damage to overseas. This is not unprecedented. More or less of a U.S. push was behind a number of notable historical instances of comprehensive crop eradication campaigns. Examples include the campaign accompanying Turkey's conversion to poppy production for medical purposes, the case of the Pakistani counter-narcotics campaign in the Dir valley, in Bajaur Agency, as well as the temporary elimination of hashish and opium production in the Bekaa valley, in Lebanon (in cooperation with Syrian forces).

Looking at UNODC's sources of funding, however, it is not only the U.S that provides resources to the UN agency with a clear law-enforcement focus – Japan and the UK do that as well. Among the major donors of UNODC there is Italy, the country that historically has held on to the position of „the Italian job within the UN,“ as UNODC's (and its predecessors') leading post is colloquially known in the UN system. Pino Arlacchi, a former executive

director of UNODC was highly active in winning the Taliban's support for a comprehensive ban on poppy-growing in Afghanistan in 2000-2001.⁷⁶ Italy's law enforcement-centred ideas about counter-narcotics seem to be influenced by the country's struggle against its own, home-grown organised crime. The Sicilian *Cosa Nostra*, the 'Ndrangheta of Calabria and the Neapolitan *sistemas* have traditionally been active even in the Southwest Asian heroin trade in the past – and Pino Arlacchi took office at UNODC, having been a founder of the Italian DIA (*Direzione Investigativa Antimafia*).

The above examples are significant. Influence exerted over others' policy preferences could be indicative of how, what seemingly is an issue-specific security community of states, may be the product of sheer pressure, or of incentives provided, by hegemonic or structurally influential actors. In such cases, asymmetrically harmful consequences are quite likely. Once they do occur, any empirically identified *policy community* will be short of a real security community in the neutral view of analysis.

The example of Italy, a prime contributor to the general-purpose funds of UNODC, is also significant because it shows how countries may become relevant actors within a security complex not only through involvement based on their security interests. Italy is connected to the illicit Afghan opiate trade security complex through institutional links, partly because of a symbolic attachment to the issue. Through these links it is a relevant party within the complex nevertheless. Meanwhile, other countries, more of actual stakeholders themselves, might not get the same influence over what happens in the name of counter-narcotics.

Stakes connected to opiate production may not be only of a security or symbolic nature. Economic interests affect calculations as well. An example could be India – as a beneficiary of the so-called 80 to 20 rule,⁷⁷ India is generally not interested in seeing more countries allowed to join legal opium production for the world market of pain-killers (Jelsma, 2005: 100-101). In light of this, it is remarkable, in a very positive sense, to see former Indian narcotics commissioner Romesh Bhattacharji work nowadays with the independent think tank ICOS (International Council on Security and Development; the former Senlis Council), on ICOS' advisory board, in promoting a poppy legalisation scheme for Afghanistan (see Senlis Council, 2007). The latter could theoretically result in India losing some of its market share (albeit the concept does not, overall, seem very realistic; more on this in Chapter Four).

⁷⁶ For a case study of the complex reasons, effects and the highly likely un-sustainability of the latter see Fazey; Jelsma; Kuo – Strathdee; MacDonald; Thouni – all of them from 2005; for views of those sympathising with the ban, or claiming its overall usefulness, see Farrell – Thorne, 2005 and Adelakan, 2005

⁷⁷ According to this rule, the U.S., home to the biggest pharmaceutical industry in the world, imports 80% of the licit opium it needs from such currently accepted producers as India and Turkey.

Based on this example, there seems to be an interesting path to explore for conceptual thinking studying the relationship between security and economic complexes of stakes and interests. A question worth asking is what meaningful difference there could be between inquiring about security in the economic sector and analysing „economic complexes” as such. However, such conceptual questions are beyond the present study.

The age of uncertain policy-making

Disaggregated analysis makes only limited sense

Genuine issue-specific security communities, as I attempted to show, are not observable in the case of the issue-specific security complexes discussed in the previous sections. *Where we do find security communities, such as NATO, their existence cannot be explained in a purely functional sense. They are not issue-specific.* They are not merely instruments of countering a particular common threat. Thinking back to Adler and Barnett, these security communities are *mutual aid societies*, much rather.

The threats against which they take collective action are not necessarily *common* as such. There is mutual aid provided by members against threats that otherwise the individual members of the security community would have to face on their own. There is a belief in the appropriateness of this, nurturing the idea of solidarity between members, beyond the basic and ultimately selfish consideration that if one wants one’s interests respected and collectively defended tomorrow, one also has to show concern for others’ interests today. Of course, at the same time one can point to economic interests dictating cooperation as well. In the case of both NATO and the EU we are talking about security communities within the core areas of today’s global economy, within the “North.” The member countries have much in the way of common stakes on the peripheries and can gain collectively if threats and challenges are managed successfully there.

This drives a kind of „post-modern imperialist” response, as described (and partly *prescribed*, albeit with caveats) by Robert Cooper (2002), or Francis Fukuyama (2004), to name just a few proponents of interventionism on security grounds (see also Mallaby, 2002 or Fearon and Laitin, 2004). This post-modern or defensive imperialism effectively rests on the assumption of a security community of the North, in the face of the South; or a security community of the „zone of peace,” in need of reaching out to, as much as it is in need of defending against, the „zone of instability.” In the conceptions of the authors concerned,

reluctant imperialism is about making a direct – partly selfish or security-seeking, and partly humanitarian – effort at spreading the *zen* of the zone of peace, so to say.

Getting back to issue-specific security complexes, this means that they appear to be insignificant as drivers of security community formation. Have the previous sections of the study been in vain then?

The answer is not so clear-cut. Disaggregated analysis seems to be the logical approach to telling why the Afghanistan mission may be important to a particular country, such as Hungary. Looking at threats one by one, from an individual country cost/benefit perspective, one may try to connect one's measure of commitment in Afghanistan *directly* to one's peculiar interests. From a Realist perspective, it seems only natural that this is the way the issue has to be analysed. So much so, that this inevitably had to be addressed in the present study.

Moreover, as the already cited official take by the Hungarian Ministry of Defence on the issue of Hungarian interests in Afghanistan illustrates, government organs themselves feel tempted to formulate issue-specific justifications regarding the need for involvement in Afghanistan, referring to terrorism and drugs in general. This may stem from fear and uncertainty about the eventual outcome of publicly addressing the fundamental questions with sufficient complexity.

But complex arguments have to be addressed – this is what makes a policy, including one's Afghanistan policy, more acceptable and more sustainable for the long run. Avoiding a more sophisticated discussion may prove to be problematic in the case of a crisis, when people, more specifically opinion leaders, begin to more thoroughly contemplate the only seemingly acceptable, oversimplified arguments thus far presented to them.

For example, if one keeps referring to the struggle against drugs as a driver of policy, it will suggest that the Afghanistan mission is counter-productive at the moment (with Afghan opiate production having grown significantly during the latter years). This view is wrong, however, because policy-productivity should be judged according to different and much more complex metrics.

If one claims that in Afghanistan there are bases of terrorism to eliminate today, that is an equally precarious justification. In case there are terrorist bases in Afghanistan, so many years after 2001, and the concern would be how to eliminate them, that would suggest that the Afghanistan mission is rather hopeless. (Most of the training camps of today are in reality in the FATA, in Pakistan, as mentioned before.)

To underscore the argument about the weakness of a disaggregated, issue-specific approach in explaining policy, this study presents a brief case study of Hungary in the following sections. It shows how much issue-specific arguments may dictate Hungary's involvement in Afghanistan *in reality* – i.e. following the already mentioned, mixed-epistemology approach in assessing Hungarian interests with a nominal claim of objectivity, to verify or reject currently common assumptions (perceptions) about the reasons of the Afghanistan mission. After this, the value of any such verification or refutation is deflated, however, questioning the overall usefulness of a disaggregated approach.

Refugees

The Afghan refugee security complex is rather well-contained. As registered in *footnotes* #43, #48 and #49, Hungary is only very mildly affected by past refugee flows from Afghanistan. So mildly, that one could not justify grounding Hungary's Afghanistan policy on that issue.

Drugs

The illicit opiate trade security complex is, as stated before, *anchored*, by demand. The elimination of the current Afghan source of opiates could only be possible in the long run in the first place. At the moment, counter-narcotics cannot be really aggressively pursued in Afghanistan. It would hurt other, more immediate objectives there, such as the ongoing counterinsurgency campaign. Moreover, opium production may, in the end, merely shift elsewhere from Afghanistan, for example back to Southwest Asia. Meanwhile, a part of users may react to any temporary decrease in the supply of heroin by just converting to synthetic substances.

Table 2.1. below shows the population abuse rate for opiates in „West and Central European countries.” This is one measure of how much each of them is affected by the largely (although not exclusively) Afghan-source trade.

Table 2.1. Population abuse rate of opiates in West and Central European Countries (for their populations aged 15-64); source: UNODC, 2007c: 241.	
Country name	Rate (%)
Estonia, 2004	1.5
Luxembourg, 2000	0.9
Latvia, 2003	0.9

United Kingdom, 2004	0.9
Italy, 2005	0.8
Portugal, 2000	0.7
Lithuania, 2002/4*	0.6
Switzerland, 2000	0.6
Malta, 2004	0.6
Ireland, 2001	0.6
Denmark, 2001	0.5
Slovenia, 2001	0.5
Austria, 2002	0.5
France, 1999	0.4
Belgium, 1997	0.4
Norway, 1997	0.4
Iceland, 2005	0.4
Hungary, 2003**	0.3
Slovakia, 2004	0.3
Netherlands, 2001	0.3
Greece, 2004	0.3
Spain, 2002	0.2
Germany, 2004	0.2
Liechtenstein, 2005***	0.2
Poland, 2003	0.2
Cyprus, 2004	0.2
Sweden, 2003	0.1
Czech Republic, 2004	0.1
Finland, 2004	0.1
<p>* „UNODC estimate based on local studies, special population group studies, and /or law enforcement agency assessments” (UNODC, 2007c: 241-242). ** In Hungary’s case data is for the population aged 18-54. *** „Tentative assessment” (UNODC, 2007c: 241-242).</p>	

Table 2 then shows, in the fourth column, a possible percentage figure for how many within the population of the above listed countries were treated for opiate-related problems. See the

second figure within each cell of the penultimate column. Data is primarily extracted from the above quoted UNODC report.

Table 2.2. Treatment of opiate-related medical problems per country	% of those treated for problems related to opiates (in the year indicated), within all of those treated	Number of treated; Number of treated related to opiates (in the year indicated, or in the same year as in the column to the left)*	Approximate % of those treated within the entire population; Appr. % of those treated related to opiates within entire pop.**	Population data used
Austria	87 (2003)	11,753 (2002); 10,225	0.146; 0.127	8,032,926
Belgium	44.2 (2004)	3,662; 1,618	0.034; 0.015	10,584,534
Cyprus	66.7 (2005)	499; 333	0.063; 0.042	788,457
Czech Rep.	24.5 (2004)	8,845; 2,167	0.085; 0.020	10,381,130
Denmark	42.2 (2004)	5,212; 2,199	0.095; 0.040	5,475,791
Estonia	53.8 (2001)	2,034; 1,094	0.147; 0.079	1,376,743
Finland	39 (2004)	3,150; 1,229	0.059; 0.023	5,308,208
France	51.3 (2004)	78,500; 40,270	0.126; 0.065	61,875,822 (metropolitan France)
Germany	80.3 (2004)	38,953; 31,279	0.047; 0.038	82,210,000
Greece	87.7 (2005)	3,872; 3,396	0.034; 0.030	11,216,708
Hungary	14.4 (2005)	14,793; 2,130	0.147; 0.021	10,041,000
Iceland	0.1 (2000)	1,655 (2004); ≈2	0.523; insignificant	316,252
Ireland	65.6 (2004)	4,750; 3,116	0.079; 0.051	6,000,000
Italy	73 (2005)	159,952; 116,764	0.269; 0.196	59,448,163
Latvia	45.1 (2005)	543; 245	0.023; 0.010	2,270,700
Liechtenstein	14.8 (2005)	27; ≈4	0.076; 0.011	35,365
Lithuania	80.3 (2005)	3,301; 2651	0.097; 0.078	3,369,600
Luxembourg	76 (2003)	1,700 (2005); 1,292	0.354; 0.269	480,222
Malta	83.5 (2003)	623 (2004); 520	0.154; 0.128	404,500
Netherlands	50.8 (2003)	29,908; 15,193	0.182; 0.092	16,408,557
Norway	52 (2004)	3,003; 1,562	0.063; 0.032	4,752,735
Poland	23.3 (2003)	12,836 (2004); 2,991	0.033; 0.007	38,518,241
Portugal	63 (2004)	31,822 (2005); 20,047	0.293; 0.184	10,848,692

Slovakia	43.4 (2003)	2,078 (2005); 902	0.038; 0.016	5,379,455
Slovenia	96.2 (2004)	3,000 (2005); 2,886	0.148; 0.142	2,023,358
Spain	44.5 (2004)	52,922; 23,550	0.117; 0.052	45,200,737
Sweden	31.5 (2004)	4,389; 1,383	0.047; 0.015	9,196,227
Switzerland	43.9 (2003)	20,316 (2004); 8,919	0.267; 0.117	7,591,400
UK	66.4 (2005)	99,482; 66,056	0.164; 0.109	60,587,300

* Regarding the third column („Number of people treated...“): Where I did not know the percentage figure for the same year for which I had data on the number of treated, I made a projection assuming a percentage figure unchanged from the year for which I had one, to be able to estimate the number of people treated for opiate-related problems. Where that was the case, I indicated in brackets the year of measurement for the data on the overall number of people treated with drug-related medical problems.

** Using, for a(n extremely) raw, yet useful, measure, population data (be it census-based or just an estimate) available on Wikipedia on May 23, 2008 – using figures originating from the year closest to the actual year of measurement of the UNODC-provided data on treatment, which was used in the other columns (when more options were available). Some of these figures have since been replaced with fresher data on Wikipedia’s pages. This is regarded as irrelevant, since population data is meant to serve here only the crude measurement of the population percentage variable in the penultimate column.

The numbers in the tables may seem small overall, but counter-arguments could be made as well. UNODC estimates that there are about 100,000 lethal overdose cases annually, worldwide. The prevalence of HIV among users in the Baltic states is also indicative of risks to general society. According to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB, 2006: 80):

„Estonia has one of the highest growth rates for HIV infection in Europe: an estimated 10,000 persons infected with HIV. Of the estimated 30,000 persons in Estonia who abuse drugs by injection, about 13 per cent are infected with HIV. In Latvia, there are an estimated 10,000 persons infected with HIV and 17 per cent of the estimated 12,000 persons who abuse drugs by injection are HIV-positive. In Lithuania, there are an estimated 3,300 persons infected with HIV. Of the estimated 11,000 persons who abuse drugs by injection in Lithuania, 3 per cent are infected with HIV.”

The impact of the drugs trade *can* be regarded as a threat to societal security, when we take all first- and second-order consequences into account. Looking back at the tables, this is just

what needs to be remarked: that it is a possibility, and not an automatic consequence – the data in the tables offer an interesting measure of the varying extent to which the impact of the drugs trade is securitised. One finds some telling divergence between how great a percentage of a country's population abuses opiates and how great a percentage is treated for related problems. For a raw metric, rank correlation may be measured between country rankings established on the basis of the above tables. It turns out to be positive but not particularly strong ($\rho=0.742$). This means that even if a country may claim to be heavily affected by Afghan heroin, based on its population abuse rate, this may not necessarily be directly reflective of the costliness of the problem in its case. The state may not have the capacity to take into its care all users, and the treatment offered may be of varying quality as well.

All in all, the data for Hungary do not show much potential for linking our role in the Afghanistan mission directly to the drugs issue. Over the 2004–2006 period for which we already have figures available, altogether 43 people died directly connected to abusing heroin: 8 in 2004, 12 in 2005 and 22 in 2006. The number of deaths as a result of heroin consumption per million inhabitants in Hungary (2.5) is the lowest among EU countries. Luxembourg (40.5) and Estonia (50.6) rank the worst within the EU. There are currently around 4,000 heroin users in Hungary – 2,316 was the number of people receiving treatment for opiate-related problems in 2006 (source of the Hungarian data cited here: NFP, 2008). While the numbers cited do need to be taken seriously, they cannot be a primary reason for Hungary's involvement in Afghanistan. Crop eradication or overseas interdiction efforts are not the only solution to Hungarian users' problems (e.g. making more methadone available for the treatment of addicts could help as well). Meanwhile, crop eradication or even interdiction are currently not a priority for ISAF in Afghanistan, and they are specifically excluded from the tasks of the Hungarian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Pul-i-Khumri, Baghlan province, in the form of a national caveat communicated to NATO.

The same could be said regarding the other countries listed above. No direct linkage between policy and threat seems natural, even with the effect of the drug trails on governance in the Western Balkans in-calculated (although corruption and state capture there do remain a concern for Hungary and other European countries).

Terrorism

Even the threat of terrorism does not offer an easily presentable, direct rationale for the Afghanistan mission. Terrorism is largely about potential. Arguably one of the best examples of how this potential works is how, on September 11, 2001, the U.S. Secretary of

Transportation ordered the Federal Aviation Administration to ground all aircraft in the U.S., in the wake of the mourning attacks in New York and at the Pentagon. The possibility of more hijackings on that day was excluded at the price of shutting down the entire air traffic system in the U.S. (Friedman, 2004: 124)

Hyland and Roul make the point that much of terrorism is explained by the „Casey Stengel Theory of International Terrorism.” Famous former baseball player and manager, the late Casey Stengel used to say about baseball that its most important rule is to „hit it where they ain’t” (Hyland – Roul, 2008). According to this analogy, terrorists, in the role of batters, are looking to hit the ball where it is the least expected. Subsequently, if an attack’s possibility is ruled out somewhere, there may be an ideal target for terrorists, right there. This is true even of East-Central Europe where we might expect less (and not so durable) attention from the mainstream global media, should something happen. The currently observable deflection of attacks to countries like Iraq and Afghanistan may seem to present us with limitations of the Casey Stengel theory. The ball is more *likely* to be hit towards these countries at the moment. Excluding the currently unlikely is no comfort for the long run, however: that is what the Casey Stengel theory suggests.

In the past, in a direct sense, Hungary was only mildly affected by the jihadist terrorism security complex. Only two relatively significant terrorist incidents of any kind took place on Hungarian soil in the 1990s – both of them in 1991.⁷⁸

Some Hungarian citizens⁷⁹ have, however, been killed or wounded abroad in attacks that can be linked to jihadist networks in some way. A possible list of these incidents is shown in *Insert 2.3*.

Insert 2.3. Some examples of terrorist attacks outside Hungary, with Hungarian casualties (killed or wounded).

August 12, 2000: Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir (India) – two wounded in a bomb attack (tourists)

July 7, 2005: London (UK) – one wounded in the Tube bombings (a migrant worker)

⁷⁸ The Turkish ambassador’s car was shot at in Budapest, on December 16, 1991, in the first of these incidents. Just a week later, on December 23, 1991, a car bomb exploded near Ferihegy airport, targeting a bus carrying Jewish emigrants headed to Israel from the Soviet Union,. In the latter case six people were wounded, including two Hungarian policemen in an escorting police vehicle (the policemen were seriously wounded).

⁷⁹ Counting here civilians as “non-soldiers,” following an operational definition of terrorism focused on acts deliberately targeting civilians, committed by non-governmental agents.

April 24, 2006: Dahab, Sinai Peninsula (Egypt) – one killed, one wounded in a bombing there (tourists)

January 17, 2007: Baghdad, Yarmouk district (Iraq) – one killed in a complex ambush on a civilian convoy (a private security employee)

Potential has to be taken into account with regards to terrorism in other ways as well. Terrorism can inflict damage on the wider world economy. This can, in the event this happens, affect Hungary's very open economy.

Yet even this does not give one such a conveniently direct link between the threat of terrorism and Hungary's involvement in Afghanistan as the one suggested by the Hungarian MoD.

Conclusion: Arguments in favour of a holistic approach

A disaggregated approach, looking at the otherwise relevant issue-specific security complexes, does not work in the sense it is expected to: it does not offer easy justification for a country's involvement in Afghanistan. Regarding the reasons and the implications of this, the following ten points are listed here.

1. A disaggregated approach does not work because the picture matters in its entire complexity. Its elements in and of themselves, the „parts,” do not equal the „sum.” Put side by side, without a holistic perspective, they do not offer the bigger picture to the observer.
2. The lack of something simple – the „folksy shorthand” mentioned earlier on – that could function as the rationale for the Afghanistan mission, and the complexity which one finds instead of it, makes this mission a hard sell to the „public,” i.e. the electorate and key domestic stakeholders.
3. Some threat scenarios that can be outlined may suggest a clearer threat–policy nexus. E.g. the threat of terrorism would clearly grow if al-Qaeda could again gain a stable foothold in southern Afghanistan, and potentially even profit from the opium trade there.
4. The latter point about scenarios should draw attention to the importance of *time*. Disaggregated analysis looks to point to something that would make the Afghanistan mission important at a given moment (in this case „right now”). But there is always a

past and a future to be considered. Actors have identities that go beyond momentary interests. Back on September 12, 2001, few in the West would have suggested that a counter-sanctuary intervention in Afghanistan was not needed or that it was not at least a normal reaction to what happened. In the future, the West is not really in a position to abandon Afghanistan, because it would send a very detrimental message about its power capabilities and its commitments anywhere in the world. Crucially, the threats considered manageable for now could be much aggravated (again) by leaving the job unfinished in Afghanistan.

5. The instinctive temptation to believe that disaggregated analysis has to legitimise policy at any given point in time could lead to absurd policy consequences. E.g. if the threat context improves in a mission area, would that imply that the legitimacy of a continued commitment there diminishes as a result? Using this standard of evaluation, let alone obeying it, could just reproduce problems in either a vicious circle or a downward spiral.
6. What if disaggregated analysis signals us that commitments have to be increased in certain places? This could be the case in areas where an increased commitment may seem even more unacceptable to the public. Disaggregated analysis may tell us that European countries should be actively using all policy instruments in Iraq – the legitimacy of the 2003 invasion of Iraq notwithstanding. Europe is possibly more directly affected by any future instability in Iraq than the U.S. could ever be. Yet such increased European involvement in Iraq is improbable for the moment. Iraq remains largely a U.S. problem as far as challenges of a military nature are concerned. But exactly because of this, the logic of mutual aid *could* be used to justify a more proactive European involvement in Afghanistan *instead*.
7. Still regarding the absurd policy implications of a disaggregated approach: the currently observable deflection of terrorism cannot really legitimise a lacklustre effort at state-building in Afghanistan. Staying there indefinitely, with the job half done, is not an option for various reasons. Most importantly, domestic public support for such a commitment is not sustainable. And it would not be rational even in an instrumental sense. The West needs to achieve success in Afghanistan because of the war of ideas it is involved in.
8. Afghanistan cannot be treated as an isolated unit of analysis. This is fundamental. Especially the issue of terrorism cannot be discussed without a discussion of political processes in Pakistan in general, and in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, in

Baluchistan,⁸⁰ or in the North-West Frontier Province specifically. These areas have become a new base of operations (later even an *area* of operations) for jihadists, since the end of 2001. One therefore has to take a regional outlook and ask whether involvement is necessary in Afghanistan's entire region as such. The answer is that it is, indeed, crucial, with regards to what can be achieved against global terrorism.

9. Even if we could, somehow, make issue-specific security complexes exactly and objectively measurable, they would not necessarily provide absolute guidance for policy. It can only indicate what selfishly rational, short-term-oriented policy could be. A country that is not critically implicated by any of the relevant security complexes concerned may still contribute to the Afghanistan mission for humanitarian reasons.
10. The question of whether the Afghanistan mission is an overall worthy endeavour should be examined separately from the question of whether it can or cannot be unproductive or counterproductive in its current form. The statement that it is a worthy endeavour does not entail that the mission is guaranteed to produce success or that there is nothing that could be improved about it on the strategic, tactical and operational levels. Far from it.

Continuing in light of the last statement, the following chapters of this study raise points regarding some of the most problematic aspects of the ongoing state-building attempt in Afghanistan.

⁸⁰ See the recent background paper from the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs on Baluchistan by Magda Katona (2008).

Chapter Three

An overview of intra-alliance conflicts and case studies of several coalition members' role(s) in Afghanistan

Introduction

Shedding light on why individual countries hesitate so much when they need to sacrifice „Pomeranian grenadiers” for common goals, the previous chapter has dealt with how unlikely the emergence of a tight global security community is, both on the secondary social level (the society-of-states-level) and on the primary social level (the people-to-people level). States have not submerged so far, and likely never will, in a very tight global security community. Similarly, „human security for all” is not an overwhelming, predominant concern for a majority of humanity. The domestic audience/electorate/population receives distinguished attention from its government. Naturally, this affects decisions regarding how its security might be served: questions arise, such as whether the provision of its security should/may take place by means of external/foreign interventions. Or how collateral damage should be distributed among the source, the transit and the target countries of securitised (and hence „negative”) spill-over effects. Or how much of the burden one's country should share with others when finding oneself in an interdependent relationship with other states. Or how many of each countries' Pomeranian grenadiers are worth the sacrifice. And so on.

That burden-sharing is a difficult and contentious issue, any degree and structure of interdependence notwithstanding, has been established before by Keohane and Nye (2001). Their insights just have to be read into the context of this paper. Interdependence and harmonious relationships do not come hand in hand. Issue-specific security complexes hardly ever give birth to genuine issue-specific security communities.

The threats considered in the previous chapter, all of which figure prominently on the contemporary security agenda, are connected to complex issues. The search for a clear policy rationale with reference to them is an elusive quest, once the details are examined. The refugee flow security complex is contained relatively well and is not sufficient to ground one's Afghanistan policy on. Even polio is more or less well-contained for now. The potential benefits of diversified Central Asian energy supply routes merit attention, but they are clearly not significant enough in and of themselves to drive one's Afghanistan policy – for now the TAPI pipeline project looks difficult to accomplish, regardless of whether there is or is not an ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan. Jihadist terrorism is partly being deflected in the direction

of countries like Afghanistan and Iraq these days, and it is rather the *possibility* of terrorism that is a concern – attacks on a large scale, with potentially major trans-national impact. These have to be defended against even if they seem improbable (which might be just false comfort). Finally, the illicit opiate trade security complex is anchored by relatively persistent demand in the countries with the highest purchasing power and retail trade value, therefore it is a challenge that can only be managed, rather than solved.

Looking at these issues, and the contemporary situation with regards to each of them, in a disaggregated manner and in an a-historical way, will not give one a really comprehensive picture of what is at stake in Afghanistan. It is the picture in its entire complexity, holistically, as well as the burden of the past and the expectations about the future, *altogether*, that really matter. To effectively communicate such a complex picture to the wider public is a major challenge in the sort of newsbyte discourse that works on the platform provided by conventional media. Partly this is why the conventional dynamics of coalition politics can be observed around the Afghanistan mission, even while rhetorically it is claimed to be important for the entire trans-Atlantic security community. And this is what results in even NATO Summits having to play the role of force generation conferences. The conventionally problematic issues of coalition politics create a semblance of permanent crisis around the organisation.

In this chapter, a brief outlook follows now, on what these issues of coalition politics typically are, ensued by case studies of the Netherlands' and Poland's contributions to the Afghanistan mission. The latter inevitably touch upon other countries' role(s) as well, and will thus provide an overview, albeit unevenly detailed, of a larger number of cases, including that of the U.S., the UK, Canada, Australia, and Germany, among others. For illustrating implications of some of the basic concepts presented in the upcoming section, Hungary's case will be briefly discussed already prior to the case studies in focus.

Case selection in the case of Poland and the Netherlands is justified partly by convenience. The role of convenience may be made legitimate by the need to understand truly in depth the *sui generis* diversity of variables at play in determining any country's Afghanistan policy. For me, convenience stems from having spent a year monitoring developments with regards to the Netherlands' role in Uruzgan province, in Afghanistan (between Springs 2007 and 2008), and from having had the chance to do a round of interviews and consultations in Poland in the fall of 2008, as part of a study about the Polish involvement in Afghanistan.

However, this case selection is also convenient to test *H5* of the present study, introduced in Chapter One (“*countries participating in the ongoing state-building efforts in Afghanistan all pursue the same interests, i.e. they are looking to counter threats by participating*”). In general it is argued here that both Poland and the Netherlands provide significant contributions to the Afghanistan mission. Yet terrorism appears to pose a threat to them on a rather different level.⁸¹ Assuming simply a threat–policy nexus cannot account for their similar contributions. Their contributions should be quite different based on an operational hypothesis derived from *H5*. Therefore this pair of cases can be used to highlight and examine the role of (a myriad of) other variables.

Sources of intra-alliance conflict: A brief overview

Countries join coalitions in order to achieve common or compatible goals. Doing this in alliances, they spread costs and risks, and they gain additional legitimacy for certain actions, while they pool resources together to achieve quantitatively and qualitatively enhanced capabilities.

From an alliance’s collective perspective, an individual coalition member’s contribution can be important in making available a missing or “niche” capability or by adding critical mass to a coalition. Any new member that joins an alliance is generally likely to increase the legitimacy of planned collective actions, and it mitigates the burden to be shared by the coalition, by taking some of the costs and the risks. A very important special case is when a coalition member becomes absolutely vital, because physical access or crucial sections of logistical routes to an area of operations may be granted exclusively through its territory. A good example of a bottleneck-country is Egypt, with its control over the Suez Canal, vital for operations in the Gulf Region.

There are also potential downsides to building coalitions. Maintaining them in the face intra-alliance quarrels may be costly itself. To be able to set common objectives, individual member countries may need to compromise over their own specific goals. This is just what a

⁸¹ This claim is made with reference to (i) the large number of Muslim inhabitants (around one-million) in the Netherlands, some of whom are of North African or Middle Eastern origin; (ii) to the past occurrence of incidents connected to inter-communal tension (e.g. the van Gogh murder and its aftermath); (iii) uncovered past terrorist plots such as the recent one against IKEA Amsterdam and other targets in the Dutch capital, in which case even a relative of one the Madrid train bombers from 2004 was arrested (all of the arrested were of Moroccan origin). See: Seven held over terror plot to bomb Dutch Ikea shops, *The Telegraph*, March 19, 2009, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/netherlands/4982443/Seven-held-over-terror-plot-to-bomb-Dutch-Ikea-shops.html>, accessed on April 20, 2009.

preventive approach to intra-alliance conflict resolution might entail, but it also translates into costs for the compromising party.

A lesson of coalition operations involving the U.S. and other countries is that capabilities may not necessarily be enhanced in collective action. For this reason, Donald Rumsfeld famously said: “The mission must determine the coalition, and the coalition must not determine the mission. If it does, the mission will be dumbed down to the lowest common denominator, and we can't afford that.”⁸² This was in January 2002. Rumsfeld was secretary of defence at the time, and he spoke about U.S. interests in light of the experiences of the Kosovo campaign and the 2001 intervention in Afghanistan. In the Kosovo campaign, the U.S. complained about having to wage “war by committee” in the NATO framework, while supplying the larger part of key assets and capabilities to the mission. Subsequently, in Afghanistan, the U.S. was initially not very keen on accepting nominally generous offers of cooperation from its NATO allies who even invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, showing readiness to provide support. The above quoted statement speaks volumes about Rumsfeld’s belief in unilateralism, as in it he completely disregarded advantages of increased legitimacy.⁸³ Contrary to this, the 1994 U.S. intervention in Haiti is an excellent example, from long before Kosovo, of when the U.S. consciously multi-lateralised a foreign mission, with no military rationale whatsoever, simply to gain added legitimacy in the eye of its domestic population as well as in the eye of Haitians (Kreps, 2007).

Generally destabilising factors in coalitions revolve around security dilemmas and mistrust. In Wilkins’ distinction, albeit this is not a clear-cut one, the former stem from fears of abandonment by allies and subsequent entrapment in a losing alliance, while the latter tends to develop (i) if burden-sharing is inequitable within a coalition, (ii) if commitments are not kept in good faith or (iii) if genuine, meaningful consultation does not take place over contentious issues, such as possible adjustments to originally equitable burden-sharing arrangements (Wilkins, 2006).

Arriving at a discussion of the current challenges in Afghanistan, one may make the following initial observations about the ISAF coalition with regards to the conceptual frameworks presented thus far.

⁸² „21st Century Transformation of U.S. Armed Forces.” Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., Thursday, January 31, 2002. Available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=183>, accessed on April 20, 2009.

⁸³ Of course he was voicing this view, not coincidentally, in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war, one should note.

- (1) The military capability gap plays less of a role in the generally low-tech counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign being waged in Afghanistan. This does not mean that it does not play a role at all. But over time the human resources that are most vital in COIN could theoretically be used with similar efficiency across the coalition, if there was a full commitment to the mission. Of course such deficiencies of the ISAF coalition, as the lack of adequate strategic and intra-theatre airlift capacities in the case of many of its members, as well as other issues, can be brought up in this context.
- (2) For an ideal counterinsurgency-force-to-population ratio, adding a greater mass of troops is a requirement, but NATO members are mostly waiting for Afghan security forces, police and army, to fill the gaps. The U.S. still has a great number of soldiers deployed in Iraq (with 35,000 to 50,000 projected to remain there even after Summer 2010). Meanwhile, several European countries are either not ready to increase commitments significantly, in the absence of a U.S. capability to quickly surge in a critical number of troops to the Afghan theatre, or they keep troops outside insurgency-affected areas where sheer mass would be most needed.
- (3) Legitimacy and risk-sharing are closely connected to a degree. Especially in Europe, there are fears that the Afghanistan campaign may increase risk to European countries, by radicalising a segment of the continent's Muslim population.
- (4) Commitments made are generally kept in good faith. The major problem is not mistrust because of a lack of respect for the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, but that the commitments made are not sufficient. Contributions are made not on the basis of exigencies on the ground, but in accordance with what domestic politics tolerate without too much debate.

These conceptual frameworks cannot yet explain all the differences there are in terms of individual countries' contributions to the ISAF coalition. For but one example, countries like the Netherlands or Poland have been more ready up till now, than others, to increase or maintain their troop commitments in the insurgency-struck areas of Afghanistan. They behave rather differently from Germany which keeps most of its contingent in the relatively peaceful northern provinces of the country. Yet Germany and the Netherlands are more similar in that they have significant Muslim populations of North African or Middle Eastern origin, exposed to radicalisation, unlike Poland.

Therefore, for added explanatory power, two more key works will be cited and briefly presented here: Fang – Ramsay, 2007 and Bennett – Lepgold – Unger, 1994.

In their game-theoretic take on the challenge of coalition burden-sharing, Fang and Ramsay show how lead nations end up having to „pay” (in a multiple sense) more within coalitions of rationally acting state parties. Their conclusions are valid primarily within the framework of a two-state, two-stage model. NATO is not a two-state alliance, but Fang and Ramsay’s study may still be relevant with regards to the ISAF coalition. They use the assumption that there are potential external partners as outside options for the lead nation – that it is not only the more traditional partners that a coalition effort’s initiator can turn to. Therefore Fang and Ramsay’s model appears useful in considering how a NATO-led, but effectively coalition-of-the-willing type alliance, such as ISAF, currently depends on U.S. lead on the one hand, and on key contributions from non-NATO member states such as Australia on the other. Fang and Ramsay find (Fang – Ramsay, 2007: 4)

„... an unusual relationship between ally contributions and the flexibility of alliance configurations. Specifically, allies contribute more in loose bipolar conditions than in tight bipolar conditions, but do not contribute enough in the multi-polar setting to deter search.”

In other words, if

i) the initiator’s search costs (the chances of finding alternative partners) decrease significantly, while *ii)* the general environment of the coalition questions the *raison d’être* of a coalition,

traditional allies will probably not be loyal contributors.

However, directly reading Fang and Ramsay’s conclusions onto the case of ISAF is problematic in several ways. Is Australia a non-traditional ally for the U.S., with the U.S. regarded as the lead nation behind ISAF here? Are East-Central European states, such as Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary or Romania traditional allies because now they are NATO member states? Can we claim that search costs have *really* diminished – even though there still are not enough „boots on the ground” in Afghanistan, and when even NATO Summits are preoccupied with generating sufficient force for the mission?

In the end, one cannot help but give up trying to use a two-state, two-period model for interpreting the whole spectrum of challenges in the case of the Afghanistan mission. One more aspect does connect with Fang and Ramsay’s conclusions, however. Truly vital national

security threats are not entirely clearly *perceived* to be coming from Afghanistan at this point, by the public, and this affects governments' decisions regarding contributions.

An alternative, empirically based inquiry into the dynamics of coalition-building and maintenance can be found in Bennett, Lepgold and Unger's study of the Gulf War of 1991. The authors examined the role of five basic factors (three external, two domestic) in influencing the level of burden shared by some of the participants of the coalition that liberated Kuwait.

Mildly reconfiguring Bennett, Lepgold and Unger's list of key factors, the external ones are:

- § balance of threat;
- § relative size (of a given country within a coalition, in terms of power: a country's contribution may show an inverse relationship with relative size within the coalition);
- § alliance dependence.

The important domestic variables are:

- § for one, the room for manoeuvre enjoyed by the executive power (executive autonomy) within a polity in designing and implementing foreign policy independently from institutional checks and balances;
- § for another, organisational interests, such as those of the military, key state agencies, the executive, or, say, political parties, influential NGOs, and others.

Note that this is a theoretical framework for explaining the contributions of not merely an initiator and a traditional partner. It can be used to evaluate contributions by anyone joining a multi-state coalition. Therefore it may be particularly relevant in looking at Hungary's case for example. I will highlight just two of the five factors to which Bennett, Lepgold and Unger draw attention, however – these two variables are particularly important with a view to Hungary's case. They are “organisational interests” and “alliance dependence.”

Regarding organisational interests of the military in Hungary's case

As is the case with several other militaries participating in ISAF, the Hungarian military has to perform well in a new role that it is not accustomed to, in Afghanistan (see Marton – Wagner, 2008). It has to practice unprecedentedly intensive interagency cooperation in a sophisticated and challenging environment in its area of operations. Meanwhile, it has to endure a budgetary situation that leaves much for it to be desired.

The Afghanistan mission is not a particularly large drain on the military's resources in absolute terms – planned spending for the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghlan province in budgetary year 2008 was 4.8262 billion Forints.⁸⁴ This was just over 1.5% of overall defence spending (the latter was planned for 2008 at 319.7555 billion Forints).⁸⁵

Still, the question for the Hungarian military may be not whether Pomeranian grenadiers are worth the sacrifice, but whether Pomeranian grenadiers can be cyclically reproduced in the long run, given the current financial conditions in which the military has to function, now aggravated by the economic crisis facing the country. It is understandable that the Afghanistan mission is eyed by some as one that is partly an unwanted drain on resources, under these circumstances.

Yet, Hungary's commitment is likely to remain in the future. The explanation for this is the factor of alliance dependence which keeps us in Afghanistan regardless of the military's situation, at least so long as we are needed there, primarily by the U.S.

Regarding alliance dependence

As a small, militarily weak country, Hungary needs NATO's security guarantee in the long run. Not directly against a particular – clear and present – threat, however. NATO is a security community. Security communities, as demonstrated, generally do not form around specific threat, cost and benefit calculations, conforming a Realist framework of analysis. For them to exist and persist, they have to be believed in: they rest on identities reinforcing them.

In any case, Hungary's involvement in Afghanistan is certainly not important only in order to stave off criticism about Hungary's defence budget – that it remains well under the required 2 percent of Hungarian GDP – as is often openly claimed even by people like former defence minister Ferenc Juhász, who stated “This is about NATO, not Afghanistan. What else would we have to do there other than taking responsibility together with our allies?”⁸⁶ If alliance dependence were one side of a coin, the other would be *alliance maintenance*, or, putting it even more constructively, *alliance importance*. Situated, as it is, on the periphery of its security community, Hungary cannot reckon with an entirely peaceful geopolitical context indefinitely, and thus it needs to take alliance importance seriously.

⁸⁴ Listed among peace support operations and crisis management tasks.

⁸⁵ A Honvédelmi Minisztérium fejezet 2008. évi költségvetésének általános jellemzése („General characterisation of the 2008 budget of the Ministry of Defence chapter”). Accessed at the Hungarian Ministry of Finance's website at [http://www2.pm.gov.hu/web/home.nsf/\(PortalArticles\)/0E0833B5845C2236C1257372003AB3A6/\\$File/13.pdf](http://www2.pm.gov.hu/web/home.nsf/(PortalArticles)/0E0833B5845C2236C1257372003AB3A6/$File/13.pdf), accessed on June 16, 2008.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Bálint Szlankó: “Magyarok Afganisztánban”, *Oknyomozó—a Társaság a Szabadságjogokért tényfeltáró oldala*, June 4, 2008, at <http://oknyomozo.hu/node/19>, accessed on August 20, 2008.

Having briefly overviewed the literature of intra-alliance conflicts, and with some illustrative reflections about Hungary's case in mind, the study now turns to a more extensive discussion of the cases of Poland and the Netherlands.

Case study: Polish involvement in Afghanistan⁸⁷

Introduction

Beata Górka-Winter, a researcher of the Polish Institute of International Affairs (*Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych*, PISM), notes that one of the key interests for a country that contributes troops to an international mission – as Poland does in the case of ISAF, in Afghanistan – is to constructively contribute to developing the right strategy and operational concepts for the given mission.⁸⁸ A contributing country should add to the intellectual capital of its coalition and it can thus make sure that its own interests end up better served as well. This sounds very similar to one of the most remarkable conclusions of the Canadian *Manley Report* of 2008,⁸⁹ offered for all of Canada's attention, in the debate surrounding the Afghanistan mission there:

„We [Canadians – *P.M.*] like to talk about Canada's role in the world. Well, we have a meaningful one in Afghanistan. As our report states, it should not be faint-hearted nor should it be open-ended. Above all, we must not abandon it prematurely. Rather, we should use our hard-earned influence to ensure the job gets done and gets done properly.”

This quote could serve both as an introduction and as a motto for this case study of the partly unique, partly ordinary phenomenology of Poland's involvement in Afghanistan.

In the following sections I will outline both the more ordinary aspects and the peculiarities of the Polish case, in an extensive qualitative analysis. First – when convenient – I look at the various different kinds of actors involved, and at their activities. Then, within

⁸⁷ The author would like to express his gratitude and thanks for the International Visegrád Fund's generous support to the author's research in Poland which made this case study possible. Thanks also go to all the interviewees contacted from Polish academia, the government, the military, the media and NGOs who have helped with offering their best knowledge, expertise and precious views and comments to the author on the subject of his research.

⁸⁸ Beata Górka-Winter: Poland in Peacekeeping and Stabilisation Operations, quote from page 270-271. In: *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2007*, PISM, pp. 257-272.

⁸⁹ *Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan*. Published by Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2008, available at http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/collection_2008/dfait-maeci/FR5-20-1-2008E.pdf (October 27, 2008). The report was prepared by a non-partisan panel reviewing Canada's present and future role in Afghanistan (*quote from page 5*).

each sub-section, I proceed to discuss existing views of these actors, their activities and related issues, based on interviews conducted in Poland in 2008/2009. During these I raised some standard questions (*“How do you see the current prospects in Afghanistan?”*; *“What is the main reason for Poland’s involvement there?”* etc.), but I looked otherwise mainly to have in-depth and flexibly structured discussions with various stakeholders. The fruits of these discussions are eventually only one of the inputs that informed my analysis of the Polish case, as the following sections’ content is complemented from other, open sources as well.

The case study is concluded by a look at how the interaction of actors, activities and views adds up to the special mix which I termed „phenomenology” above. I will take care to highlight, as much as possible, which elements in this phenomenology concern a uniquely Polish experience and which elements of it are more universally observable in the case of the Afghanistan policy of other coalition countries. Cognitive factors of strategic decision-making, as well as structural factors explaining cross-country differences in such decision-making processes, will be tentatively identified, deriving a set of problems, ones not specific exclusively to the Afghanistan mission, partly from a strategic culture of security free-riding on the one hand, partly from structurally originating differences in actor qualities on the other.

The central argument is that many countries in East-Central Europe, with economies barely nurturing a prospect of catching up with the welfare of Western and Northern Europe, are burdened in their approach by a region-specific sense of irrelevance. This feeling of irrelevance is not well-founded under the circumstances one finds in Afghanistan. There, if wisely used, even a small contribution can have an important *marginal* effect. Conversely, it is also true that if these countries act as though their involvement in Afghanistan would not really be “about Afghanistan,”⁹⁰ then their marginal impact may also be negative in the end. That is the main normative policy advice, or warning, that is offered in this case study.

NATO, Russia, Minister Sikorski, and other real or perceived drivers of Polish military involvement in Afghanistan

NATO, U.S., Russia, Germany: The geo-political context

The Polish military is the currently modernising remnant of a large Warsaw Pact armed force. It is set to become an all-volunteer military by 2010, with enhanced expeditionary capabilities, a „leaner but meaner” force structure and a corresponding emphasis on special

⁹⁰ See former defence minister Ferenc Juhász’ words, quoted on page 106.

forces – the latter under a possibly united command (SOCOM, Special Operations Command) in the future. The expectations regarding the Polish military's transformation are generally in line with the contemporary trends of defence evolution seen elsewhere in NATO countries. Some of the Polish armed forces' procurements do, however, show somewhat more ambition than what is the average as far as the new, post-Cold War NATO member countries are concerned. For example, the country has acquired a fleet of new F-16 fighter-bombers. The more pronounced ambitions do not concern only a willingness to achieve enhanced expeditionary capability, but also the relatively hot geopolitical context of a country that shares less than harmonious relations, as well as even a land border, with Russia.⁹¹

The Polish armed forces are active in Afghanistan since at least 2002, taking part in both ISAF (the UN-authorised International Security Assistance Force – Afghanistan) and OEF (the UN-recognised Operation Enduring Freedom's) operations. At that time, Poland sent combat engineers and other soldiers there for various roles, such as demining and military logistics (e.g. road-building for military use). These served there already as part of the, in the early phase, still non-NATO-led ISAF mission. Poland had its own, separate, separated,⁹² quarters at the sizable military base within the key Bagram complex in central Afghanistan, similarly to other countries, also from very early on. Polish special operations forces have been taking part in the OEF mission since 2002.

The tasks undertaken by Poland gradually diversified further over the years. After Sweden had started its own Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the northern Afghanistan town of Mazar-i-Sharif, in Balkh province, Poland contributed a force protection element to that PRT. It consisted of about 40 troops.

The more significant expansion of Polish military involvement, both in a qualitative and in a quantitative sense, came in 2006. It came in the wake of earlier plans that were eventually not realised, ones that might still be interesting to discuss here.

Poland wished to deploy the additional soldiers in Afghanistan as part of a Multinational Corps Northeast (MNCNE) mission. MNCNE is a multi-national command structure, set up prior to Poland's NATO accession in 1999, originally by Poland, Denmark and Germany (now joined by many more countries). It has become a NATO-recognised „lower readiness headquarters” upon Poland's accession to the North Atlantic Alliance. In 2006, plans emerged that Poland would take command of the entire ISAF mission, together

⁹¹ With the Kaliningrad enclave to its northeast.

⁹² Interview (in September, 2008) with Mariusz Janik, journalist of the daily *Dziennik*, who visited the Bagram base in 2002.

with Germany and Denmark, during the ninth rotation of command (in the period between August 2006 and February 2007). They were planning to use the MNCNE format.⁹³ These plans were dropped, however, after the U.S.-initiated transformation of ISAF's command structure, which asserted U.S. control over the coalition's operations in Afghanistan, and ended the rotation of ISAF's central command after mid-2006.

Instead, Poland was to become an important contributor to operations in eastern Afghanistan. ISAF operations gradually extended all over Afghanistan's territory by October 2006, in a counter-clockwise process of country-wide expansion. The last region of the country officially covered by ISAF forces was to be the east, where mostly American forces operate up till today. Polish troops arrived in this region to serve under direct U.S. command,⁹⁴ with various U.S. units (of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division). They were filling gap roles in different provinces, with hundreds of additional Polish troops deployed altogether. Polish soldiers came to be stationed in Ghazni and in Paktika provinces (the latter is neighbouring on Pakistan), in places such as Waza Khwa, Gardez and Sharana.

There they took part in patrols, in delivering humanitarian and medical aid, in carrying out CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation)⁹⁵ projects and in the occasional, inevitable fighting that characterises the area. They have also taken casualties, mostly from IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). The country's role in Operation Enduring Freedom also continued. Polish special forces are serving in Kandahar province (GROM rangers, mostly).

As to the why of this involvement, several different answers have to be given. The timeline of events has to be kept in mind here. The reason for that is that at different stages the Afghanistan mission seemed to pose different requirements to contributing countries in general. This fundamentally shaped Poland's calculations. NATO, as an alliance, and its importance to Poland, played a determining role from the start – only, this played out very differently as time progressed.

⁹³ My attention was drawn to this by Tadeusz Diem, a political advisor of the ruling Platforma Obywatelska, during my interview with him in October, 2008.

⁹⁴ Since some of the Polish public was sensitive to the fact that Polish troops would be directly under U.S. command, a small American unit, from an FOB Salerno-based battalion of the U.S. Army, was placed under Polish command for a while (under Lieutenant-Colonel Adam Strek). Source: *U.S. Troops In Afghanistan To Fall Under Polish Command, Ministry of National Defence, May 18, 2007, available at <http://www.mon.gov.pl/en/artykul/3058>, accessed on January 29, 2009.* This probably came at least partly as a symbolic gesture, although the exact on-the-ground rationale of all nuances of order-of-battle (ORBAT) is not easy to establish from an arms-chair perspective.

⁹⁵ CIMIC is abbreviation for civil-military cooperation. CIMIC projects are small projects that a military carries out in a mission area to make itself more accepted by the local population. The simple theory behind it is that if the military pays, the local people will pay back with sympathy and help soldiers with information, for example. CIMIC is thus a part of psychological and information operations – with the boundaries of the three notions, CIMIC, psy-ops and info-ops less than unambiguously conceptualised.

Right after the attacks of September 11, 2001, it was especially important for new NATO members to show meaningful solidarity with the U.S., while the North Atlantic alliance also expressly called on its members to act accordingly. In the background of assistance under circumstances like these, there may, of course, be selfish concerns to a degree: that unless one helps others at a time of need one cannot expect just this from others, either, when one oneself shall be in need. But in this case, such concerns did not play an overriding role. At the time, acting in solidarity was more a matter of principle.⁹⁶ The setting directly post-9/11 was simply unambiguous as to the need to do something.

After 2003, with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, priorities changed somewhat. Poland decided to significantly contribute to operations there. Earlier, it had been one of the subscribers to the so-called Letter of Eight document, an open letter addressed to the *Wall Street Journal* in which various European countries voiced support for the Iraq war, on the eve of that conflict. After the invasion of Iraq, Polish troops deployed with the Multinational Forces Iraq (MNF-I) coalition, under the would-be Multinational Division Center-South. MDC-S was placed under Polish command from September 2003. The area concerned comprised five Iraqi provinces: Najaf, Qadisiyah, Wasit, Babylon and Karbala. Over the years, some 15,000 Polish troops served there, in ten contingents. Thereafter Polish involvement was gradually reduced in Iraq, as Iraqi Security Forces increasingly took on the necessary roles themselves. The one major crisis of the Iraqi mission came with the Shiite Mahdi Army's (the Jaish al-Mahdi's) uprising in 2004. It resulted in Polish troops passing command responsibilities to U.S. forces, between June and December. Their mandate would not have allowed them to take part in offensive operations that were self-evidently necessary in the area, at the time.

Even with the generally decreasing role and the relative stability of the Iraqi provinces concerned, Poland's contribution to operations in Iraq was a major undertaking, and in 2003 it was quite obvious to every observer that Poland would not have been capable of a similar-size commitment elsewhere, for example in Afghanistan. In fact, this state of affairs cannot have been perceived as being in contradiction with NATO's stated importance to Poland. The alliance itself also became involved in training Iraqi armed forces already from the autumn of 2004.⁹⁷ At the same time, in Afghanistan, it was still, clearly, the so-called „light footprint”

⁹⁶ Interview with Łukasz Kulesa and Beata Górka-Winter, researchers of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, in Warsaw (October, 2008).

⁹⁷ Under the aegis of the NATO Training Mission–Iraq (NTM-I). See “NATO's assistance to Iraq,” information sheet, date not indicated, at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51978.htm?selectedLocale=en, accessed on April 21, 2009.

approach that was being pursued. It was not envisioned that stabilising the situation in Afghanistan could require significant troop increases in the end. There was not that level of insurgent activity in the country, and, for the time being, it looked like a smaller number of troops could have sufficed. Under secretary of defence Donald Rumsfeld, the Pentagon even signalled that it was planning troop reductions in the Afghan theatre, as late as in September 2005; a reduction of about 20%, or about 4,000 troops.⁹⁸ Therefore Poland did not face truly significant diplomatic challenges over its major commitment in Iraq.

This started to change from late 2005 onwards. It was – not coincidentally – then that Poland began to receive criticism for its „neglect” of NATO’s major out-of-area mission of the day. It may have seemed to some by that stage as though Poland had gone to „Iraq instead of Afghanistan.” But this was a conclusion based on retrospective logic. In fact, paradoxically, Poland’s decision to take a major role in MNF-I was contrary to what many other countries were looking to do at the time in the sense that most perceived Afghanistan to be the safer area for operations as long as the insurgency did not flare up decisively there.

Of course it was mostly the U.S. that traded off a safer investment of resources in Afghanistan. It did so in favour of its Iraqi enterprise, which eventually turned into a very costly one. Insurgencies sprang up in Iraq, Islamist fighters arrived to the country, and no significant oil revenues were generated that could have spared the U.S. from an extremely large investment of resources in Iraq.

That Poland eventually turned receptive to the demands it faced has primarily to do with NATO’s (and the U.S.’) perceived vital importance to Poland as a guarantor of its security. This perception is shared across the country’s political elite, regardless of party affiliation. Moreover, during 2003-2005, Poland’s geopolitical context took on a more pronounced importance as well. Poland’s large eastern neighbour, Russia, seemed to pose a growing threat in the eyes of many, not only in Poland.

Earlier, Russia was definitely not seen as so much of a threat in Polish foreign policy. Back in 2001-2002, Russia was still reeling from the effects of the 1998 economic breakdown it had suffered. Russian President Vladimir Putin was largely focused on economic diplomacy and on consolidating his power. At that stage, Russia did not affect Poland’s commitments to military operations abroad to the extent that is sometimes suggested, once again with a retrospective logic. Even today, when Russia may look more threatening, Poland is not in

⁹⁸ Eric Schmitt: U.S. Plans Troop Reduction in Afghanistan by Spring. *The New York Times*, September 13, 2005. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/13/international/asia/13cnd-afghan.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1126915496-lieBbPIWW/MaJ5vbOc74AQ, accessed on April 21, 2009.

Afghanistan simply because of its large and at times unfriendly neighbour. Russia is definitely a factor in Poland's alliance policy, however, and contributing to the preservation of the North Atlantic Alliance's credibility by contributing to the mission in Afghanistan is clearly an important Polish interest.

Poland's by now more closely intertwined NATO and East policies are not free of possible trade-offs related to the Afghanistan mission. The latter cannot succeed without logistical cooperation between NATO and Russia. This may adversely affect Polish interests, if this means, for example, trading off the alliance's eastward expansion to admit the Ukraine and Georgia, for Russian logistical help to the ISAF mission. Poland vehemently opposes any such trade-off, openly suggested at times by Russia in the run-up to the Bucharest NATO Summit in May 2008. While non-cooperation over Afghanistan is not really an option for Russia, in light of Russian interests, neither is it an option for NATO and ISAF, and a definitive abandonment of NATO's open-door policy would be antithetical to Poland's foreign and security policy goals.⁹⁹

U.S. support to the eastern expansion process is reassuring to Poland, even with the Obama administration's approach that is somewhat more restrained than the earlier Bush administration's rhetoric. At the same time, Germany's generally more cautious stance on all issues connected to Russia is a concern for Poland's foreign policy. Poland, a country that, by virtue of its currently existing borders, lives under the „long shadow of history,” part of which was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, does not find Germany's policy of showing „equidistance” from Russia and the U.S. on certain issues, reassuring (Kiss J., 2008: 92). These issues include both NATO's eastern expansion process and Afghanistan. Poland in general sees a need to show more “Atlanticism” than Germany, exactly because of fears of Russo–German encirclement. Therefore this is also something that dictates to Poland a steady and growing contribution to NATO's increasingly challenging mission in Afghanistan.

Even so, the milieu of German–Polish relations has by now improved significantly, with both German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Polish PM Jarosław Kaczyński not Prime Ministers of their respective countries any more. Germany's current Chancellor Angela Merkel is not without caution in her policy vis-à-vis Russia, but she does not pursue an uncritical special friendship, either. On the Polish side, Donald Tusk as Prime Minister is open to a reasonably calm relationship with Russia, and Lech Kaczyński as Polish President is not in a position to strongly oppose such a relationship, even if he so wished.

⁹⁹ Marek Ziółkowski: Polish Security Policy. In: *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2007*, PISM, pp. 67-76.

Minister Sikorski

As to Afghanistan policy, a key figure within the Polish elite, who strongly backed and promoted the expansion of Poland's military contribution there, was the defence minister at the time: Radosław Sikorski. He is currently serving as his country's foreign minister (as of mid-June 2009; in office since November 2007). On one occasion prior to the expansion, he even noted that one of Iraq's lessons is that „very exotic caveats” – including such that held Poland back from joining the fight against the Mehdi Army in Iraq – create too many problems on the ground.¹⁰⁰

Sikorski's entire life story could be interesting to retell here. He is a former war correspondent, used to be based in London. He frequently visited Afghanistan in the 1980s and the early 1990s, and he travelled there on a couple of occasions in the post-Taliban era as well. Many make the observation that he probably considers himself to be an Afghanistan expert – which is not to deny that he is one, *in effect*. He even has a past working with a U.S. think tank, the American Enterprise Institute. AEI is a conservative think tank, to the right of U.S. politics. Sikorski himself is clearly a rather conservative thinker, albeit liberal in the sense of believing in the absolute virtue of political freedoms.

Sikorski wrote some truly excellent dispatches in the past from Afghanistan. To note just a couple of illustrative examples of his past involvement there, for instance, he developed a genuine friendship with Ismail Khan, a major Afghan powerbroker up till today in Western Afghanistan. In fact, on his visits to Afghanistan, Sikorski usually „embedded,” as it is nowadays fashionable to say, with the guerrillas (the *mujahideen*). He went to Afghanistan even during the times when most correspondents abandoned the country to cover conflicts of more global public interest elsewhere, for example in the Balkans. In one of his reports written at the time, he concluded (in 1993):¹⁰¹

„The world has changed in the last twenty years (...) With cheap travel and instant communications, terrorists can base themselves anywhere on the globe. A terrorist with a satellite phone, limitless revenues from the poppy fields, and access to Iran and turbulent Central Asia might be forgiven for preferring a remote Afghan valley to places like the Bekaa valley or the Libyan desert. Afghanistan's potential nuisance value can be

¹⁰⁰ Hohenfels training gets Polish troops ready for deployment to Afghanistan, *Ministry of National Defence*, December 18, 2006, available at <http://www.wp.mil.pl/en/artykul/2505>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹⁰¹ Radek Sikorski: Afghanistan revisited: Civil war between mujaheddin factions, *National Review*, August 23, 1993, available re-published at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_n16_v45/ai_13294519/pg_2, accessed on January 29, 2009.

measured by a famous recent terrorist incident. Several months ago a lone Pathan gunman opened up on employees at the gate of the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The might of the CIA, FBI and Pakistani Army has been mobilised to try to capture him on the Afghan-Pakistani border in Baluchistan. Over 4,000 men were recently used in dawn raids on suspected hideaways. The culprit is still at large, laughing at all the world.”

Sikorski may be no Afghanistan expert by training, but his insight, transparent for all to see in the above quoted passage, is clearly a factor in how he thinks about Afghanistan policy. It is hardly a daring statement to make that both as defence minister and as foreign minister his personal attachment to the place may have influenced/may influence him.

One example of when this influence showed in the past was when Sikorski visited Afghanistan in the summer of 2008 to announce that Poland would, in the foreseeable future, take over the Provincial Reconstruction Team from the U.S. in Ghazni province, one of the most volatile areas in the south of Afghanistan. At a press conference on June 6, 2008, held jointly with Afghan foreign minister Rangeen Dadfar Spanta, he commented on what his counterpart had to say about Hizb-i-Islami commander Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.¹⁰² Sikorski interrupted to say that while he would not want to interfere in another country's domestic affairs, he would welcome a decision to indict Hekmatyar for war crimes.¹⁰³ Minister Sikorski said this as a former journalist, whose colleague, Andy Skrzypkowiak, a BBC cameraman, was killed most likely by Hekmatyar's forces, in 1987. Skrzypkowiak was beaten to death with a piece of stone while he was asleep in a Hizb-i-Islami camp, on his way back to the West. In Sikorski's retelling,¹⁰⁴ Skrzypkowiak was taking footage with him from the late Ahmed Shah Massoud's Shura-i-Nazar forces. Hekmatyar was a rival of Massoud, occasionally fighting occurred between their forces, and Hekmatyar's men were not keen on letting someone take potentially support-inspiring footages from Massoud's areas to the West.

For a measure of contrast, and for a measure of the feelings Sikorski holds regarding Hekmatyar: Finnish correspondent Jari Lindholm, who also lost a friend and colleague of his, Mirwais Jalil, most likely killed by Hekmatyar's men, notes that „Hekmatyar has always had issues with the BBC, particularly with its Pashtun service.” He, however, wonders who, by the perfect standards of arms-chair observers, isn't a „war criminal” by now, out of all of

¹⁰² Hekmatyar is even today one of the leading figures of the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan.

¹⁰³ Poland to bolster Afghan deployment, *Al Jazeera English*, June 4, 2008, available at <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2008/06/20086150221755928.html> (accessed on January 29, 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Radek Sikorski: Afghanistan revisited: Civil war between mujaheddin factions, *National Review*, August 23, 1993, available re-published at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_n16_v45/ai_13294519/pg_2, accessed on January 29, 2009.

Afghanistan's numerous militia commanders, even while he also considers Hekmatyar to be responsible for unjustifiable killings and harbours bitter feelings over Jalil's murder.¹⁰⁵

It could be a stretch to connect this to Minister Sikorski's personal memories of Hekmatyar, but, uncharacteristically for some other countries' official public briefing documents – especially ministry of defence materials of this kind – the Polish MoD does explicitly mention Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami as part of the insurgent forces, beside the Taliban.

This is as far as Minister Sikorski's documentable personal involvement in Afghanistan's past goes. During the course of 2008-2009 many have also speculated, however, that he was keen on actively promoting the deployment of more troops in Afghanistan because of his good connections in the U.S. Thus such sources are effectively claiming that the U.S. is „well-connected” to Minister Sikorski. One person I talked to even mentioned the familiar theory¹⁰⁶ that for someone like Minister Sikorski Polish involvement in Afghanistan is but a ticket to becoming NATO Secretary-General. Such rumours are not timely any more, as the position of NATO Secretary-General went to Sikorski's Danish counterpart, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, at NATO's 60th anniversary summit in Strasboug/Kehl.

Minister Sikorski is certainly well-connected to the U.S. establishment, as well as to the U.S. in general. His wife is Anne Applebaum, an American journalist who sometimes writes even about – and from – Afghanistan. They take care to avoid conflicts of interest, and Anne Applebaum does not write about Poland's Afghan involvement. Another marker of Minister Sikorski's U.S. connections could be his good working relationship with U.S. General David McKiernan. General McKiernan was head of the U.S. European Command/NATO-SHAP (SACEUR) at the time when a specialised training course was hastily arranged (in October 2006) for Polish troops to be deployed in eastern Afghanistan. The training was held in Hohenfels, Germany, at the Joint Multi-National Training Center. Minister Sikorski visited the training troops there in December 2006, and he travelled there picked up on the way by General McKiernan, in Nuremberg, by helicopter.¹⁰⁷ It should not be missed that General McKiernan was, up till June 2009, ISAF's commander in Afghanistan (COMISAF).

It is difficult to gauge the counter-factual of how much Poland's foreign policy could have been different without Sikorski. He definitely was not the only and most influential

¹⁰⁵ Exchange of e-mails with Jari Lindholm in October, 2008, quoted with permission.

¹⁰⁶ Heard without a basis in connection to other politicians in the past.

¹⁰⁷ Hohenfels training gets Polish troops ready for deployment to Afghanistan, *Ministry of National Defence*, December 18, 2006, available at <http://www.wp.mil.pl/en/artykul/2505>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

policy-maker at any stage. Other factors, dealt with previously in this study, clearly play a more important role overall. Poland has, by now, at the end of a gradual process, drawn down its forces stationed in Iraq, leaving that country officially in October, 2008. Thus more troops have become available for the Afghanistan mission – and those troops are needed there by NATO.



Photo 3.1. A Polish Rosomak KTO armoured vehicle, at an exhibit of the Polish military in the Saski Ogród in Warsaw, October 2008, marking the day when the last Polish soldier was to leave Iraq. Photo prepared by the author.

Sikorski is relevant rather because of his charisma and insight, which should theoretically sell the Afghanistan mission better, but also because of his past which in some people's view makes him seem as though he would have „privatised” Poland's Afghanistan policy. Especially with the wide-spread perception that Afghanistan policy is not based truly on direct Polish interests. In the end, Sikorski's impact on public perceptions is difficult to judge, with there not being a highly informed, extensive public discourse about the subject.

The fact is that currently Poland has about 1,600 troops in Afghanistan, and the set of roles for these troops as well as their numbers are set to expand. Poland is even readying itself to fully take over the Ghazni PRT from the U.S. at some point, although the crisis of the Polish economy and the intensifying insurgency in Ghazni make this seem unlikely to happen any time soon. Meanwhile, nominally there already exists a Polish PRT in Ghazni, even while

NATO's ISAF "placemat" indicates the Ghazni PRT as working under a U.S. flag – elsewhere in the document it is listed as a joint ("POL, USA") PRT (as of April 3, 2009).¹⁰⁸

The impact of the Nangar Khel incident and other „scandals”

In the previous section we have noted that there is not really an extensive public discourse in Poland about either Poland's involvement in Afghanistan, or about Afghanistan itself. Polish journalists I spoke to all agreed that, if anything, it is mostly Polish troops' presence in Afghanistan itself, or rather the fate of these Polish troops, that evokes some interest and concern from the part of the public. There are certain obvious downsides to this. Instead of an informed discourse about what is possible in Afghanistan, and how, it is either the trivia of soldiers' lives abroad, on a foreign mission, or the inevitable „scandals” that come with it, that will be discussed, with whatever this adds up to in the end being equated with „the issue of Afghanistan” as such.

Soldiers are people who are trained to kill. Civilians in their sending countries do not like to imagine them in the process of killing, they wish to see them much rather as peace-keepers or as „social workers in military uniform,” handing out humanitarian aid and building shelter for the needy. Essentially, soldiers are thought of as conveyors of a desirable image of the sending country, including its people.

The reality is that soldiers are predominantly men, sent very far from home, from their loved ones. Even though Polish troops' rotations last only about six months, it is a long time that they spend away from home, and they do so in an environment where incidents of fighting may occur everyday. The public judges their actions in combat from an arms-chair point of view that inevitably informs its judgements one way or another. In general, soldiers may enjoy a protective milieu: being regarded as heroic for their service to the country. Such special regard for them may dissipate, however, when certain events pierce this protective shield and surmount a critical thresh-old of tolerance on the part of the public.

At least on two occasions, this has been the case in Poland, too.

The latter of these may eventually have the more serious reverberations in terms of its impact on the public's thinking, according to one journalist I talked to.¹⁰⁹ On this latter occasion, in August, 2008, a Polish daily, the *Polska*, discovered some rather gruesome war

¹⁰⁸ „International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army strength & laydown. Current as of 3 April 2009.” The regularly updated version is available at the static URL of http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf, accessed on April 22, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Andrzej Talaga, foreign policy editor of the daily *Dziennik* (November, 2008).

images on a website used by Polish soldiers, for sharing photos (www.koledzyzwojska.pl). The images that the author of this study has seen were of victims of war (some wounded, most dead). Some of the dead were soldiers, for example victims of IED attacks. Several of the images showed badly burned, distorted corpses, some of them having lost limbs in an explosion. Some Polish soldiers were apparently sharing these photos in order to discuss what the war awaiting them could be like. As the forgiving view has it, this is merely part of becoming mentally prepared for what may come as part of one's service to the country. But another, different perception cannot be discounted in terms of its importance in public discourse. This view is not sympathising and understanding towards soldiers at all. It regards soldiers ineligible to be sent to help people of a foreign country, conceiving of them as generally dangerous human beings: a view supposedly evidenced by interest in graphic war images within their ranks.



Photo 3.2. One of the images in question, downloaded while it was available at www.koledzyzwojska.pl, on September 2, 2008. In the author's view, this one was *by far* the least gruesome image from all the rest – that is why this one is used for illustration here.

The prior „scandal” of the Polish contingent's operations in Afghanistan came much earlier, however, a year before, back on August 16, 2007. This incident became relatively well-known internationally even, after *The New York Times* had it covered in a few articles.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Prosecutors charge 7 Polish soldiers with killing Afghan civilians, *International Herald Tribune*, November 14, 2007, available at <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/11/14/europe/EU-GEN-Poland-Afghanistan.php>, accessed on January 29, 2009; War crimes case weighs on Poland, *International Herald Tribune*, November 28, 2007, available at <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/11/28/europe/poland.php>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

It is impossible to offer a definitive narrative of what happened. All the details are still debated in Poland at the moment. Those responsible (if responsible) are still awaiting trial – a trial that itself cannot hope to truly uncover all the aspects of the affair, given, for example, that the Afghan victims of the incident cannot be exhumed in respect of the local Islamic customs.

I have talked to one journalist who was there with Polish troops in Paktika province when the incident occurred, and is therefore in a position to offer a more informed judgement regarding what happened.¹¹¹ To his account, I can add information derived from open sources. And for a really comprehensive overview of the case, I can then add supportive and condemning views of what happened, from other people who have made statements to, or from the part of, the media, or in interviews that I have had with them.

On August 16, a convoy of vehicles with soldiers of the Polish contingent (Team „Charlie”) and a few U.S. soldiers, was attacked. An IED¹¹² exploded near one of the vehicles, shortly after they have left a jointly run U.S.-Polish base (FOB Waza Khwa, in Paktika province). One of the vehicles was damaged by the blast to such an extent that it became immobilised. After this, the soldiers came under small arms fire, according to one of the known narratives, and they remained under fire for hours still. At some point during the engagement, an insurgent was captured, someone already known to Polish troops by his nom de guerre of „Puma” (Cougar in English). Enemy firing positions were alleged to have been localised in the hills above a nearby, small village.¹¹³ In the meantime, another batch of Polish soldiers was sent to relieve the unit bogged down in the fighting. They brought along a trailer platform to tow away the immobilised vehicle, and there was a unit of elite commandos from the Bielsko-Biała Delta platoon with them.

The soldiers were concerned about the situation as nightfall was approaching. The unit sent in relief wanted to disperse the ambushers and thus proceeded to set up mortars to fire at the supposed enemy firing positions. Some 26 to 27 mortar rounds were fired, intended to hit positions in the hills above the village. At least a few went astray, however, allegedly due to a malfunction. These mortar munitions were claimed to have somersaulted along their path in the air, landing off-target. Three exploded in the vicinity of the village, and one landed in the

¹¹¹ This is Grzegorz Indulski, whom I interviewed in October, 2008. He writes for *Newsweek Polska*.

¹¹² Improvised Explosive Device.

¹¹³ The name of the village is unclear to the author of this study, but according to Grzegorz Indulski it was not really Nangar Khel (which is another nearby settlement). It may thus be ironic that the incident is so commonly referred to as „the Nangar Khel incident.”

village proper. It was the latter round that killed six civilians, children among them. Three women's lives could only be saved by amputation of their injured limbs.

Polish troops spent the ensuing night in the village, and thereafter called for medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) of the injured civilians. This, as well as the claim that only one out of 26 to 27 rounds hit the village, would later be cited by those who were looking to prove that the soldiers were acting *bona fide* (according to what that possibly means in a war context) – i.e. that their actions were justifiable in the end. One of the attorneys defending the soldiers, Jacek Relewicz, stated, on the basis of this, that „nobody thinks that this was an intentional act of vengeance by Polish soldiers.”¹¹⁴

However, the affair would not have become Poland's first „war crimes case,” had there not emerged different narratives, backed by differing claims. *The New York Times* (and the *International Herald Tribune*, *IHT*) mentioned that the village was not only shelled by mortar – it was, according to them, kept under machine gun fire as well. The author of this study is inclined to believe that this is possible. Such fire may have been suppressive fire, indirectly aimed at immobilising the enemy, provided that the troops were, indeed, in contact with insurgent forces. Even that claim is doubted, however. The IHT quoted the chief military attorney investigating the case, Karol Frankowski, of the Poznań military tribunal, as saying that „according to evidence, the attack was ‘not related to any kind of simultaneous, direct or real act of aggression from the local residents’ or to ‘any threat to the soldiers’ life, health or security.’” Another member of the attorney's team, Colonel Zbigniew Rzepa, stated in November, 2007, that „we know now that the initial claim that the soldiers merely returned fire, is not true.”¹¹⁵ The most harsh claims so far, likely included in the official indictment as well, were aired by *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which published a „reconstruction” of what happened in Nangar Khel. According to this the Polish Delta commandos sent in relief may have arrived on the scene with an order from commander Olgierd „Olo” Cieśla to – literal quote – „fuck over three villages.”¹¹⁶

The public's reaction to these revelations was mixed. Many were sympathetic to the soldiers, understanding of even potentially bad decisions under the generally bad circumstances the troops have to endure. The soldiers had their chance to talk to the media,

¹¹⁴ War crimes case weighs on Poland, *International Herald Tribune*, November 28, 2007, available at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/11/28/europe/poland.php>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹¹⁵ War crimes case weighs on Poland, *International Herald Tribune*, November 28, 2007, available at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/11/28/europe/poland.php>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹¹⁶ Marcin Kaćki – Marcin Górka – Adam Zadworny: Nangar Khel - a Reconstruction. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, July 28, 2008, available at http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5496838,Nangar_Khel_a_Reconstruction.html, accessed on January 29, 2009.

one of them reportedly saying he would have preferred to die in Afghanistan as a hero to returning home the way he had to, in the wake of the incident.¹¹⁷ Marek Sterlingów, a journalist of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, there in Afghanistan at the time of the incident, said that „it is very unlikely that they did it on purpose (...) it is most likely that this was an accident, maybe an accident caused by a not very good tactic. I think that the Polish military got into such a bad situation because of the instinct of covering up.”¹¹⁸ The IHT also quoted some people voicing the more typical public view of the incident. One of their respondents, a young lady, said that „our soldiers’ blood being spilled is pointless,” probably reflecting scepticism regarding whether soldiers should be put in harm’s way in Afghanistan, or outside Poland, at all. Another person, a retired former soldier, said that „The ones who should be charged are those that arrested them.”¹¹⁹

Even within public opinion, there are other streams present, however. Andrzej Talaga, foreign policy editor of the Polish daily *Dziennik*, sees in the incident a tragic reversal of the entire Polish history of Poles being the underdogs, the insurgents and the victims, themselves – an incident thus very damaging to Poland’s identity and image.¹²⁰ Piotr Balcerowicz, a professor of Warsaw University, who himself often visits Afghanistan, thinks that while what happened in Nangar Khel was probably some sort of crime, troops of other countries, for example the U.S., have also committed atrocities like this, and those cases were not, apparently, given the same amount of weight by their respective countries. Meanwhile, Balcerowicz himself also sadly notes the irony of Poles being now possibly responsible for something they used to suffer themselves in earlier times.¹²¹

To what degree this could be an embarrassment to Poles, may perhaps be illustrated by pointing out a seemingly innocent, but in fact false, reference in an article on an unrelated, lighter subject: an officially organised visit of Afghan children to Poland. Major Wojciech Kaliszczyk, a Public Information Officer of the Afghanistan Polish Battle Group, summed up Polish–Afghan relations in the following way, to a question by a reporter:¹²²

¹¹⁷ Quoted in: Hősök vagy gyilkosok Afganisztánban? *Népszabadság Online*, November 16, 2007, available at <http://nol.hu/archivum/archiv-471517>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹¹⁸ War crimes case weighs on Poland, *International Herald Tribune*, November 28, 2007, available at <http://www.ihrt.com/articles/2007/11/28/europe/poland.php>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹¹⁹ War crimes case weighs on Poland, *International Herald Tribune*, November 28, 2007, available at <http://www.ihrt.com/articles/2007/11/28/europe/poland.php>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹²⁰ Interview with Andrzej Talaga, foreign policy editor of the daily *Dziennik* (November, 2008)

¹²¹ Interview with Piotr Balcerowicz (October, 2008).

¹²² Spc. Micah E. Claire: Afghan Children Return From Poland Field Trip, *DVIDS*, October 8, 2007, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/index.php?script=news/news_show.php&id=11728, accessed on January 29, 2009.

„The two countries have had relations since the 1920s, at that time Polish soldiers came to the rugged Afghan mountains for special training. Later, many Afghans came to Poland for refuge during the Russian [*sic!*] occupation 30 years ago.”

Inherent in this is a view that Poland and Afghanistan were suffering under the yoke of Soviet oppression together, and a marker of solidarity among them is the presence of Afghan refugees on Polish soil. Quite obviously, however, under the „Russian” occupation of Afghanistan, it is hardly believable that Afghan *mohajirs*¹²³ could have ended up in communist Poland. Most likely, Afghan communists (or people better connected to the communist regime), who may have studied in Poland, could have chosen exile in Poland over returning to conflict-struck Afghanistan, where the Najibullah regime’s days were numbered.¹²⁴

Tellingly, the *New York Times/International Herald Tribune* piece already mentioned above also seemed to find the issue of Poland’s history to be most eligible for a central theme in one of its articles on the Nangar Khel incident. Quoting a relevant passage below, it said:¹²⁵

„Poland is perhaps equally enamored of its view of itself as an underdog fighting on the side of right, typified by the mythic charge of Polish cavalry against Nazi tanks in World War Two.”

Even high official circles echoed similar views in Poland in the aftermath. Bogdan Kilch, defence minister, reportedly said that „We were convinced that our contribution was not only stable and militarily significant, but also that we stand for international law and humanitarian needs (...) From that point of view, what happened in Afghanistan is a shock for Polish public opinion.”¹²⁶

The murkiest part of the picture emerging regarding the so-called Nangar Khel incident is what behind-the-scenes politics and turf battles within the realm of officialdom may have had to do with the affair. Most sources I spoke to agreed that there was an attempt

¹²³ The image and concept of the „mohajir” is brought up here, with irony, to offer telling contrast. From an Islamic religious perspective, a majority of Afghans who fled Afghanistan under the communists were „mohajirs” in the sense that they left a land ruled by an atheist regime, that one cannot tolerate as a true Muslim.

¹²⁴ Jolanta Sierakowska-Dyndo, Polish academic and a professor of Warsaw University, studied in Moscow for a couple of years during the 1980s. She describes her work at the time, on Afghanistan, as a constant, delicate balancing act, given that she was from Poland (already under the military regime of General Jaruzelski), involved in studying Afghanistan (with an ongoing, anti-Soviet insurgency).

¹²⁵ War crimes case weighs on Poland, *International Herald Tribune*, November 28, 2007, available at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/11/28/europe/poland.php>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹²⁶ Quoted in: Nicholas Kulish: An Afghanistan War-Crimes Case Tests Poland’s Commitment to Foreign Missions. The New York Times, November 29, 2007, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/29/world/europe/29poland.html?pagewanted=print>, accessed on April 21, 2009.

on the part of the Polish military to at first cover up the affair (perhaps to avoid a public discussion of what happened, even if it was not in reality something shameful, but only regrettable). Many voiced, however, that Polish military counterintelligence, having an apparently significant number of agents in Afghanistan, there with the Polish soldiers, might have been interested in over-blowing the issue, and making it look worse than it actually was. A conflict between the Ministry of Defence, led earlier on by Radosław Sikorski, and Military Counterintelligence, led since October 2006, by Antoni Macierewicz,¹²⁷ was partly behind Sikorski's departure from the post of defence minister in February 2007. Sikorski later on left even the Kaczyński brothers' and Macierewicz's Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) party and joined the currently governing Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*). The image of such, possibly bitter infighting between Polish state organs, and common knowledge of it, certainly does not help in creating a positive image of the Afghanistan mission amongst the public.

As to the prospects of what impact the Nangar Khel incident may have, according to most, it will be obviously quite negative. Views diverge, however, as far as the media's future role is concerned. Some journalists fear that the incident may contribute to a culture of not debating what „ours” do in faraway places, holding their safety above everything else. Meanwhile, a journalist like Grzegorz Indulski, who often spent time with the troops in Afghanistan (as well as in other mission areas, such as Chad and Iraq), thinks that the debate that emerged will be present too much on soldiers' minds, and this will make their job more difficult – and this will be more likely to lead to trouble in the future.

„Make their sacrifice count”

Scandals may be coming at the steady rate usual for other countries as well, but in Poland so far, just as there is no widespread, „public” discourse on Afghanistan, there is no organised, mass, civil society movement opposed to the country's involvement, either – only, mostly, just individual people, with their typically negative, sceptical views of the mission.

Were we to draw the SWOT matrix (a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats matrix) of a country's involvement in Afghanistan, based on the premise that such involvement is necessary, and considering a loss of public support as a „threat,” the lack of civil society activism is, in fact, what seemingly offers an „opportunity” to policy-makers.

¹²⁷ Macierewicz had earlier been the „liquidator” or purger of the former military intelligence service, the Military Information Service. He was appointed by the then Jarosław Kaczyński-led government.

The public may remain passive regardless of what happens, and this could mean that while it generally does not approve of a mission, it may still tolerate it if undertaken in the name of foreign policy, underwritten by an expert and an elite consensus. Debate can be avoided, at least it seems so for the moment.

From the military's point of view, there is one further opportunity present in Poland's case. An overwhelming majority of Poles is not supportive of the Afghanistan mission (the Polish CBOS company found 72% opposed to the mission in September 2007, based on a respondent sample of 844 Polish adults).¹²⁸ This antagonism translates into a concern for soldiers, who were, in the eyes of many, put in harm's way not out of a clear need for this, but under the effect of foreign policy constraints. Soldiers can, therefore, expect sympathy from the public when the armed forces demand better/safer equipment for themselves, to fit mission needs and provide better force protection. The urge to „make their sacrifice count, once they were sent there”¹²⁹ is definitely present in the Polish case. One may call it a constructively sceptical stream of thought, albeit it also rests, to a degree, on a self-flattering or narcissistic collective self-image. The logic of it, put simply, is that if soldiers on our behalf are there for others' interests, making a heroic and unselfish collective sacrifice, at least they should be provided with the best possible protection.

At the outset, Polish forces were not particularly well equipped. Their vehicles did not have enough armour, especially the light vehicles. For this reason, Poland licensed Humvees from the U.S., on favourable terms. But the ones received in the first batch came not with the upgraded armour that best protects soldiers against IEDs. It was later on that Poland eventually received Humvees of the Kit 4 and Kit 5 series that are better protected. Of course, even those light vehicles cannot be perfectly defended against IED blasts, in any case.

Since the U.S. did not provide the vehicles offering the best possible protection right from the start, this caused offence with some people. Grzegorz Indulski, for his part, found it frustrating that one had and has to negotiate so hard over these issues with the U.S., and that this is overall a rather petty approach to affairs on the part of the Americans. Inherent in this reasoning are the assumptions that the U.S. is solely responsible for what is happening in Afghanistan, that it is acting there furthering almost exclusively its own interests, and that therefore the U.S. should be grateful and helpful in return for any help it is offered by anyone

¹²⁸ Poles Want Troops Out of Afghanistan, *Angus Reid Global Monitor: Polls & Research*, October 11, 2007, available at http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/28556/poles_want_troops_out_of_afghanistan, accessed on January 29, 2009. See also pollster CBOS' website at <http://www.cbos.pl/>.

¹²⁹ I heard this exact wording from journalist Grzegorz Indulski during the interview I had with him in October, 2008, but in fact this argument is familiar from the discourse in several other countries, too, from the part of people who could be best described as „constructive sceptics” perhaps.

else. The conclusion drawn from these premises is that helpfulness should include the provision of the best equipment to allies such as Poland.

This perception of American behaviour is not unique to Poland. Recently, a noteworthy discussion was started at Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA) fellow Péter Wagner's weblog,¹³⁰ joined by several people apparently affiliated with the Hungarian military. This discussion is worth mentioning here to illustrate existing views of U.S. intentions. The emerging consensus in this case was that the U.S. is interested in handing out Humvees to allies in Afghanistan only with the dark motive of hoping that insurgents will attack not only their soldiers as a result. This rests on the following assumptions: (1) that guerrillas cannot differentiate between a Hungarian and a U.S. Humvee; (2) that guerrillas try to kill Americans *only* if possible. On the basis of these dubious premises it was concluded that in general guerrillas will only look to blow up Hungarian Humvees if they mistake them for Americans. One contributor to the discussion even revealed some data concerning Road „Pluto,” the road between Pul-i-Khumri (capital of Baghlan province, where the Hungarian PRT is located) and Kunduz – according to this, in the first half of 2007, there were three attacks against Americans along this road, and only one against Hungarians. In the view of the author of this study, this lonely, unrepresentative piece of data, if true, does not actually prove the above mentioned assumptions to be right. Nevertheless it does affect segments of the discourse about Afghanistan.

At the same weblog, on a later occasion, the issue of whether Humvees could be repainted with the Hungarian national colours also came up. In the view of those who raised this point, this could save Hungarian lives (again based on the previously mentioned assumptions). One source, purporting to look well-informed, claimed that Polish troops improved their own protection from IEDs by attaching well-visible Polish flags on Polish Humvees in Afghanistan. Looking through images available from open sources (e.g. the Polish Ministry of Defence's photo galleries of the Afghanistan mission, or using Google's image-search tool), this does not seem to be true. In the case of some vehicles in Iraq, I did find a relatively well-visible Polish flag painted onto the front doors of Humvees. But not on all of them. The sources involved in the above mentioned on-line conversation claimed that the U.S. gives Humvees to allies on the condition that they cannot be repainted. Without looking into this, this could be simply because these are licensed vehicles, to be returned as

¹³⁰ The comment-section discussions mentioned in this and the next paragraph are available at <http://wagnerpeter.blogspot.com/2008/09/ujabb-magyar-tmads.html> and <http://wagnerpeter.blogspot.com/2008/08/van-j-nks.html>, last accessed on January 29, 2009.

U.S. property. In any case, an existing interpretation is that this provides U.S. soldiers with some „statistically improved” protection.

Moving beyond the controversy surrounding the Polish fleet of Humvees, the issue of another vehicle’s eligibility for the Afghanistan mission also generated discussions in Poland. The vehicle in question is the main armoured personnel carrier (APC) currently used by Polish forces: the Rosomak KTO (*Kołowy Transporter Opancerzony*, i.e. „wheeled armoured transporter”). Supposedly, it is the most mine-resistant of the Polish military’s fleet of vehicles so far. It is not seen as providing perfect protection, however, even though it has withstood IED explosions, without the soldiers inside seriously harmed, on occasions in the past.¹³¹ Therefore some also expect the U.S. to provide more mine-resistant MRAP vehicles to Poland (which it seems likely to do eventually).

Rosomak APCs are manufactured under license from the Finnish designer and manufacturer of Patria armoured vehicles. Initially, the Polish military ordered 313 of these vehicles in 2003, to be delivered between 2004 and 2013. For cost-effectiveness, a modification of the original armour – a downgrading of the vehicles’ armour – was ordered.¹³² This proved problematic later on, as the IED threat demanded more protection both in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Re-modifications were needed, that took time to install. In December 2007, the daily *Dziennik* reported that the delivery of a batch of eight Rosomaks with upgraded armour was to suffer a delay of a couple of months.¹³³ In March, 2008, defence minister Bogdan Kilch said that the conventional tendering process at the Polish Ministry of Defence might need to be circumvented in order to speed up deliveries.¹³⁴ By August, these problems appear to have been solved, and Minister Kilch promised speedy delivery of more Rosomaks with upgraded armour to Polish troops by September.¹³⁵

The public is definitely concerned for troops’ safety. As stated, this can be utilised to a degree in the Polish military’s interests. But the underlying assumptions behind the public’s thinking – that Poland is in Afghanistan for others’ interests, and that that is why heroic

¹³¹ *Polish armoured personnel carrier runs over land mine in Afghanistan*, Polish Radio, August 12, 2007, available re-published at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1880180/posts?page=14>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹³² *Afganistan: 14 lipca dotrą dodatkowe pancerze dla Rosomaków*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, July 6, 2007, available at <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/Wiadomosci/1,80277,4295448.html?skad=rss>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹³³ *Polish troops short of APCs in Afghanistan*, *UPI*, December 20, 2007, available re-published at <http://www.afghanistannewscenter.com/news/2007/december/dec212007.html#8>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹³⁴ *Dla vipów kupią używane samoloty?*, *TVN24.pl*, March 4, 2008, available at <http://www.tvn24.pl/-1,1541117,wiadomosc.html>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹³⁵ *Polish troops have to adjust tactics in Afghanistan*, *TheNews.pl*, August 21, 2008, available at <http://www.polskieradio.pl/thenews/news/?id=89713>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

soldiers need to be protected from harm as much as possible – show that the above discussed view of the SWOT matrix may be valid only as long as all-party or at least major-party elite consensus remains in the „Strengths” cell of the matrix. If such consensus would not exist, the absence of civil society mobilisation against involvement in Afghanistan would not matter that much (as „opportunity”). Nevertheless, in Poland, supportive elite consensus seems likely to last at this point.

There have only been a few exceptional occasions when members of the Polish elite voiced dissenting views. For instance, a high-ranking Polish military officer, General Koziej stated once that Poland should boost its presence in Lebanon, as part of the UNIFIL II. mission, rather than in Afghanistan. On another occasion, in October, 2008, Leszek Miller, a former socialist Prime Minister,¹³⁶ declared that Poland should not leave Iraq, because it would miss out on the fruits of stability there just when those would include economic opportunities for Polish companies. These were isolated views, however, not particularly resonant within any circles.

Meanwhile, the U.S. gives aid to the Polish military on an annual basis. This subsidy, amounting to USD 66 million in 2004 and USD 100 million in 2005, is seen by many as something making up only partly for an otherwise negative balance in Polish-U.S. relations, in favour of the U.S. This image of relations is not affected by the fact that Polish troops, serving under U.S. command, also have access to U.S. CERP¹³⁷ funds to spend on projects in Afghanistan, and that thus all financing does not in reality have to come from the Polish government for the current efforts in Ghazni for example. Significant sums are spent nonetheless: the Polish military alone spent EUR 188 million¹³⁸ on its „current needs” in Afghanistan in 2007. This is a sum that is multiple times higher than what the Hungarian military is spending, even on a per-capita basis (counting Euros spent per country population).

The non-governmental aspect of Polish involvement

When discussing „Polish” involvement in Afghanistan, one should not forget about the non-governmental aspects of this involvement. Polish NGOs (three of them, to be exact) have carried out projects in Afghanistan, and one of them, the largest one, *Polska Akcja*

¹³⁶ He lately figured, at the 2007 elections to the *Sejm*, on the electoral list of the right-wing Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (*Samoobrona Rzeczypospolitej Polski*).

¹³⁷ Commander’s Emergency Response Programme (funds at the disposal of US military officers responsible for a particular area of operations).

¹³⁸ Excluding expected procurement costs for equipment and material needed for the mission in the future.

Humanitarna (Polish Humanitarian Action or PAH by its Polish acronym) is even currently involved in running projects there. The *Polska Misja Medyczna* (Polish Medical Mission) stopped its activities in the country in 2007.¹³⁹

Schools for Peace – nowadays renamed Education for Peace – is a smaller NGO, led by Piotr Balcerowicz, a professor of Warsaw University. His organisation was active especially in the first few years after 2001, in Afghanistan. Schools for Peace carried out even school-building projects (three of them). At one stage they used to have more school projects running than PAH, the far larger organisation, which focused in the first period post-2001 on an arts school in Kabul. In 2007, Education for Peace re-emerged as a participant in a project for which it was not able to get funding, however, from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project would have provided aid for the development of an agricultural school in Mazar-i-Sharif, which was at this point set to be realised chiefly by a German NGO, based in Hamburg (the *Afghanistan-Schulen*). Education for Peace has some more plans for the future, including regarding a girls' school, in an actually receptive,¹⁴⁰ Dari-speaking Pashtun community in Herat province, not far from conflict-struck Shindand district. Since the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' funds for Polish NGOs are now spent almost exclusively through PAH, at the time when I spoke with professor Balcerowicz, Education for Peace was not likely to be an official participant in this project, either.

As to PAH, it is involved currently in several school projects.¹⁴¹ Four of these are in Kapisa province and three in Panjsheer. These are not school-building projects – merely „soft aid,” oriented at capacity-building through running English-language and computer skills training courses at the schools concerned, while also providing computers, textbooks and even teachers for the courses. The issue of human resources is perhaps the greatest challenge, as well-trained female teachers are sometimes hard to find, and they are vital for running girls' schools. Of the latter, PAH is providing aid to two in Kapisa, and one plus one, as one could put it, in Panjsheer, given that one of the schools there is a shared school for boys and girls (with girls studying during the day, and boys studying in the evening).

¹³⁹ Exchange of e-mails and telephone conversation with Ewa Piekarska of the Kraków-based *Polska Misja Medyczna* (October and November, 2008).

¹⁴⁰ According to professor Balcerowicz, this community began running the girls' school all by itself, in tents set up for accommodating 3,000 girl students from the area. They also have a women's shura, and the latter is involved in organising silk production (with traditional methods, using silk worms). *Note based on interview with Piotr Balcerowicz in October, 2008.*

¹⁴¹ Regarding PAH, I am relying mostly on an interview I had in Warsaw with Olga Mielnikiewicz, head of PAH's Afghanistan projects.

The other major element of PAH's profile is water and sanitary projects. They provide wells as well as gravitation-supported systems in places, for example connected to their school development projects in Kapisa and Panjsheer.

As far as their operational security is concerned, their best guarantee for now seems to be their independence. They work with a small staff, keep a low profile, are not armed and do not, at least in a direct sense, work together with militaries. That is exactly why they are not interested in working with the Ghazni PRT in the future. But they have a good working relationship with the Polish government. At the time when I spoke to Olga Mielnikiewicz in late 2008, a former PAH employee seemed likely to become a development advisor (DEVAD) with the Ghazni PRT once it would have been taken over by Poland. There also was a former PAH employee working on development issues at Poland's Kabul embassy. PAH can rely – beside ANSA reports¹⁴² – on the Polish embassy's security briefings in its work. But even though the government would certainly happily encourage PAH to work in Ghazni, PAH will most likely resist such wishes.

A good measure of how the relationship between PAH and the Polish government works is the aftermath of the Uzbeen valley insurgent ambush on French paratroopers on August 16, 2008. The attack took place in Kapisa province, in a predominantly Pashtun, more problematic district – not in one of the predominantly Tajik districts where PAH is working. The Polish government issued a warning for Polish citizens to stay away from the province. PAH at first heeded this advice, and ceased its activity in Kapisa for about three weeks. Later on, however, they reviewed this decision, based on their own assessment, and carried on with their projects.

One important question is how the Polish government will use NGO involvement in Afghanistan once (and if) the Ghazni PRT is run by Poland. There may appear a strong stimulus from the side of the government to concentrate available resources for the province. However, it can be safely concluded in advance, based on the experience of other southern Afghanistan PRTs, that most areas of Ghazni province will be, for now, ineligible for NGO-run development projects, given the ongoing insurgency. This can be a concern for an NGO like PAH.

Even with this in mind, it may still be remarkable and praiseworthy to note that in the Polish military high-ranking officers are ready to acknowledge the military's lacking capability to effectively handle development tasks itself. General Biziewski, a commander of

¹⁴² Quarterly reports of the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, widely relied on by NGOs active in the country.

the Polish Battle Group under ISAF's Regional Command-East at the time, openly said that he wants to see more people both from the relevant Polish government ministries coming to Afghanistan to work there on their respective ministries' projects, and more NGOs showing interest of the same kind, too.

Getting back to challenges of the present, a further important question is whether ongoing NGO projects are valuable, and how much they are worth exactly. This is difficult to assess in any case. There are some worrying indications, however. PAH readily admits (and complains of) the fact that at this stage they are not able to do really long-term projects, which should normally be preferred. And since they restrict their involvement on the ground to a minimal level, they are not in a position to monitor a project once it is finished.

In fact, a Polish researcher, working on an unrelated assignment for the Polish Ministry of Defence, had the chance to see one of PAH's schools in Kapisa, and in his view it seemed like the school was not well-maintained (e.g. regularly cleaned) at all.¹⁴³ In this way, it is very difficult to achieve sustainable and significant results, let alone verify them.

How others are involved and who they are

Even the notion of non-governmental involvement has to be widened to a degree, and two further relevant groups of people/actors could be mentioned here, for a brief, but more complete, overview.

Firstly, in Schools for Peace's school projects, for example in donating officially out-of-date English textbooks acquired from English publishers' stockpiles that were designated redundant, many Polish university students became involved. Piotr Balcerowicz recounted with pride to me how students were happy and even eager to volunteer for whatever that was necessary, to take part in these projects. For instance, some of them delivered the copies of books obtained to military airports by car themselves, from Warsaw to southern Poland (at which point the Ministry of Defence helped with getting the books to Afghanistan).¹⁴⁴ This is a commendable example of involving a relevant group of key minds (students of oriental studies or international relations; any relevant field) in aid activities and thus letting them get closer to the subject of their studies as well.

¹⁴³ Interview with Krzysztof Strachota, researcher of the Polish Eastern Studies Institute – the Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich (Warsaw, November, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Piotr Balcerowicz (October, 2008).

Secondly, another sphere of activity, only tangentially discussed in this study so far, is the economic sphere. A common complaint of sceptics, with regards to involvement in Afghanistan, is that no Polish company will ever make any profit there. This, in fact, is already not true, as at least companies in the defence industry are in a position to capitalise on emerging opportunities. One example is the Polish manufacturer of the already mentioned Rosomak APCs, the Military Mechanical Works, based in Siemianowice.

Another company is WB Electronics, based in Ożarów. Its case holds some special relevance with regards to Hungary's involvement in Afghanistan, because it is partly through the latter involvement that WB Electronics had the chance to make some money on Afghanistan-related defence procurements.

WB Electronics, according to its website, specialises in „software development, system integration, design and manufacturing of computers, terminals and communication devices, and maintenance of deployed systems,” and its „most renowned product is its integrated Fire Control and Command System (FCS) for artillery.” The TOPAZ automatic fire control kit is used, for example, by Polish artillery. It was with this background that the company decided to participate in a tender of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence, to supply two mini-UAV SOFAR systems, for use by the Hungarian PRT in Baghlan province, Afghanistan. These systems include Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), three to be used with each of the two systems, a data transmission and a data processing system, as well as a man-portable operator station and a vehicle-based one. WB Electronics won the procurement contract by low bidding, which the prime competitor Israeli company, Elbit, could not beat, even at the second round of the tender. The Hungarian MoD was bound to accept the lowest offer, and WB Electronics undertook to supply the mini-UAV SOFAR systems in cooperation with a Hungarian partner (MH Armcom Kommunikációtechnikai Kft., which fitted the operator station into Mercedes 4x4 vehicles used by the Hungarian military) and an Israeli one (Top-I-Vision, supplying UAVs). Even the communication system to be installed was an imported feature of the end-product: the German Multi-Rolle Radio Kongsberg system. Altogether, the contract was worth 690,000 Euros.

The Hungarian MoD accepted delays of delivery on two occasions (preferring this to re-starting the tendering process). First in the spring of 2007, then for the second time in August 2007. On the former occasion the UAVs were not delivered on schedule. On the latter, it was realised that the communication system could not be used for training the operating personnel in Hungary, since the system operated at a frequency that cannot be used according to current regulation by the Hungarian Government's Frequency Management Authority. This

was major negligence on the part of the contractor, as specifications concerning this were explicitly included in the terms of contract. Finally, in November, 2007, the Hungarian MoD therefore ended the contract, and WB Electronics was forced to pay a penalty over this.¹⁴⁵

This may not be a positive example of Polish companies' involvement in Afghanistan, but the point, that these actors should not be left out of a comprehensive discussion of „Poland's” involvement, or of „Polish” involvement rather, in Afghanistan, is nevertheless valid.

The Polish case: Conclusions

This case study showed how Poland, a devoted promoter of the idea of the trans-Atlantic security community, arrived at playing the relatively important military role it is currently playing in Afghanistan.

It dealt with factors possibly affecting the Polish contribution at the present and in the future, including some of the most influential elite figures' background, the unorganised opposition from a passive Polish public, the importance of major-party elite consensus behind the mission, and the lack of mass civil society mobilisation against it. Broadening the notion of „Polish” involvement in Afghanistan, the study also touched upon Polish NGOs' past and present activities in the country, as well as on some Polish companies' Afghanistan-related defence procurement contracts.

This case study, by its sheer extent, has arguably shown how a single East-Central European country's contribution to the Afghanistan mission, in and of itself, with all the different actors it tends to mobilise, can offer enough of a subject for a discussion. This might suggest that even a country like Poland (or Hungary) can make a possibly significant marginal impact. This could induce decision-makers and publics alike in East-Central Europe to think more constructively, creatively and pro-actively about their countries' commitments there.

Concluding somewhat unconventionally with a hitherto un-discussed piece of fact: Poland has already given *absolutely* vital, indispensable input to the Afghanistan mission.

¹⁴⁵ See e.g. Lencsés Károly: Felderítő robotrepülőket vásárol a HM, *Népszabadság Online*, September 1, 2008, available at <http://nol.hu/archivum/archiv-505344> (accessed on January 29, 2009).

Poland helped out Canada with intra-theatre helicopter airlift capacities in 2008.¹⁴⁶ In this way, Canada could meet informal conditions set by the Canadian opposition for its parliamentary support to the mission, on the basis of the Manley Report (which was already mentioned in the introduction of this case study). These were conditions regarding ally support that Canada demanded, in order to remain able to fulfil its pivotal role in Kandahar province, between 2009 and 2011. Helping Canada meet these conditions, with the offer of intra-theatre airlift, was vital input indeed, as indirectly this is what made ISAF's mission sustainable in the time-frame concerned.

Case study: The Netherlands' role in southern Afghanistan¹⁴⁷

Introduction

A thorough, methodical characterisation of the Afghan security situation, or more exactly that of the diversely varying accessibility of different locales within Afghanistan, can be found in the UN Department of Safety and Security's half-year security reviews. In simplifying terms, one may still talk about a strong contrast between the situation in the "north" and the "south" of Afghanistan, taking note of the much tougher challenges faced in the southern parts of the country. This basic distinction needs to be kept in focus when analysing and, regarding the exemplary nature of the contribution, assessing and appreciating the role played in Afghanistan by the Netherlands, a small country with a population of about sixteen and a half million people. The Dutch have taken on a leading role in one of the most difficult areas, the southern province of Uruzgan, just south of the also heavily insurgent-infested Ghazni province where Polish troops are operating. They took the lead in the "reconstruction" of the province as well as in the security operations ongoing there under ISAF (NATO) command (unlike Polish troops in Ghazni).

¹⁴⁶ Canadian Forces (CF) were eventually provided the opportunity to rely on two Polish Mi-17 helicopters in Kandahar, sharing them with Polish Special Forces in the province. This caused some disappointment in Canada. At a meeting of Foreign Minister Sikorski on the part of Poland and Defence Minister Peter MacKay of Canada, in February 2008 in Ottawa, it seemed to have been promised that CF could exclusively operate these helicopters. In any case, key parliamentary votes went in favour of the Afghanistan mission in Canada partly as a result of the Polish offer, whatever the exact form it originally came in. Source: Doug Schmitt: Canada to share Polish choppers in Afghanistan. *Canwest News Service*, June 6, 2008, available at <http://www.canada.com/topics/news/world/story.html?id=1f872180-ed38-4538-8116-af79a9b2fcf9>, accessed on January 29, 2009.

¹⁴⁷ The results of monitoring the Netherlands' involvement in Uruzgan province, from between Springs 2007 and 2008, can be viewed online at the author's weblog, at <http://statefailure.blogspot.com/search/label/Uruzgan%20Series> („The Uruzgan Series,” [My] State Failure Blog).

The number of insurgents in the area of southern Afghanistan has only increased over the last couple of years. The international troop presence has also grown significantly in the wake of ISAF's Stage 3 expansion to the southern provinces, back in August 2006. These changes inevitably lead to more clashes and subsequently to more security incidents all over southern Afghanistan.

In the following sections this case study focuses on the politics of the Netherlands' mission in Uruzgan province, in two arenas: both in the Netherlands and in Uruzgan. It aims to identify as many influential determinants of the course of Dutch policy as possible; those which had a role up to late 2007 in affecting, in one way or another, the eventual decision of the Dutch government to renew their troops' mandate in Uruzgan. (The renewal came for two more years, up till mid-2010.) The time frame will be restricted to the period between Spring 2006 and Autumn 2007, suiting the present inquiry best. The Netherlands' role in Afghanistan extends beyond what the country is involved in in Uruzgan, but the territorial focus will be the province of Uruzgan alone here.

The background of the Uruzgan deployment

The Netherlands had taken on the role of lead nation in Uruzgan initially with a mandate lasting from August 1, 2006 for exactly two years, till August 1, 2008. On November 30, 2007, following lengthy public, domestic political and internal NATO coalition debates, the Dutch government decided to formally announce plans to extend the mission to beyond the end-date of the initial mandate period, until 2010, even while diminishing its troop presence after mid-2008 in Uruzgan somewhat. The Dutch parliament's seal of approval was still needed at this point, but the well-founded expectation was that sufficient support in the legislature had already been secured.

Notably, one of the major arguments considered in favour of the extension was something that other countries cannot ignore, either, even as we speak: in the Afghanistan Compact, 2010 had been set as the year by the end of which many of the most important objectives of the Afghanistan mission, including the principal security objectives, should be achieved. Without a stable international commitment of assistance up to *at least* 2010, such aims cannot be realised, and for subscribers to the Afghanistan Compact such self-defeat out of pure cost-aversion would go below any decent standard of statecraft.

To add a detail relevant from Hungary's perspective, at the time when the Dutch government brought its decision, there were plans circulating regarding the possible

deployment of a Hungarian Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) of twenty soldiers to the province. The Dutch government has brought its decision to extend their mission in Uruzgan expecting, among others', a contribution from Hungary, too. Eventually, rather slowly, and only long, long after the Dutch decision had been taken, it then transpired (in January 2009) that Hungary is only ready to send the OMLT in question to the area of Regional Command-North.¹⁴⁸

August 2006 is only officially the beginning of ISAF's expanded presence in the south. In fact, already prior to that date the Netherlands, just like its other ISAF partners under Regional Command-South (ISAF RC-S), had already had some presence established in its area of operations. There had been preparations long in advance underway for taking over the Uruzgan Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), run originally by the U.S. In April 2006, a Dutch Deployment Task Force arrived to the province to start the construction of a whole new, large and secure base for the incoming Dutch troops, in the vicinity of provincial centre Tarin Kowt. This base, Camp Holland, is currently the main base for ISAF troops (mostly Dutch and Australians) in Uruzgan.

The extensive preparations also included a comprehensive survey of the social context in the province. The latter quite obviously affects the outcome of any operation in the area, from the outcome of the most basic humanitarian project to that of security operations. The context analysis, with the results of this research, has even been published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the internet, not lastly in order to facilitate and stimulate commentary from social scientists. The study gives a detailed picture of tribal and other social relations in Uruzgan.¹⁴⁹

Regarding the highly influential nature of tribal relations, it is also remarkable that the Netherlands have, within the PRT leadership, beside the political, the development and the legal advisors (POLAD, DEVAD and LEGAD, respectively) a position for a so-called TRIBAD (tribal advisor) as well. That position was filled at the start by Matthijs Toot, a renowned expert of Pashtun tribes.

In an environment burdened by multi-layered conflicts, having this sort of expertise at hand is absolutely vital. With the challenge of the Taliban-led insurgency alone, carrying out any activity, whatsoever, of a constructive nature, be it labelled as humanitarian,

¹⁴⁸ See the blog entry from January 19, 2009 by Péter Wagner for some amazing details regarding how this was communicated, available at <http://wagnerpeter.blogspot.com/2009/01/omlt-javts.html>, accessed on April 23, 2009.

¹⁴⁹ Context Analysis: Uruzgan Province. Prepared by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, in August 2006. Available at http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/kamerbrieven-bijlagen/2006/10/0_368-bijlage-2.pdf, accessed on April 23, 2009.

development, construction or reconstruction work, would be difficult enough, but such work has to take place in a context characterised by a whole set of other (clan, tribal, ethnic *etc.*) conflicts. It is the insurgency that has the most destructive effect, of course. Anything constructive has to take place in what, in the context of the insurgency, can be described as a 360-degree battlefield. This is why an overview and an assessment of the strategic response to the insurgency follows here.

The ink blot approach to counterinsurgency

According to a commonly used distinction, the discourse and practice of counterinsurgency has two fundamentally different schools.¹⁵⁰ One of these is what one may call an enemy-centric approach. Because of the nature of guerrilla warfare and the difficulty of identifying combatants, an enemy-centric approach risks killing and maiming a lot of innocent civilians, in return for killing as many guerrillas as possible. In this kind of counterinsurgency campaign, there is no comprehensive approach to attempting to win the loyalty of the populace – in any way other than by way of employing brutal, coercive force. Ignorance of “collateral damage” and of the need to win “hearts and minds” may lead to the alienation of all of the local population in the insurgency-hit area. Even those who originally are not supporting the insurgents may side with them as a result. Most probably, this eventually leads to defeat for the counterinsurgent party.

The other, population-centric school of counterinsurgency does not exclude the possibility of taking on insurgents in fighting – and so neither does it exclude the possibility of civilian casualties. In its case, however, counterinsurgency is more policy than simply a military–strategic framework. “Policy” refers to the need for sensitive choices all the time, highlighting that even in two neighbouring villages entirely different approaches might yield optimal results, and that thus a heightened awareness of the varying political, social, economic and cultural context, from one locale to the other, is imperative, in order to melt away the social basis of an insurgency and isolate guerrilla fighters. This sort of awareness requires intensive use of “human terrain mapping” (Marr – Cushing – Garner – Thompson, 2008). Warfare in a population-centric approach is just one of the options. It can only have a role if and when it can actually contribute to the furtherance of larger political objectives.

¹⁵⁰ See e.g. in: John A. Nagl (2005): *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife – Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

This sort of policy, the objective of which is to win the hearts and minds, or the souls, of the people, has to be as flexible as the human soul itself. To designate some sort of rigid framework for thinking about the optimal path to realising it could be mistaken. Still, it does have some sort of schematic underpinning in the form of what is called the “ink blot strategy.” I will outline this strategy in a few paragraphs below, relying partly on a presentation by Australian counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen.¹⁵¹

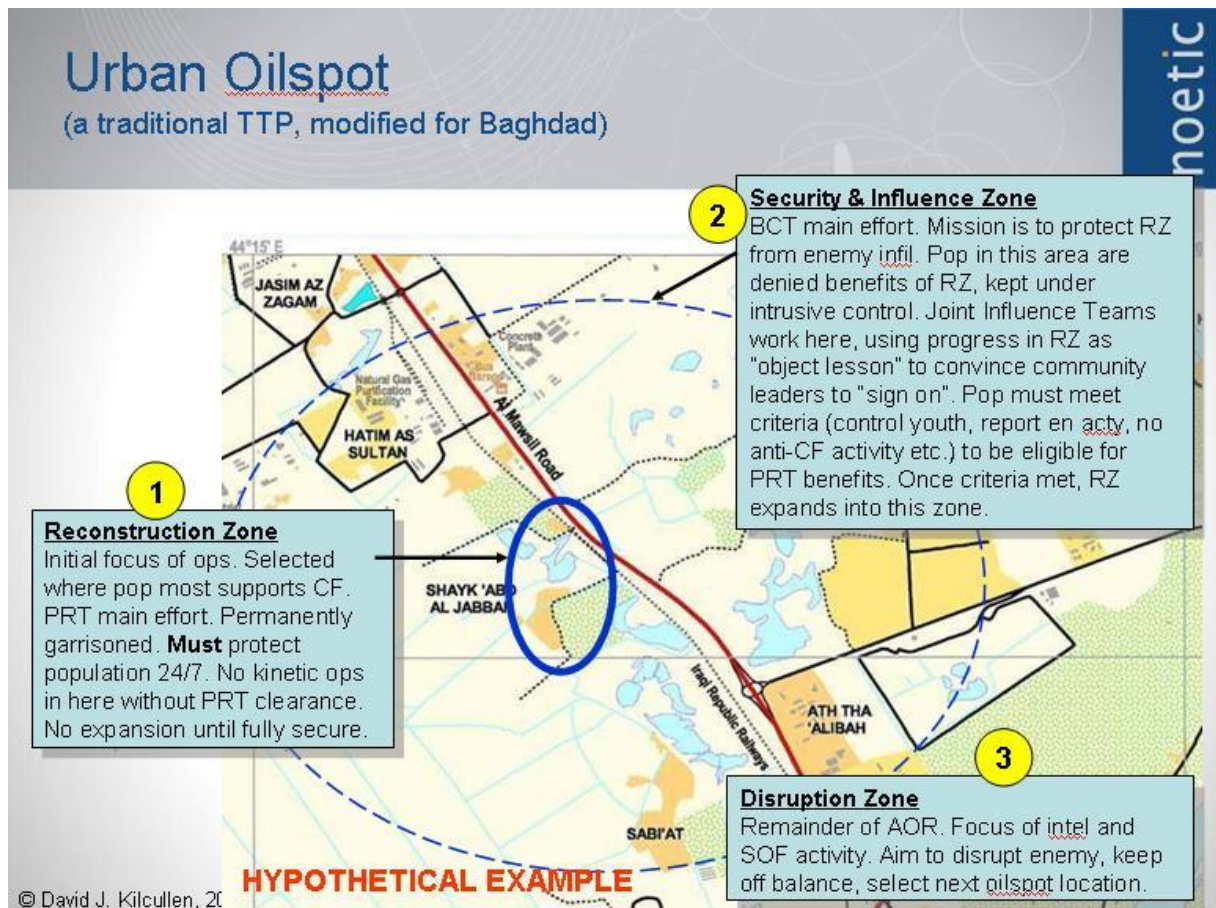


Figure 3.1. A visual scheme of the ink blot strategy, also known as the “oil spot” strategy. Page 62 of David Kilcullen’s presentation on COIN (see *footnote 151* for reference).

The party interested in pacifying a given area should establish its presence in such a location first where the population is most supportive of its efforts, or where an area of key strategic importance can be thus secured. Ideally, this is good for two basic reasons: it rewards the

¹⁵¹ David Kilcullen: „Counterinsurgency in Iraq: Theory and Practice, 2007,” presentation at a seminar at the Grey Research Center, at Quantico, Virginia, September 26, 2007. Available at <http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil/Counterinsurgency%20in%20Iraq%20theory%20and%20practice2007.ppt> (last accessed: December 22, 2007); especially recommended.

supportive segment of the population, and it also provides for the rational allocation of resources, with the establishment of a main base in a location where either it may be the most secure to do so, or where one would have to maintain a presence in any case. This shall be the so-called ink blot area. Even here, retaining local support is not something to be taken for granted. Consolidating it takes an effort in terms of, for example, development projects executed, in order to improve the quality of life for the local populace. Permanent security shall be guaranteed to preserve the people's confidence in the counterinsurgent party.

It is best to imagine the scheme of the ink blot strategy in the form of a series of concentric circles. We find, in the area directly adjacent to the ink blot core, in an outer circle around it, the so-called "influence zone" (effectively a zone of competing influences). There, local leaders shall be constantly reminded of the potential benefits of joining in support of the counterinsurgent party. They have to see that they may be rewarded for such support by the extension of the ink blot core into their areas, bringing along sharing in projects and better security. In these areas, in order not to let the insurgents undermine the counterinsurgents' influence, intrusive control is required in the form of patrols and house searches, but in as targeted a way as possible, based on good intelligence.

Finally, beyond the zone of influence, in the furthest outlying areas, the minimal objective at the beginning is merely to critically disrupt insurgent activities. To hamper their supplies and to deny them a safe haven if possible, for which role special operations forces may be the most eligible.

The aim of the ink blot strategy is to gradually expand control and exclude insurgents from more and more areas, thus letting the "ink blot" grow, with the ink spilling over ever wider territory.

This approach is the basis for ISAF's current operations in southern Afghanistan. Using the central metaphor of the concept, the aim of these operations is to eventually merge all the ink blots across the entire area of operations belonging to ISAF's Regional Command-South. In the current situation this only appears to be feasible over the span of at least several more years.

Putting the ink blot strategy in an historical context, since it is usually referred to as originating from the colonial era, it should be highlighted that in fact the political objectives of the current mission in Afghanistan by far exceed the objectives that used to be typical of colonial "small wars." Back in the case of the latter, rule over a population by means of dividing it, or the ability to maintain a permanent presence in a strategically important area, could be regarded as sufficient in itself. In the case of Afghanistan, the endgame is to provide

optimal conditions for the central Afghan government to exercise its authority over the entire territory of the state.

Moreover, while there are more ambitious objectives to realise, the set of means available is more limited. The often mentioned counterinsurgency campaign waged by Great Britain in Malaya (1948-1960) is a better analogy than that of colonial small wars in terms of the greater similarity of political goals. In the Malayan case the chief political objective was to lay the foundations of an independent Malayan state that does not fall under the control of a particular political force, i.e. communists. But even the Malaya parallel is imperfect for the reason that in reality Great Britain enjoyed wider room for manoeuvre there. Ethnic Chinese villagers, a primary constituency of the insurgency, were resettled in so-called “New Villages,” where in some places a system of food rationing was introduced and the people were given boiled rice in order not to let them put aside reserves for the guerrillas. It would be difficult to find support for such harsh measures among Western publics today.

Ink blots in Uruzgan

At the moment there are three ink blots in the province. Taking into account the special situation of Chora, two plus one might be a more accurate formula. The most important ones are in the area of Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod. The latter is another major settlement in the western part of the province. In its vicinity there is another major ISAF base, Camp Hadrian (though it is far smaller than Camp Holland).

In general, a logical way to assess how the execution of the ink blot strategy is proceeding, is looking at how active the counterinsurgent force is in the influence and the disruption zone(s). This is all the more important to gauge, as there is a possibility that if guerrillas are not kept under even pressure in the different provinces, they will find safe havens for themselves. In this way, conditions within one province may negatively affect conditions in other, surrounding provinces.¹⁵² Notably for the analysis here, from the end of 2006 to the spring of 2007, Dutch forces had often received criticism from several sources, including from the U.S. military, regarding supposedly not being pro-active enough against insurgents in Uruzgan.¹⁵³

¹⁵² This is effectively an instance of “negative spill-over effects” taking place; referring to the concept introduced in Chapter One, albeit it occurs in this instance across provincial administrative boundaries, not across international borders.

¹⁵³ Such criticism is mentioned e.g. in C.J. Chivers: *Dutch Soldiers Stress Restraint in Afghanistan*, The New York Times, April 6, 2007.

The somewhat unfortunate public communication of the mission by the Dutch government might have reinforced this impression. The government in the Hague likes to emphasise, up to this day, that there is a special Dutch approach as such: a way of conducting operations entirely distinctly from that of other lead nations in the south, e.g. Great Britain or Canada.¹⁵⁴ Ministers of the Dutch government, playing key roles in the coordination of the Uruzgan mission in the framework of the “3D approach,” which includes a central role for the portfolios of *defence*, *diplomacy* and *development*, have often voiced several of the main sound-byte talking points of the Dutch mission. These may have had a deceiving effect. Some examples: „we build where we can and we fight when we must;” „we are not there to fight the Taliban but to make them irrelevant.” This is ironic, since such slogans, coupled with a none-too-deep and none-too-widespread public understanding of the conceptual framework of ISAF operations in southern Afghanistan, may have also contributed to false expectations by the Dutch public regarding how dangerous the Uruzgan mission would be. The public was allowed the luxury of the belief that ISAF’s mission could be exclusively focused on reconstruction, while it would be the distinct role of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) forces to fight in Afghanistan. Misperceptions of this nature may have subsequently reinforced a degree of passivity and casualty-aversion in the Dutch strategy. It should be added, however, that Canada and Great Britain’s notably less “soft” communication of offensive operations may have added to the perceived differences in tactics and strategy as well.

In reality, what caused Dutch forces to have much fewer casualties than British and Canadian forces in directly neighbouring provinces, was the complex interplay of several factors that I will discuss later on. Something that could be mentioned as a special element of the Dutch approach, as much as there ever had been a distinct one, is how it happened, according to some indications, at the Netherlands’ will, that a former Talib politician, Abdul Hakim Munib, was appointed as Uruzgan’s governor, by Afghan President Hamed Karzai. Munib filled this position from Spring 2006 to September 2007.

Mention is sometimes made of the openly declared Dutch readiness to have talks with any local leaders, including local Taliban commanders. The Dutch saw such talks as useful in building peace in the province, and thus also in the interest of calm in the ink blot areas. But in fact even the latter feature of the Dutch strategy was not at all unique. Great Britain, too, has in the past had to forge compromises with tribal leaders on the one hand, and with Taliban

¹⁵⁴ Lead nations in the provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, respectively.

commanders on the other, exemplified by the case of British forces' retreat from the town of Musa Qala in the autumn of 2006.¹⁵⁵

Constraints affecting the Dutch application of the common strategy

As much casualty-aversion as there is on the part of the Netherlands, it can be connected to several constraining factors. First of all, one could mention the rather weak domestic support for the mission in the Netherlands. During the debate about the renewal of the mandate for the Uruzgan mission, this translated to a less than complete consensus of the parties making up the current Dutch governing coalition, the mixed, left-right, cabinet of PM Jan Peter Balkenende. The Dutch Labour Party (PvdA by its Dutch acronym) wanted to see more emphasis put on the "softer D" elements of the 3D approach, most notably on development – the portfolio controlled by labour politician Bert Koenders. The parties of the political right that are members of the governing coalition (the Christian Democratic Appeal which is PM Balkenende's party, and the Christian Union) thus had to look to secure even some external support for the Uruzgan mission, further to the right of Dutch politics. They were able to get this by coming to agreement with the parties concerned over pro-military conditions: they committed themselves to providing additional financial resources for the Dutch armed forces. Meanwhile, at the far left of Dutch politics, the Groenlinks (Green Left) party, the Socialist Party, and others, were intensively campaigning "against the war."¹⁵⁶

Here attention has to be drawn to another major constraining factor: the unpleasant financial/material situation of the Dutch military. Equipment is wearing down in Afghanistan faster than in normal conditions, and the steady supply of spare parts as well as the retention of skilled maintenance personnel poses a challenge in the operational environment of Uruzgan. Partly this factor has to do with some of the down-sizing of the Dutch armed forces that has taken place in the last couple of years. For example, the Netherlands have sold Leopard tanks to Canada, F-16 fighter-bombers to Chile and Jordan, and they have backed out of purchasing 30 Tomahawk cruise missiles.

The situation had improved slightly before the government's internal decision about the Uruzgan mission, as a result of a decision that made a special foreign ministry fund

¹⁵⁵ Musa Qala was taken by the Taliban in February 2007, and was taken back from them by U.S., British and Afghan forces in December 2007.

¹⁵⁶ „Troepen terug uit Afghanistan – Geen verlenging missie Uruzgan.” Leaflet of the Groenlinks, the Socialist Party, the Platform against the New War (Platform tegen de Nieuwe Oorlog), and the Coalition Stop the War (Coalitie Stop de Oorlog). From August, 2007; exact date not indicated.

accessible for the Ministry of Defence, for the purposes of operations in Uruzgan. It has also been declared that the Ministry of Finance might grant additional resources to the armed forces, should the need arise.

The third major constraining factor, beyond doubt the most important one, is the lack of a sufficient number of troops on the ground. In late 2007, the Netherlands had as many as 1665 soldiers in Afghanistan, out of whom over 1300 served in Uruzgan. However, only a fraction of the latter force, consisting of about 500 soldiers, made up the truly combat-capable element of the battle group within Task Force Uruzgan. With that many soldiers, it could not prove really feasible to expand the existing ink blots, let alone to create new ones.

The complementary role of partners in Uruzgan

Dutch forces are not the only foreign troops present in Uruzgan province. Most significantly, with regards to the furthest outlying disruption zones, there are special forces (SFs), mostly from the U.S., stationed under an OEF mandate at forward operating bases (FOBs) in some remote districts of the province. There are Australian troops as well in Uruzgan, present with a Special Forces Task Group, that served in late 2007 under the direct command of ISAF's RC-S (Regional Command-South); thus not as an element of Task Force Uruzgan. Australia also had a Reconstruction Task Force (RTF) deployed to the province, made up mostly of combat engineers. The RTF was there up till 2008 as an important partner of the Dutch-led PRT. It had its own security detachment (the RTF Security Task Group: RTF-STG). It itself was an integral part of Task Force Uruzgan.

The role played by Australian forces complements the one played by the Netherlands. The military strategy employed in operations in Uruzgan has become more pro-active by the summer of 2007, with the Australian contribution of special forces. The latter were sent to Uruzgan specifically to carry out disruption operations in the province, although they became operationally ready rather slowly, only by the summer of 2007. Their presence added to the effect of adjustments the Dutch battle group itself had reportedly introduced in April. At the time, it was declared that from then on the battle group would follow an "amoeba" concept, carrying out patrols independently from the PRT's activities every now and then, along less predictable routes, thus more dynamically and unexpectedly challenging adversaries by their presence.

Another important point of nexus between the Australian and Dutch forces' efforts used to be the formers' contribution to reconstruction-type operations through the RTF it deployed to Uruzgan.

The Dutch PRT was conducting projects on its own, too, at the time, including, just for instance, an alternative livelihood program to provide incentives to farmers to switch from cultivating poppy to other cash crops such as saffron; they were involved in building irrigation ditches, in training Afghan auxiliary police etc. Up till the summer of 2007, about 14 million Euros had been spent through the PRT on development. This was largely on par with the sum spent by the Canadian-led PRT in Kandahar over the same one-year period. To this came added the projects carried out by the Australian RTF. For instance, the RTF had a trade training school in Tarin Kowt, teaching young students carpentry and plumber courses. They also trained combat engineers of the Afghan National Army (ANA), they were involved in the construction of a causeway in the vicinity of Tarin Kowt, and they were conducting many smaller-scale, community-based projects, for instance building flood defences for villages.¹⁵⁷ (Since January 2009, the RTF was renamed Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force, MRTF.)

Conclusion: The key challenges in a province like Uruzgan

Some development projects take place even in southern Afghanistan, although not by NGOs. Even ink blots are not entirely secure for the latter, and they would not want to be seen as working closely together with militaries in any case.

The main strategic concern is that the extension of the current ink blot areas is not simply lagging behind expectations, but that prospects may not change definitively for the better in the foreseeable future. Instead, hope may only be offered by the building up of the ANA. During the course of October-November 2007 a significant number of fresh Afghan troops arrived to Uruzgan, from the new 4th Brigade of the ANA. It is their presence that may offer the chance for the more frequent patrolling of contested areas in the future. This is what may prevent a return of insurgents in large numbers e.g. to the crucial Baluchi Pass area, connecting provincial capital Tarin Kowt with district centre Chora. The pass was cleared of insurgents in Operation Spin Ghar, which started on October 25, in 2007, while the mentioned fresh ANA units were arriving to the province. Only definitively preventing the return of

¹⁵⁷ Mick Ryan's study on the RTF's activities: *The Other Side of the COIN – Reconstruction Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, Australian Army Journal, Vol. IV.: No. 2., pp. 125-143.

insurgents in such places can create an opportunity to decisively win the confidence of the population in these contested areas.

Chora's situation is special as it is physically sharply separated from Tarin Kowt, and the ink blot there, by the Baluchi Pass. The area is therefore in a vulnerable position. Dutch forces only committed to relieving Chora and its surroundings from under the pressure of a major Taliban offensive in June 2007 after some hesitation, about whether or not they should give it up rather. The military commander on the ground even had to make the decision to defend Chora independently from the political leadership in The Hague, according to claims by some sources.¹⁵⁸ This is particularly remarkable given how it is known by now that in the villages that the Taliban had managed to occupy for a while from inhabitants who desperately tried to fight back against them, insurgents severely punished local leaders and their relatives for being supportive of ISAF and the Afghan government.¹⁵⁹

Regarding the level of brutality seen in this case, it has to be noted that the Taliban's eagerness to punish these people stemmed partly from the fact that a section of what Western military parlance refers to as insurgents' Main Supply Route stretches across the Baluchi Pass (from the direction of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the FATA, all the way to Helmand province). That is why Chora, at the north-eastern end of the pass is a strategic obstacle in their path. Its population, made up predominantly of Populzai and Barakzai families, is generally unfriendly towards insurgents.¹⁶⁰ While the timing of the Taliban's attack in the area could not have been foreseen exactly, some kind of attack should have been better expected based on available knowledge of all these factors.

However, to add to a balanced assessment of Dutch forces' performance, it should be mentioned that similarly unfortunate developments took place in other, southern Afghan provinces as well. For instance, the Taliban similarly took over Arghandab district in Kandahar province, for a few days, in the wake of a key, pro-government and pro-Canadian tribal leader's – mullah Naqib's – death there, in October 2007. Local security forces and the late mullah Naqib's militia proved weak to defend themselves from the Taliban, and Canadian

¹⁵⁸ See e.g. David Axe: *Will to Win – Dutch Army slugs it out with Taliban despite political misgivings*. Defense Technology International, July-August, 2007, p. 28.

¹⁵⁹ The most detailed report made public on events in Chora last summer so far was prepared jointly by UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan) and AIHRC (Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission): *'AIHRC and UNAMA joint investigation into the civilian deaths caused by the ISAF operation in response to a Taliban attack in Chora district, Uruzgan, on 16th June 2007,'* available at: <http://www.rnw.nl/ppp/AIHRCChora.pdf> (last accessed on January 3, 2008).

¹⁶⁰ Data taken from a 2006 PRT briefing, made available by the U.S. Atlantic Council at http://www.blogger.com/www.acus.org/docs/061212-Lt_Col_Tak_brief.ppt, accessed on April 23, 2009.

Forces for their part did not do enough to deter, prevent or stop a violent intrusion into the area by insurgents.

Such lapses cannot be taken lightly. In the case of the assault on Chora, the Taliban were defeated in their attempt to take the town after air strikes and artillery fire ruined much of the settlement and compounds elsewhere in villages around Chora. Especially local allies' areas, such as district centre Chora, cannot be left without a sufficiently deterring international troop presence.

Currently, as of April, 2009, things in Uruzgan are looking comparatively calm. The Baluchi Pass is safely under the control of Afghan and international forces, with ANA and police bases established near both ends of the valley. In 2008, large-scale events, similar to the Taliban offensive in Chora district in June 2007, did not recur in Uruzgan, nevertheless the possibility of their recurring cannot be ruled out. Perceiving any weakness or negligence, the Taliban may be ready to try their luck again another day, employing swarming tactics, building on the element of surprise.

Even the interpretation of the current relative calm in the province should occur bearing in mind what an Afghan general said to *The Economist* in April 2009, mentioned in the following sentence: "The Afghan army's commander in Uruzgan, General Abdul Hamid, says the Taliban use remote districts of Uruzgan as training areas. So they have a reason to 'live and let live' for now."

Something that could be safely concluded from the case of operations in Uruzgan in 2007, is that

- *firstly*: in order to be able to expand the ink blot areas,
- *secondly*: to be able to reinforce local tribal allies' areas with sufficient troop presence,
- *thirdly*: to enable ISAF to use somewhat less Close Air Support (CAS) which unfortunately tends to produce civilian casualties, and
- *fourthly*: to counter the potentially increasing pressure of an insurgency that seems to have steady logistical and manpower support from areas including Pakistan's tribal agencies,
- *fifthly*: to be able to pro-actively take the fight to insurgent safe-havens,

more foreign troops were needed in Uruzgan. Perhaps even a contribution of several thousand more soldiers, deployed without national caveats restricting their role, could have made a major difference in winning the trust of a critical part of the population already back then.

This shows how static troop levels negotiated in the bargaining processes of domestic political debates and talks with coalition partner countries may simply not correspond to the potentially dynamically changing needs on the ground.

Put simply, over the course of 2007, there was too much disconnect between the political reality in European capitals and the military–operational reality on the ground in Afghanistan. The situation regarding this has since not improved significantly since then.

Discussion: The role of atypical variables in determining coalition contributions

The previous two case studies were presented with a modest ambition: to show the weakness of the reductionism inherent in the tendency to explain coalition contributions in terms of a direct threat–policy nexus. By way of a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of several key issues, the previous chapter looked to show that assuming such a nexus is not objectively justifiable. Sometimes decision-makers may still act according to a threat-balancing logic, but they do not do so all the time. Exactly for this reason, this chapter’s purpose was to demonstrate in its two extensive case studies that a wide array of other factors are also at play in shaping countries’ coalition policies.

Below is a non-comprehensive list of some of the peculiar-seeming determinants highlighted in the Polish and the Dutch contexts:

1. lack of civil society mobilisation against Poland’s ISAF commitments;
2. Poland’s geopolitical context: concerns about Russia and mistrust towards Germany;
3. the pressing financial situation of the Dutch armed forces;
4. the Dutch government’s recognition of the need to realise the objectives laid down in the Afghanistan Compact;
5. the demand that allies meet expectations regarding a critical degree of solidarity (seen as playing a role in both Canada’s and the Netherlands’ decision to renew their respective mandates in southern Afghanistan);
6. U.S. assistance to Poland in force protection;
7. Minister Radosław Sikorski’s personal influence in shaping Poland’s Afghanistan policy, or a perception thereof;

8. “scandals” affecting public support to ISAF commitments in both the Polish and the Dutch cases.

In fact, the interpretive frameworks presented in this chapter’s earlier overview of intra-coalition conflicts fully account for all but three of the factors listed here. There seems to be only one factor that calls for a broadening of the initial perspective, to let us accommodate it. One by one, the following more general explaining principles are rendered to the items on the list above:

1. no civil society opposition = executive autonomy (Bennett, Lepgold and Unger, 1994);
2. geo-politics = alliance dependence (Bennett, Lepgold and Unger, 1994);
3. the military’s finances = organisational interests (Bennett, Lepgold and Unger, 1994);
4. the need to realise the objectives set = balance of threat (Bennett, Lepgold and Unger, 1994) and *pacta sunt servanda* (Wilkins, 2006);
5. ally support demanded = fear of abandonment/entrapment and the expectation of equitable burden-sharing (Wilkins, 2006);
6. ally (U.S.) assistance expected in force protection by Poland = fear of entrapment and the expectation of equitable burden-sharing (Wilkins, 2006);
7. perceptions regarding Sikorski’s role = fear of entrapment.

Some explanatory remarks. Regarding #5: “entrapment” entails having to maintain a difficult commitment all on one’s own, out of the consideration that if no one helps it will still be an imperative to stay, in a moral sense. Regarding #6: “entrapment,” in a broadened sense, refers to soldiers who might die because of inadequate protection, in a mission in which their country had no direct interest to partake. Regarding #7: if we could somehow deal with the challenge of the counter-factual, and show that without Minister Sikorski Poland would not have made a similarly significant commitment in Afghanistan (unlikely in my view), then this factor should be associated with something else. Instead, “fear of entrapment” is the *deeper*, more profound reason named here, too: the *perceptions* of U.S. influence over Sikorski’s actions connect to the rampant impression that Poland is fighting a war in Afghanistan that it has no direct interests to fight.

But there is also something else in Sikorski’s case: a fundamental reason why neither Bennett, Lepgold and Unger’s, nor Wilkins,’ interpretive frameworks account for this (or

rather *his*) sort of variable. These frameworks concern two different levels of inquiry in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), namely the systemic and the state levels (e.g. entrapment and alliance dependence concern the systemic level, while executive autonomy and organisational interests are relevant on the state level).

Coalition burden-sharing theory has to be seen embedded into wider FPA. Wilkins' and Bennett, Lepgold and Unger's studies offer pre-selected sets of variables to look at in the analysis of coalition contributions, from within a larger set of variables generally relevant to FPA: the latter's tri-level agenda is also interested in the individual level. The examination of the role played by a decision-maker like Sikorski falls on the individual level of analysis – zooming in, as it does, on the decision-maker's person, background, psyche and cognitive processes (Kiss J., 2009: 195-209).

"Scandals" of the sort that were discussed in the Polish case matter through the effect they have on domestic politics. This effect should not be overestimated. Should it regularly recur, however, it (the arising "normative difference") is seen by some as potentially undermining foreign missions – for example by Gil Merom (2003).

In general, the following tentative characterisation may be offered regarding the basic dynamics of intra-coalition politics. Perhaps they can best be described as taking place on multiple levels (these are not meant to be identical with FPA's three levels of analysis, previously described). These levels are the following:

- § the level of the trans-Atlantic decision-making community, willing progress in Afghanistan, but so far without securing the means for it;
- § the level of political elites in individual coalition member countries, responsive both to foreign peer pressure and to the pressure of their domestic publics, with a risk-averse reluctance to show leadership on a number of key foreign policy issues (including taking ownership of Afghanistan policy);
- § the level of publics *seemingly* intent on bearing less and less costs for military purposes;
- § militaries looking to secure their organisational survival.

This multi-level dynamic is a major structural challenge for all ISAF countries in one way or another. The roots of this challenge are more complicated than a formula pitting weak states against strong societies in the fight for the autonomous conduct of policy. On occasions, the observer has the impression that public opposition is merely instrumentalised by heads of state and government for use in intra-coalition bargaining processes. See Kiss J., 2000: 200 on the "my-hands-are-tied" strategy, as played by secretary of state Henry Kissinger in the past.

When European (British, Dutch, German, Polish, Hungarian and other) politicians implicitly or explicitly suggest to their publics that NATO is serving mostly American interests in Afghanistan, they may as well be regarded as playing a version of this game.

All complex details of coalition politics discussed so far look amazingly simple, however, when one tries to assess Pakistan's role in Bennett, Lepgold and Unger's terms. Pakistan is a "major non-NATO ally" (MNNA) of the U.S. since 2004¹⁶¹ (this is a status Pakistan shares with only thirteen other countries). Yet there is hardly the level of trust between it and the U.S. that one could expect on the basis of the MNNA designation (see Fair, 2009). Instead, Pakistan's military and its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) are extensively supporting a number of insurgent groups, including the Taliban, and are thus "contributing" to coalition operations in Afghanistan in a *negative* sense.¹⁶² This is happening at the same time as Pakistan is, at least half-heartedly, fighting jihadists on its own soil; while it is allowing U.S. drone strikes to take place in its territory against al-Qaida targets; and while the country provides the vital physical access to Afghanistan, reminiscent of the bottleneck role that Egypt was mentioned as playing earlier on in the chapter, in operations in the Gulf Region.

¹⁶¹ *Bush names Pakistan major ally.* BBC, June 17, 2004, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3814013.stm, accessed on April 25, 2009.

¹⁶² Ordinary pieces of journalism bumping into the oft-found Pakistani thread can attest to this (such as this one: *Taliban leader killed by British forces in Afghanistan was a Pak Army officer*, ANI, October 12, 2008, available at http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/taliban-leader-killed-by-british-forces-in-afghanistan-was-a-pak-army-officer_100106279.html, accessed on April 12, 2009). Brilliant pieces of investigative journalism from the last decades (e.g. Moreau – Hirsh, 2007) can also be cited here. And so can academic studies (Gregory, 2007), and excellent books on, or related to, the subject (Hussain, 2008; Rashid, 2009; Zahab – Roy, 2004). Indirectly even logical reasoning can be used to back up this statement. Suffice it to refer to the increasing frequency of U.S. government leaks about evidence, collected by U.S. intelligence, regarding extensive ISI support to insurgents. See Mark Mazzetti – Eric Schmitt: *Afghan Strikes by Taliban Get Pakistan Help*, U.S. Aides Say. *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/26/world/asia/26tribal.html>, accessed on April 21, 2009.

Chapter Four

The sequence of state-building and related complications in the case of Afghanistan

Introduction

The ultimate objective of state-building is the creation of a political entity, formally sovereign over a certain geographical area, that satisfies the needs of both its citizens and the outside world. This imagined entity shall provide stability for its citizens, sparing them of arbitrary use of its own powers, of the harsher consequences of social conflicts, of epidemics and other threats to public health, and of absolute poverty: in general, sparing them of the miseries of life. At the same time, the outside world also expects a kind of stability – a different kind. From its perspective, the most important expectation is that the state, as an abstract agent, should conduct itself in a reasonable, calculable, reliable way, conforming to the fundamental norms of interstate relations (referred to as “benevolence” in Chapter One). It is also important that the state be strong enough to ensure that no actors use its territory to threaten the security of the outside world, contrary to the state’s intentions (referred to as the capability of “credible commitment” in Chapter One). For instance, the state shall make sure that its citizens (or any other state’s citizens) do not export drugs from its territory, or that they do not prepare for, or carry out, terrorist or insurgent attacks from its territory against other states and their citizens.

In Kasnyik’s useful expression, the end-goal is the establishment of the “Holy Trinity” of democracy, market economy and civil society (Kasnyik, 2008: 10). This is what is conceived of as the basic condition for a state to be able to fulfil the above listed requirements. But the *process* of state-building is not so elaborately conceptualised.

Before I would shed light on what this entails, it first needs to be clarified what I am not referring to at this point. We have quite a clear conception of what shall form part of the process of state-building. For instance, it is self-evident that the state’s territory has to be cleared of mines and other unexploded ordnance in the wake of an armed conflict. Or, if we want a representative democracy, the necessary political institutions have to be designed first, in a sufficiently legitimate process. Ensuring that legitimacy for the long run, in a wide sense, necessitates even a process of “nation-building,” to ensure the social cohesion required for the functioning of the institutions concerned (Rada, 2006). Altogether, a more or less consensual “checklist” of tasks related to state-building does exist in practitioners’ minds: an agenda, the items of which most of them would like to see “check-marked” by the end of the process.

Still, there are a lot of debates about the “how” of state-building, stemming from a number of dilemmas (Paris – Sisk, 2007; Bollettino, 2007). It is debated, for instance, how much and in what way the actions of the different actors involved in state-building need to be coordinated, or if such coordination is necessary at all. Others raise the issue of how long a state should receive direct external assistance, and how much it should be relieved of its burdens throughout this period (Nixon, 2007). Those arguing for brief and low-cost state-building interventions caution us that a long and costly attempt at the consolidation of the objectives of a state-building intervention may be counter-productive. In their view, it might undermine the sustainable independent viability of the very state that one is looking to aid. As it is put by some in the discourse, these are questions concerning the intervening states’ desirable “footprint” (mostly the size of this footprint) in the target country.

In this chapter, I will argue that such questions about the desirable footprint are largely superficial, when posed in the way they generally are. I do not claim the same with regards to the issue of coordination. I regard, as the most important challenge, the appropriate chronological arrangement of state-building tasks. If an appropriate order is established, the best for *context-specific* efficiency, then the exigencies in the individual phases of this “road-map” should ideally dictate the required size of the footprint themselves. State-building assistance should last as long as tasks logically succeeding each other require it to last, with all of the successive phases accomplished one by one, costs what it costs.

Under certain conditions, it is imaginable that a state-building intervention may succeed without the issue of “sequencing” addressed at all. But the logical arrangement and prioritisation of tasks does render success more likely. Where conditions are less fortunate, debates about the required size of the state-building footprint may divert attention away from the real causes of failure: e.g. from having invested insufficiently in executing a given task, and thus not accomplishing a key phase in the state-building process.

This is just what is currently observable in the case of Afghanistan. The current chapter, in order to demonstrate this, presents an overview of what contradictions and inconsistencies improper or lacking sequencing leads to in practice. It looks to catalogue these under a more or less comprehensive list of categories, to be outlined in the body of the argumentation itself (under “categories” and “issues” headings).

Of course, these contradictions among different aims or tasks related to state-building did not go unnoticed with other observers, either. Hence I can also quote, and rely on, already existing other sources on the topic - I do not have to rely exclusively on my own monitoring

of developments in Afghanistan. The discourse even includes false assumptions, reckoning with non-existent contradictions and trade-offs, which will also be pointed out.

Modelling appropriate sequencing

From simple intuition to the systematic collection and analysis of the available empirical experience, we may devise models of state-building using numerous different approaches, and we may thus envision different schematic concepts of an appropriate sequence. However, it is not my intention to do this here in the sense of offering a universal recipe. I briefly refer to the BIEN model¹⁶³ outlined by Péter Rada in a recent (2009) issue of the Hungarian journal *Foreign Policy Review* (Külügyi Szemle), to mention but one example of thinking about the right sequence. Otherwise debate, about the advantages and the disadvantages of different schemes of sequencing, is very much possible. With modest ambition, this chapter only looks to show that in the ideal case practitioners should come to agreement with regards to the need for *some* sequencing and subsequently for *some* coordination, to make sure that any reasonable-looking sequence that is agreed on be actually implemented.

If we take a look at the i-ANDS document (Afghanistan's interim development strategy that used to be valid for the period up to 2008; see i-ANDS, 2006: 20), according to its scheme, the various actors of state-building ought to have achieved major results in the fields of public security (part of which had to be counterinsurgency), counter-narcotics and economic development, at the same time. Endeavouring to achieve goals in all these fields parallel to each other, simultaneously and even in the same physical space, can pose major difficulties, as I will demonstrate.

Observations from the Afghan case seem to reinforce the thesis that “peace-building,” a potentially meaningful concept, is used in the discourse of practitioners merely as a deliberately vague, catch-all term that can, so to say, “rally around the flag” all the different participants and stake-holders of a state-building intervention, be they governments, government agencies, militaries, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs or private firms.

Its vagueness allows for everyone to do what they are best at, according to their own organisational DNA, while everyone, of course, hopes that by way of acting like this, collectively, we may arrive at the desired overall end-goal of the larger intervention itself. Somehow. But this is just what becomes very difficult when faced with an insurgency.

¹⁶³ BIEN stands for **B**asic needs, **I**nstitution-building, **E**conomic development and **N**ation-building (slightly modified from Rada, 2009: 66, footnote #7).

Category #1: Being simultaneously tight-fisted and short-sighted

The accomplishment of tasks related to state-building is often hampered by the actions of the intervening states themselves, stemming from their either wrongly conceived or at least short-sightedly formulated interests.

Issue #1/1: Economic interests of the intervening states vs. the foundation/revitalisation of a self-sustainable economy

One of the most basic contradictions comes up with regards to economic development. State-building programs dictated by liberal democracies aim, under the title of “integration” into the world economy, at “building” a protection-free economy and a streamlined state administration. In the case of Afghanistan, an aim of donors is to hasten the country's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), even while the country's general tariff levels are already comparatively low, relative to those of the neighbouring countries. This, in fact, already puts (would-be) producers of all kinds at a disadvantage there, since in Afghanistan prices are generally affected by the ongoing armed conflicts. They include a surcharge, as both financing, production and distribution, essential components of most economic activities, are made more expensive there. That is why it may be worth to import even carpets to Afghanistan, in spite of all the tradition of carpet-weaving there is.

At the same time, the United States, for example, is only ready to provide unilateral trade preferences (duty-free access beyond the Generalised System of Preferences regime) to the country, a country that it nominally looks to “assist,” in the case of so-called non-trade-sensitive items. Even the recently proposed legislation about the ambitiously named “Reconstruction Opportunity Zones,” introduced in the U.S. Senate in 2008 by Senator Maria Cantwell, co-sponsored by Senators Orrin Hatch, Kit Bond, Joe Lieberman and Chuck Hagel, offers such preferences only regarding “non-sensitive” products from Afghanistan (also from Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas).¹⁶⁴

The structural determinants of economic relations may in fact be disadvantageous to the so-called “beneficiary” of economic assistance. The development of industry is something

¹⁶⁴ See „Cantwell Urges Swift Senate Passage of her Reconstruction Opportunity Zones bill in Senate Finance Hearing” at Senator Cantwell's website, dated June 12, 2008; at <http://cantwell.senate.gov/news/record.cfm?id=299087>, accessed on May 2, 2009; also: „Reconstruction Opportunity Zones enhance global security and promote Afghanistan's economic development,” The Embassy of Afghanistan, Washington D.C. (U.S.), available at <http://embassyofafghanistan.org/03.18.2008roz.html>, undated, accessed on May 2, 2009.

the West does not really reckon with as an option in places like Afghanistan. It does not fit with the Western concept of globally sustainable development, and with (partly well-founded) preconceptions about the inevitably poorer, uncompetitive quality of indigenous “third-world” industry. This is unjust to a degree, as the latter is weakened by trade rules dictated largely by the West, and it has to produce in competition with globally optimising corporations aided by the general weakening of trade barriers, able to take advantage of both economies of scale and economies of scope (Szentes, 1999: 573). In such a set-up, effectively only foreign investment can provide for a more diverse economy: one that is not dependent merely on subsistence activities, cash-crop agriculture and natural resource extraction. However, this investment is not flowing to countries characterised by political instability and with the degree of corruption that is normally to be expected in resource-scarce environments. In the place of foreign investment, none-too-surprisingly, one gets an economy where the production of opiates or hashish reckon as normal agro-industrial activities.

In a private conversation with a former leading World Bank economist in 2007, I was asked, in reply to my questions concerning the instrumentality of Afghanistan’s hasty WTO integration, “But who wants industry in Afghanistan?”

Ironically, the masterminds of the November 6, 2007 bombing attack at the New Baghlan sugar factory likely had, as one of their aims, exactly the deterrence of would-be investors in mind, to keep them back from investing in the relatively stable-looking northern provinces of Afghanistan. Probably that is partly why they targeted the opening ceremony for the then-recently upgraded sugar factory: a German investment.¹⁶⁵ Thus they demonstrated expectations about the importance of industry in Afghanistan rather different from those of the World Bank.

Issue #1/2: Returning refugees vs. political stability and counterinsurgency

After the October 2001 intervention in Afghanistan, a number of Western countries seemed to find the situation in Afghanistan apt for the return of Afghan refugees in their territory at the time. As already noted in Chapter Two, Australia signed a memorandum of understanding about this with the then-interim Afghan administration in May 2002.

For another example, Iran – the second-largest in-taker of Afghan refugees after Pakistan – is playing what sometimes appears to be “political football” since 2007, with the

¹⁶⁵ At least indirectly this is certainly true. The opening ceremony was important enough to draw an Afghan parliamentary delegation to New Baghlan – the delegation that was the primary target of the attack. See coverage of related developments at the Ministry of State Failure blog, my weblog, at <http://statefailure.blogspot.com/search/label/sugar%20factory%20bombing>.

forcible returning to Afghanistan of large numbers of refugees and other, unregistered Afghans in its territory. According to at least one source who interviewed insurgents in the area (Shahzad, 2007), some of the returnees may have joined insurgents' ranks in places like Shindand district in western Herat province. This is happening while otherwise instability in Afghanistan is not really in Iran's interest – reason enough to conclude that most likely it is occurring not only out of strategic considerations (with the intention to cause difficulties to the U.S. in Afghanistan), but also, perhaps primarily, out of the desire, rampant in Iranian society, to get rid of unwanted aliens in their country, and of the costs associated with them.

Issue #1/3: Counter-terrorism vs. state-building

Directly post-9/11, U.S. behaviour was characterised by what could be termed “(misconceived) anti-humanitarianism.” The U.S. – together with its European (and other) partners, it has to be stressed – simply did not devote sufficient resources to state-building in Afghanistan, handling it as an economy-of-force mission. To a degree, under-investment characterises the ongoing state-building effort there up to this day. See *Figures 4.1., 4.2., 4.3., 4.4. and 4.5.* regarding this crucial statement, as well as Ahmed Rashid's book on “the United States and the failure of nation-building” in Afghanistan's wider region: essentially an account of deliberate, miscalculated negligence in U.S. policy (2008).

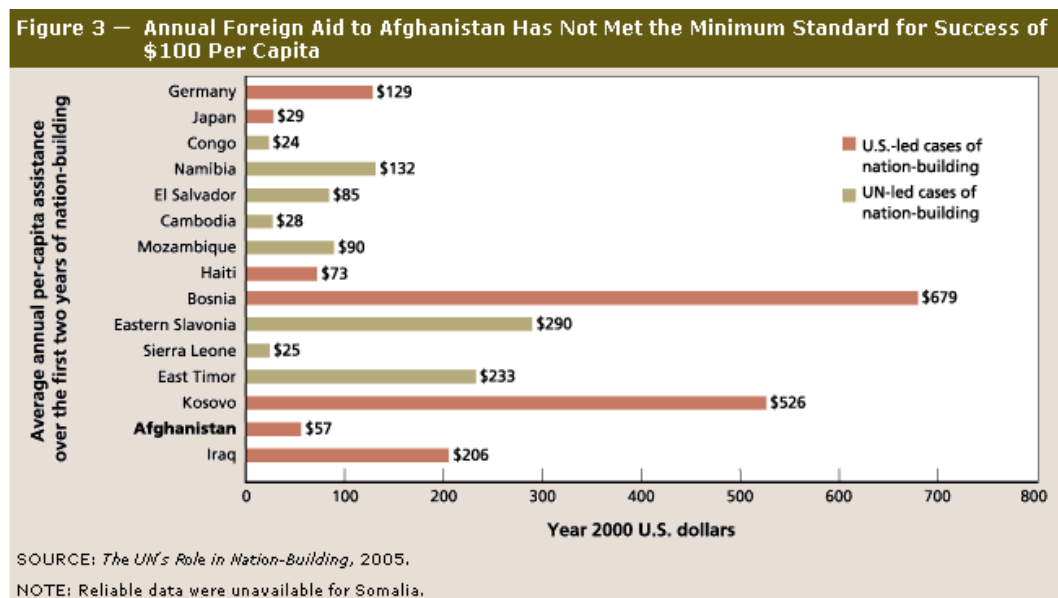


Figure 4.1.: Per capita aid in a selection of target countries of state-building interventions in the first two post-intervention years: note the difference with Bosnia and Kosovo. In: Godges, 2007; originally in Dobbins et al. (2005).

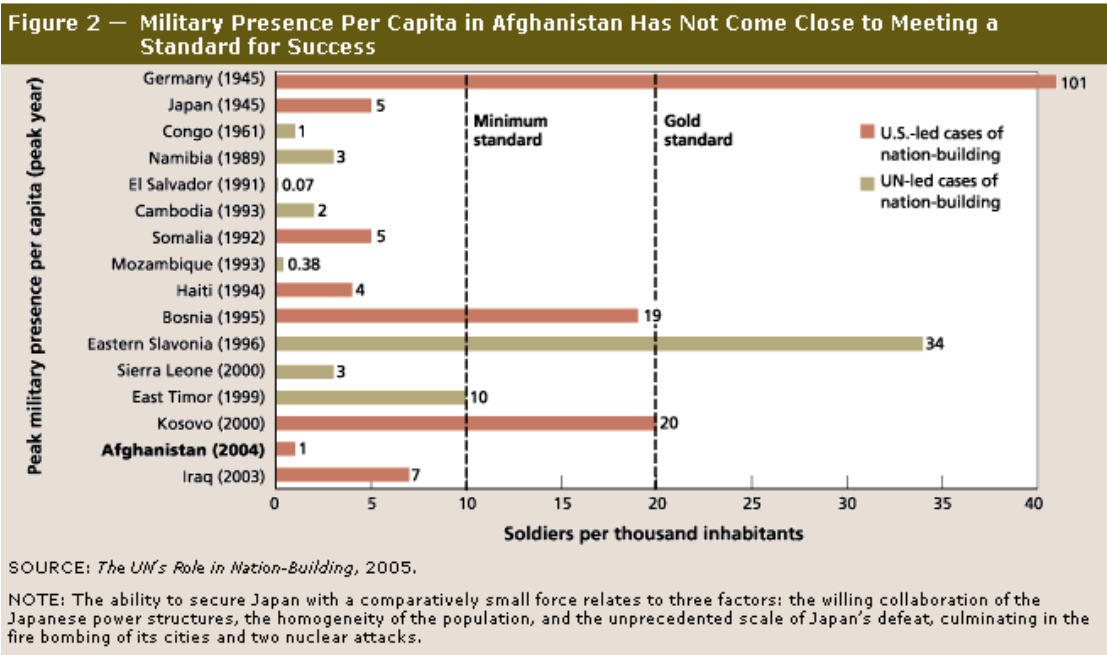


Figure 4.2.: Per capita foreign military presence in the peak-year, in a selection of target countries of state-building interventions, plus (this has to be corrected with regards to the source of this figure) Afghanistan, where we have yet to see the peak-year in fact. Do note the difference, significant in any case, with Bosnia, Eastern Slavonia (Croatia) and Kosovo, based on the year 2004 in Afghanistan – as late as three years post-intervention. In: Godges, 2007; originally in Dobbins et al. (2005).

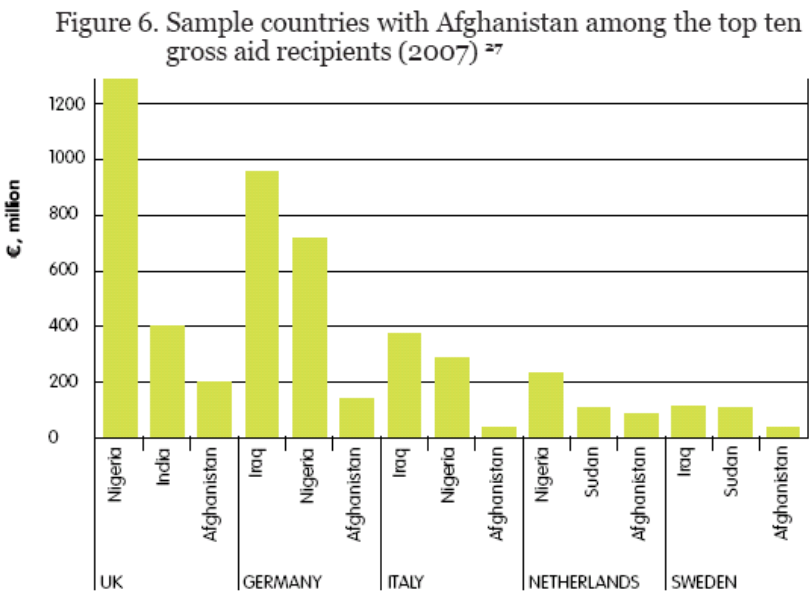


Figure 4.3.: A sample of donor countries with Afghanistan among their top ten gross aid recipients, compared in terms of aid given to other recipients of the respective donors, showing a dispreference of Afghanistan relative to (oil-rich) countries like Nigeria and Iraq (Korski, 2009: 11).

Figure 7. European assistance to Afghanistan in €, million
January 2002 – March 2008 ²⁸

	PLEDGED	COMMITTED	DISBURSED
EC	1,554.40	1,225.10	1,090.28
UK	1,050.36	1,290.21	1,098.98
GERMANY	436.20	895.68	682.71
NETHERLANDS	360.96	360.96	344.05
ITALY	257.05	310.09	353.96
SWEDEN	189.50	218.42	218.42
DENMARK	175.03	175.03	178.74
SPAIN	116.31	47.12	20.51
FINLAND	69.30	69.30	69.13
FRANCE	31.15	91.22	87.23
BELGIUM	30.03	33.82	31.87
IRELAND	16.37	8.56	8.02
LUXEMBOURG	6.94	2.34	1.44
GREECE	5.89	0.23	0.22
PORTUGAL	0.96	1.73	1.17
POLAND	0.91	0.83	0.83

Figure 4.4.: European Commission assistance, and assistance from individual European countries to Afghanistan. Nominally pledged, effectively committed, and actually disbursed sums for the entire period between early 2002 and Spring 2008, showing at times major discrepancies between what was pledged and what was eventually disbursed: note the cases of the EC, Spain and Greece for negative examples (and to show that not only major donors such as the U.S. should be kept in mind when it comes to under-investment in Afghanistan) [Korski, 2009: 11].

Figure 3. EC aid to Iraq and Afghanistan 2002–2007 ²⁵

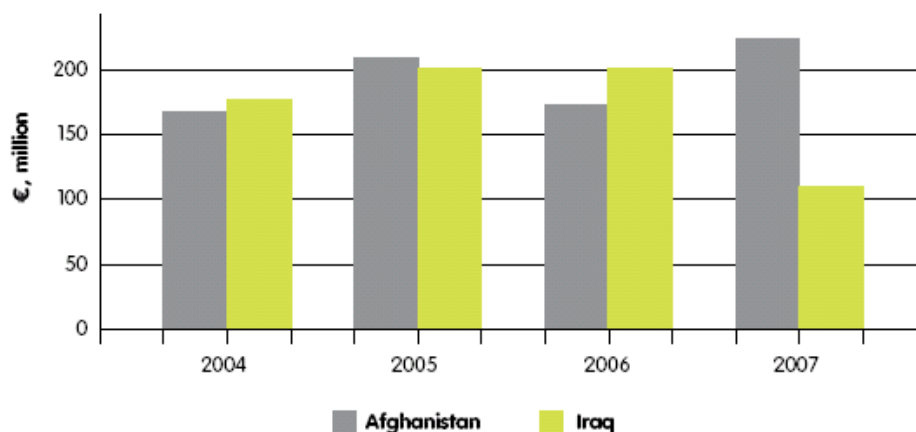


Figure 4.5.: European Commission aid to Iraq and Afghanistan compared, for the years 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. Note years 2004 and 2006, in light of the *supposedly* very different U.S. and European approaches to the issue of Iraq (Korski, 2009: 10).

Behind this generally tight-fisted approach, one encounters the initial U.S. belief that while state-building would be a noble objective in Afghanistan, it would be too costly an endeavour, and might thus divert attention and money from what is really in the West's interest: trying to weaken trans-national terrorist networks in what looks like a "globalised Islamist insurgency" to some (Kilcullen, 2005).

Even worse was to come, however, with the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Already the preparations for operations in Iraq drew away much needed resources and attention from Afghanistan.

In February 2002, Colin Powell, then U.S. secretary of state, along with the State Department's senior staff, was recommending that U.S. soldiers be added to the ISAF coalition, set up in December 2001, to provide security in Kabul and its direct vicinity. In his influential book, "Descent Into Chaos," Ahmed Rashid claims that several European and U.S. diplomats told him about informal talks at the time, about how a U.S.-aided European force, comprised of about 30,000 troops, could have started operating even beyond Kabul's area, if only U.S. support would have been a given. Ryan Crocker, the first post-2001 U.S. ambassador in Kabul would later claim that all such initiatives were actively opposed by the Pentagon, which saw state-building, and costly international involvement in it, as unnecessary (Rashid, 2008: 134). In the period of 2003-2008, in Iraq, the U.S. then ended up directly spending over \$600 billion from the U.S. federal budget on military operations and assistance (potentially even as much as \$3 billion, according to more radical estimates which take into account more indirect costs as well [Stiglitz, 2008]). In April 2003, at a meeting in the Pech valley of Kunar province, Osama bin Laden reportedly said: „Get Americans in Iraq before they get us in Afghanistan." This is stated by a Pakistani journalist, Hamid Mir, who interviewed bin Laden on several occasions since 9/11.¹⁶⁶

Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, the U.S. focused so much on counter-terrorism, that in Rashid's view "the real hindrance was still the CIA, which even in 2003 was deciding what projects other agencies should undertake on the basis of how those projects would affect the war on terrorism" (Rashid, 2008: 185).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Hamid Mir: „How Osama bin Laden Escaped death 4 times after 9/11." *Canada Free Press*, September 8, 2007, available at <http://www.canadafreepress.com/2007/mir090907.htm>, accessed on May 8, 2009.

¹⁶⁷ Rashid also quotes Peter Tomsen, a former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, who testified to the U.S. Congress in October 2003 exactly the same thing: that the CIA was the main hindrance to reconstruction. Rashid cites, as a concrete example, the case of the planned construction of the Afghan ring-road – plans that were supported neither by the CIA, nor by the Pentagon, and were only acted on once President Bush gave his personal support to the idea in November 2002 (Rashid, 2008: 185-186).

This is ironic.¹⁶⁸ At the same time it is also very problematic, as this is just why today we are faced with the possibility of the pre-2001 terrorist sanctuary re-locating (again) to Afghanistan, in case of a premature withdrawal of ISAF forces from the country. It is partly a consequence of the “light footprint” approach, partly a result of the open search for an “exit” from Afghanistan, which allowed and motivated the Taliban to first regroup in Pakistan and then regain a foothold in Afghanistan, aided by the Pakistani Army, which sought to hang onto them as strategic proxies.

Category #2: Acting in the manner of short-sighted bulls in a china shop

Mentioning the asymmetrically advantageous nature of economic relations or the hasty returning of refugees, not many would doubt that in the short run there may be clashes of interests between the intervening states and the target country. At times, however, ironically, it is exactly on the basis of supposedly shared interests that measures are taken which may, in the end, be detrimental to the interests of all parties concerned – but for the target country the most perhaps.

Issue #2/1: Counter-narcotics vs. counterinsurgency

A restrictive interpretation of counter-narcotics, combined with subsequently awkward action against the cultivation of opium poppies in Afghanistan, clashes with the more urgent needs of the counterinsurgency campaign there. A most direct and unpleasant consequence of poppy eradication is that people are left indebted, unemployed and consequently without livelihood. In search of an alternative, they may end up joining the insurgency or drugs lords’ militias, simply to earn a living.

In a country-wide poll of the Charney Research Group, in Helmand province – a major hub of the production of opiates and of the insurgency alike – 25% of respondents said that

¹⁶⁸ Something that is not merely ironic, but downright absurd, is how the United States did not devote sufficient resources to hunting down al-Qaida figures while they were still in Afghanistan, directly after 9/11. In November 2001, as thousands of Taliban and many of their Pakistani and Arab allies were encircled in Kunduz by Northern Alliance forces, the U.S. did not put its own troops on the ground to take a central role in mopping up this important pocket of resistance – while they did allow the Pakistani military to fly out Pakistani advisors of the Taliban, who lifted out, together with those, many Taliban, and even Arab volunteers. The U.S. provided an air corridor to these Pakistan-bound flights, seeing a need to respect Pakistani interests (Rashid, 2008: 90-93). The next month (December 2001), again mostly substitute forces, Afghan militias with a handful of U.S. special forces, were deployed against Arab volunteers holed up in the cave-fortress complexes of the Tora Bora mountain range. Osama bin Laden managed to flee to Pakistan from there as a result of this, as did 600 to 800 other Arab militants (Rashid, 2008: 98-99). In the end, the counter-sanctuary intervention carried out by the U.S. in Afghanistan, in 2001, merely pushed a lot of al-Qaida and Taliban fighters out to Pakistan’s border region.

they know of a “farming family” who was forced to give up a child to creditors at some point to even debts, after their fields had been eradicated; 52% knew of someone who fled the province because of debts; and 38% knew of people who sympathised more with the Taliban after they had been victims of poppy eradication (cited in Rubin – Sherman, 2008: 12). Under such extreme circumstances, to destroy the produce of poorer farmers just before the harvest time, when revenues could be made, is cruel and counterproductive. It is not beneficial even from a narrow counter-narcotics perspective. Opiate production in all of Afghanistan cannot be stopped by such means. The only result for now is that it concentrates more and more in the insurgency-struck areas of the country, while the production of hashish (less concerning for the West) takes over in many places elsewhere (UNODC, 2009: 11).

Three important concepts shall be highlighted here, for further insights about the issue. One is the notion of “*sustainable* crop reduction,” mentioned in the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS, 2006). This can only be provided for, if there truly exist opportunities for alternative livelihood. It is not sufficient to create merely an incentive structure that will get farmers to substitute their illicit crops with something that can be legally produced. Afghanistan’s whole economy on the one hand, and the partly isolated, local economic micro-systems on the other hand, all depend on revenues from the production and the trade of drugs. Farmers are but cogwheels in a large machine. The foundations of an entire functioning, alternative economy would need to be laid. This entails neither mere “development efforts,” nor simple corrective measures against “deviant” members of society who are “accomplices” to organised crime, as common views have it. Crop reduction, even if it is achieved by economic means, can only be interpreted as “counter-development.” It looks to replace an existing form of livelihood with an alternative one that is supposedly more favourable from the point of view of everyone’s common interests in the long run. For the intervening countries supporting crop reduction, the main goal is to eradicate their own domestic drugs markets – although to imagine this as possible seems far-fetched even in the long run, as shown in Chapter Two. For Afghans, including the farmers, long-term advantages may derive from a reduction in the number of Afghan opiate addicts¹⁶⁹ and a reduction of other negative consequences of rampant drug abuse.

¹⁶⁹ One of the ways in which Islamist radicals look to reconcile the production of drugs and the general condemnation of their consumption in the Islamic world, is by claiming that drugs will just corrupt the immoral enemies of Islam, while the trade also finances the jihad against them, as an added benefit (Tahir, 2008; Rashid, 2008: 317). But in fact, there are over 400,000 opiate addicts in Afghanistan, too, estimated at 1.4 percent of the population there (Emery, 2008).

However, drugs lords' militias are major employers, and they cannot be surgically wiped out from the rest of the economy for now. Crop eradication endangers people's livelihoods, especially in the insurgency-struck areas where the infrastructure of agriculture (that of financing, production, and distribution) cannot be reconstructed in the short run. Neither is it possible in these areas to reinforce alternative, licit economic activities, characterised in general by lower returns on investment. To highlight just one of the major challenges, the banking system in Afghanistan is extremely under-developed, and farmers get loans mainly in the form of the so-called *salaam* payments offered by the drugs lords. In southern Uruzgan province, there is only one bank, the local branch of the Afghanistan Central Bank, in provincial capital Tarin Kowt. Even the roof of that bank had holes in it back in 2007, according to an aid worker who visited it at the time, and mice were damaging the records. See a photo of the bank branch attached here.¹⁷⁰



Photo 4.1. The Uruzgan branch of the Afghanistan Central Bank in February 2007. Photo taken by “Eric,” an aid worker, published at <http://yearinafghanistan.blogspot.com/2007/02/only-bank-in-uruzgan.html>, accessed on May 4, 2009.

A major issue, used as a counter-argument, against a more cautious approach to counter-narcotics, is whether the insurgency itself may be financed *primarily* by the drugs trade. If it would be so, it could make sense to even redouble counter-narcotics efforts. At the moment this is what NATO and the U.S. are increasingly prepared to do. But the statedly strong drugs trade–insurgency nexus does not seem to be easily verifiable in fact. To the contrary.

¹⁷⁰ „The only bank in Uruzgan,” blog entry, at A Year in Afghanistan, at <http://yearinafghanistan.blogspot.com/2007/02/only-bank-in-uruzgan.html>, accessed on May 4, 2009.

Such inference can be reached for example through indirect reasoning – I will quote Antonio Giustozzi here, to demonstrate this (Giustozzi, 2007: 88, footnotes omitted):

“Others, including most foreign diplomats, maintain that drugs remain a secondary source of revenue for the Taliban and that there is little evidence of them encouraging the farmers to grow poppies and of their involvement in the trade. This author tends to side with (this) group for three reasons. First, the traffickers are unlikely to be willing to give up a major share of their profits to the Taliban, particularly in the presence of overproduction and of competition from corrupt police officers and increasingly even ANA officers encouraging their favours. Second, if substantial amounts of money were turned to field commanders this would likely have resulted in a fragmentation of the Taliban chain of command, as commanders would become more autonomous.”

For another indicator, U.S. officials are, at least in private, behind close doors, or anonymously, ready to voice that individuals and charities in the Gulf states are still the primary financers of the Taliban insurgency.¹⁷¹

Issue #2/2: Force protection vs. counterinsurgency

To reduce troops' casualties from insurgent attacks, technological innovations, rigorous security protocols and loose rules of engagement (RoE) can be of use in the short run. In the long run, this is more likely not to be the case, however.

A force that is focused exclusively on its operational security will find it increasingly hard to achieve goals even on the operational level. Its intelligence capabilities will be reduced, as the local populace may turn resentful about the heavy-handed conduct of the soldiers. People may offer less information to the troops, and it thus becomes more difficult to gain foreknowledge of attacks. More armour does not necessarily help in reducing casualties, either. Guerrillas may simply change tactics or – if their supplies do not inhibit them – they can use more explosives to maintain the same level of lethality in ambushes. If a patrol uses increased firepower in retaliation, or breaks out of “kill zones” at ambush sites at high speed, putting by-standers' lives at risk, insurgents will be able to capitalise on this in their propaganda.

¹⁷¹ See James Blitz – Daniel Dombey: „US claims Gulf donors fund Taliban fighters,” March 25, 2009, available at http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b1787f4c-197a-11de-9d34-0000779fd2ac.html?nclink_check=1, accessed on May 4, 2009. Here U.S. special envoy for South Asia Richard Holbrooke is said, by an unnamed Western diplomat, to have referred to intelligence at a NATO ambassadorial meeting, according to which “the prime source of funding for the Taliban is not from narcotics but from private individuals in the Gulf region.”

The problem in the long run is not simply that insurgents can gain from this, and that therefore force protection measures may be counter-productive for the state-building effort. In fact, they may be counter-productive *even as force protection measures*. More casualties may be the result for the troops even.

This is a major challenge in counterinsurgency (COIN). In Chapter Three, I discussed two fundamentally different schools of COIN: the enemy-centric and the population-centric approaches. There are major problems for democracies in applying either of them. The former is too brutal, while the latter is seemingly too risky for one's troops. The approach actually taken can therefore be characterised as a "garrison mentality" (Foust, 2009), which one could also describe as a "force-protection-centric" approach. Currently, this approach is arguably characteristic of the majority of ISAF contingents, to a lesser degree even of the U.S.¹⁷²

For civilians, it may seem ethically problematic to argue for a change of approach, i.e. to argue that soldiers should be put at more risk. Yet it is possible, by now, to cite authors affiliated earlier on with the U.S. military, on the topic. For the latter, the insurgency in Iraq offered some of the most basic, counter-intuitive lessons of counterinsurgency that are also relevant in the Afghanistan context. Lyall and (Lt. Col.) Wilson III.'s study (2009) of parallel experiences of two U.S. Army units – the 101st Airborne Division (101st ABD) and the 4th (mechanised) Infantry Division (4th ID) is particularly noteworthy in how it documents contrast in the results yielded by starkly differing approaches. While the 101st ABD carried out the majority of its patrols dismounted, the 4th ID, under the command of General Ray Odierno, even received orders in 2003, in the early stages of the Iraqi insurgency, to "increase lethality"¹⁷³ in response to insurgent attacks. They ended up fighting many more fire-fights than the 101st ABD, which was also stationed in the Sunni Triangle, in a directly adjacent area of operations. The two units even shared control of the town of Sharqat, and the mayor of the town, Muhsin Khalaf requested at one point that the 101st ABD take over responsibility for the whole of Sharqat, given the more heavy-handed conduct of the 4th ID (Lyall and Wilson III., 2009:100-101). At the same time, it has to be noted that the 101st ABD lost more

¹⁷² I witnessed this first-hand in Baghlan province, visiting there with the Hungarian soldiers serving in the Pul-i-Khumri PRT. On one occasion, I had to abruptly, and rather rudely, break off a conversation with a local Afghan NGO worker, because our convoy was set to leave a girls' school at a certain point in time. The lady in question was just telling me about their activities in the province when I had to turn my back on her. In general, as a visiting guest of the PRT, one feels like a dog on a leash, not allowed to walk outside the defensive perimeter set up by soldiers at project sites in any case, even while there are civilian NGO workers in the province, who work entirely independently from the soldiers. Not wanting to present a one-side picture here, I shall add that the risk of kidnappings or attacks is present in Baghlan; that being a guest of the PRT can make one a more likely and politically more valuable target; and that soldiers merely follow their orders in handling guests as they do.

¹⁷³ See in Dexter Filkins' excellent article: „The Fall of the Warrior King,” *The New York Times*, October 23, 2005, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/23/magazine/23sassaman.html>, accessed on May 5, 2009.

soldiers during its tour in the area. But – importantly – they took their casualties in an overall smaller number of incidents. This is crucial, since eventually winning is what reduces casualties. Therefore the 101st ABD's approach cannot be said to be wrong, even from a narrow, force-protection-centric point of view. Importantly, they suffered less from the “information starvation” problem already referred to above, and highlighted by Lyall and Wilson III. in their study.

From the Afghanistan context, Germany's example may be especially telling. Most of the German ISAF contingent is stationed in the area of ISAF Regional Command-North. In this way, German troops' participation in counterinsurgency-related tasks is restricted largely to what they may have to do in their relatively safer area of operations. Yet they could not avoid casualties. Insurgents devote time and manpower to make the investment in carrying out attacks against German troops even in northern Afghanistan, where the social context is otherwise less affording for their operations. They may perceive increased returns on their investment in the way the German public and the German political elite reacts to casualties. Thus German troops have suffered more losses as of this stage than the Dutch battle group operating in Uruzgan province, a heartland of the Taliban-led insurgency.¹⁷⁴

Category #3: Bleeding-heart myopia

If we contrast the interests of intervening states according to a simple security-oriented/humanitarian distinction, as put forward in Chapter One, thus effectively making a distinction between interventions serving primarily *our* interests, and others serving primarily those of the target-country population, what we find sometimes is a preference, on the level of beliefs at least, for prioritising humanitarian interests.

Such altruism may be misplaced, in that it may be short-sighted or even blind to its own consequences: the general public may not reckon with the necessity of connecting means to ends, and what this requires on a practical level. In other words, public opinion may approve of objectives that are defined as appropriate from a non-strategic perspective: out of purely humanitarian/moral considerations.

For instance, the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) may be very popular. At the same time, however, publics may also prefer not to have any (or many) soldiers of their

¹⁷⁴ Wikipedia's coalition casualty aggregation accessed on May 3, 2009, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalition_casualties_in_Afghanistan; at 19 Dutch and 32 German military fatalities, as of the day cited.

countries on foreign deployments – simultaneously valuing rather incompatible principles. Examples of this follow.

Issue #3/1: Humanitarian aid vs. development aid and counterinsurgency

After ISAF executed its “Stage 3” expansion into southern Afghanistan, the number of foreign troops there increased significantly.

The Taliban’s infiltration into these areas had started years before that, and spectacularly accelerated after October 2005, in the wake of the devastating earthquake in Pakistan, which had its epicentre in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir – that emergency drew away the Pakistani army’s units from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas along Afghanistan’s border (Shahzad, 2008). ISAF’s successive expansion thus effectively mirrored that of the Taliban, to reinforce Afghan security forces in the area. It was very much required for counterinsurgency, yet not really adequate in absolute terms, especially for the long run.

Incidents of fighting grew more frequent, and NGOs and IGOs (such as WFP, the World Food Programme), that were still involved in humanitarian assistance in the southern provinces at this point, found it increasingly hard to continue with their operations, as more and more areas became dangerous or impossible to access. But in fact there were only a handful of such organisations by this stage.¹⁷⁵ As Giustozzi sums it up (2007: 107):

“The Taliban were (...) successful in driving NGOs away or forcing them to cooperate. Already during 2003 NGOs started reducing their activities in Zabul and Uruzgan, following the killing of an international Red Cross worker. In Kandahar, already in 2003 the number of NGOs deploying foreign workers had dropped from twenty-two in 2002 to seven or eight and even those were not venturing to the outlying districts. U.S. NGO Mercy Corps, for example, by October 2003 had already downscaled its activities in southern Afghanistan from forty-two districts in early 2003 to six. In Zabul eighteen NGOs were active in 2002, but just two were left by the end of 2003. Some of the few NGOs still operating in the south after 2003 were allegedly buying the tolerance of the Taliban with cash. By 2006 even UN agencies, which had been attacked only rarely, were operating in just six of the fifty southern districts.”

Nevertheless do see the maps (*Figure 4.6.*) attached, regarding how the UN Department of Safety and Security measured the change of accessibility from 2005 to 2007.

¹⁷⁵ Hekmat Karzai highlights the example of *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF)’s withdrawal from Afghanistan, because previously MSF operated for 24 years in the country (Karzai, 2007: 64). To be accurate, MSF’s withdrawal was certainly an important marker of change, but the direct trigger for MSF’s decision was an incident that occurred in Badghis province, in the northwest. Still, it is telling how MSF blamed, for the need for their decision, coalition forces in general, for „politicising aid,” trying to win hearts and minds with it.

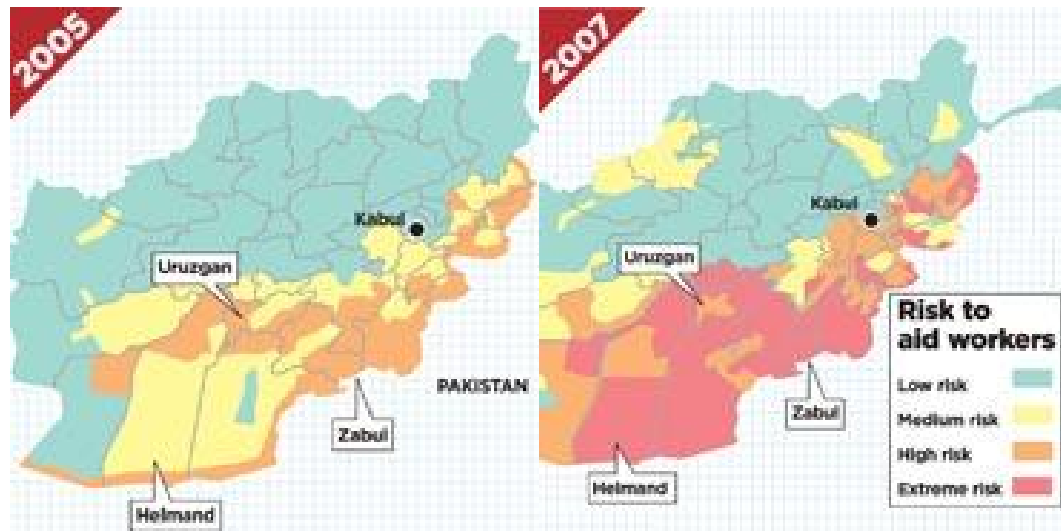


Figure 4.6.: Aid workers' accessibility map, its change from 2005 to 2007, drastically for the worse. Source: UN Department of Safety and Security (leaked map).

(In: Nick Meo: Leaked aid map of Afghanistan reveals expansion of no-go zones. *The Times*, December 5, 2007, available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article3000067.ece>, accessed on May 5, 2009.)

The assumption, that the organisations that still remained in the south by 2005 could have maintained some of their operations – albeit not altogether unhindered – had foreign troops not arrived to the southern provinces in this period, is not overall ill-founded. With the ink blot strategy, introduced in Chapter Three, both development and humanitarian projects should theoretically concentrate in the core areas of foreign and local security forces' presence. In reality, projects are difficult to realise even in the ink blots, and NGOs are not inclined work there, where they could be seen as closely cooperating with foreign militaries. Instead, generally quick impact, low quality PRT projects take place there, and some more major projects and programs carried out by contracted, for-profit companies ("development consulting firms," such as *Chemonics International*, for example: a long-time contractor of USAID projects).

Arguably, it would be short-sighted, or mistaken, to blame ISAF for this, and demand a return to humanitarian assistance even if that would mean leaving rule of the area to the Taliban. Contesting and holding on to areas over which the Taliban are looking to exert influence, is what could provide for the opportunity of development in the long run. This is clearly a future-oriented trade-off, as much as it can be said to be taking place.

Issue #3/2: Truth-making vs. political stability

An issue that continues to captivate the attention of the more foreign policy-conscious segments of public opinion in the West, ever since 2001, is that of the “warlords” who were allowed to integrate into the new Afghan polity, some of them even in high positions of power, up to this day. A notorious example could be General Mohammed Daud Daud, formerly a commander in Ahmed Shah Massoud’s Shura-i-Nazar forces, currently the deputy minister of interior responsible for counter-narcotics and head of the Counter-narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) – himself a major drugs trader according to an extensively researched report by esteemed correspondent Graeme Smith (Smith, 2009).¹⁷⁶

Demand for a reckoning for war crimes has Afghan proponents as well, such as MP Malalai Joya who was banned in 2007 from participating in sessions of the Afghan parliament’s lower house – the Wolesi Jirga – for her provocative rhetorics.

Basic human craving for justice may be agreeable in the cases of certain former commanders, but its satisfaction is not necessarily compatible with the exigencies of today’s Afghan politics, and with a need for political stability. Those called “warlords” (a term that has obviously negative connotations) may not have been leaders purely on the basis of their skills as militia commanders and warriors, as the literal interpretation of the word could suggest.¹⁷⁷

Their co-optation was of fundamental importance in the wake of the 2001 intervention. Back at that time, the intervening countries were not able to mobilise even a tenth of the number of soldiers that would have been required to directly control all of the terrain in Afghanistan. (For instance, the RAND Corporation’s estimate was two soldiers needed per a hundred people, in stability operations: this can be translated to 600,000 troops needed to achieve undisrupted control over all of Afghanistan, where the population can be estimated at 30,000,000 for the purpose of a none-too-accurate assessment; see Quinlivan, 2003.)

Thus a complete disarmament and subsequent legal proceedings against former militia commanders, including those of the Northern Alliance, who played a key role in defeating the Taliban regime, would not have been a realistic objective, post-2001, in any case.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Smith quotes unnamed Afghan officials as saying that Gen. Mohammed Daud Daud can still call on the loyalty of around 4,000 to 6,000 militiamen, and mobilise them in under 48 hours, if need be.

¹⁷⁷ Christian Bleuer: What’s in a (Warlord’s) Name? Blog entry, *Ghosts of Alexander*, March 18, 2008, at <http://easterncampaign.wordpress.com/2008/03/18/whats-in-a-warlords-name/>, accessed on May 22, 2009.

¹⁷⁸ On the kind of DDR (disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration) program that has taken place in Afghanistan, see Giustozzi – Rossi, 2006, and Giustozzi, 2008.

Category #4: Working for common interests of the intervening states, but unsure how*Issue #4/1: Anti-terrorism vs. counterterrorism*

The basis for a distinction of the two, of “anti-terrorism” and “counterterrorism,” is the distinction made in NATO’s official terminology. The latter, as outlined in *Annex A* of “NATO’s military concept for defence against terrorism,” defines anti-terrorism as “defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property to terrorism...;” while it defines counterterrorism as “offensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of forces, individuals and property to terrorism.”¹⁷⁹ Essentially, this is distinction between active but defensive and pro-active approaches, and there are debates as to whether there may be possible contradictions between the two.

There is no disagreement over the need for anti-terrorist measures, even if their necessary contents cannot be said to be consensual, for example regarding how much they should be allowed to infringe on democratic freedoms. When it comes to counterterrorism, however, its overall utility is questioned, and the issue of its possible counter-productivity is raised – that counterterrorism may undermine the effectiveness of anti-terrorist measures. For example, David Betz, a professor at King’s College’s War Studies Department opines this way in a blog entry (Betz, 2009):

“If you ask strategists here in the UK what is at stake, above all, in Afghanistan they’d answer the cohesiveness and meaning of NATO. Moreover when you consider the impact of participating in American-led expeditionary operations on the faltering domestic counter-radicalization efforts of many European countries (which is the real source of threat right now, not the Russians) it isn’t as though this is a cost-free decision.”

This debate among proponents and sceptics of the counterterrorist approach is often described as an essentially “American vs. European” debate, *ergo* a “trans-Atlantic” one. But in fact sceptics of counterterrorism represent only a minority on the level of heads of state and government (HoSG) in NATO, therefore the latter proposition is false: it is a rhetorical means of mobilisation for those looking to undermine the current, official HoSG consensus. The debate is very significant nevertheless, as the rationale of the Afghanistan mission, and other similar foreign ventures, is pinged on the calculation that counterterrorism may work (and that it may not be counter-productive in the end).

¹⁷⁹ Dated October 2003; see at <http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism-annex.htm>, accessed on March 18, 2009.

Category #5: Asserting one's own interests as the member of a coalition

The occurrence of intra-coalition conflicts is something to be expected in any case, as shown in Chapter Three. Especially in the case of a coalition that is looking to realise not entirely well-defined and consensual objectives, it is no surprise that one can observe members of the coalition do things that may be seen as undermining the main collective objective of state-building. Such is the endeavour to maximise own gains, or, as is more often the case in Afghanistan, to minimise risks and costs. Several examples of this follow.

Issue #5/1: Designing a “user-friendly” polity vs. nation-building

For the U.S., it was an essential part of the “light footprint” approach that such a polity be designed for Afghanistan through which key wishes from the part of the intervening states may be satisfied with low transaction costs, through a nominally strong central figure. Put simply, it seems that they were looking for a “user-friendly” Afghan polity: a clearly presidential system, with a pro-Western, and in this sense reliable, politician at its head, whom they hoped to find in Hamed Karzai. Institutionalising a strong role to political parties was dispreferred, as that would have allowed for the more dynamic and coherent formation of an agenda of political opposition in general, and for a stronger influence of the former Northern Alliance (NA), whose leading commanders were to be gradually weakened in the post-2001 set-up.

Karzai's “royal” presidency was, according to some sources, created partly under the pressure of the moment, in the turbulent post-intervention period of Kabul politics. Former King Zahir Shah's largely Pashtun followers wanted the late monarch to be a candidate for leading the country, whereas this could have alienated members of other ethnic groups, and their leaders; most importantly the Northern Alliance commanders. Hamed Karzai, as a strong Pashtun president, was the ideal compromise in this situation, while to appease Pashtuns, the U.S. even pressured the Tajik “Panjsheeri”¹⁸⁰ group, which held three key ministries at that time (intelligence, interior and defense), to give up one of these positions (it was to be Younous Qanuni's ministry of interior; Rashid, 2008: 139-140). Thus started a process of political weakening for the Panjsheeris' and for former NA commanders' in general.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Referred to as such since they hail from the Shura-e-Nazar faction of Jamiat-e Islami; „Panjsheeri” as reference is to Ahmed Shah Massoud's geographical stronghold in the Panjsheeri valley.

¹⁸¹ This process saw Mohammed Qasim Fahim lose the position of minister of defence in 2004, to Pashtun Abdul Rahim Wardak; Ismail Khan, another major Jamiat-e Islami-affiliated former mujahideen commander and ultimate strongman of western Afghanistan, received the position of minister of energy, largely to detach him

According to a common (mis)interpretation, the foundations of the weak-party parliament were created with the application of the SNTV (the Single Non-Transferable Vote) electoral system, which, according to one account, was aggressively pushed through the circle of influential diplomats based in Kabul, by then-U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad. The latter may have already had specifically Karzai's future role in mind.¹⁸² But in fact, the additional electoral rule, that representatives can only run in their electoral districts as independents, has more significance. It is more the latter's consequence that truly cohesive parliamentary fractions cannot easily form.

In the resulting system, Karzai is a hub in a network of interests asserted by a multitude of actors both "below" and "above" him – the diverse actors under the umbrella of the "international community" nominally above him, and the various different kinds of Afghan strongmen nominally below him. He cannot really change anything independently of *any* actor, but he may derive some room for manoeuvre from an ability to cite pressures from one direction or another as the reason for taking a certain decision. This is not very good for transparent, responsible leadership in a country where exactly that is what could solidify an idea of the state after decades of practically meaningless statehood and a process of botched modernisation that foundered with the onset of internal war(s). Instead, one gets an Afghan polity with a weak "king" on top, and a lot of quarrelling "princes" in the parliament and outside it, unrestricted by loyalty to parliamentary fractions or strong party organisations.

A stronger role for parties would carry some risks as well, in potentially reinforcing ethnic and religious fault-lines in society. But without the interest aggregation function usually played by parties and fractions in polities elsewhere, no nation-building can take place, and in the long run this might doom the quest for political stability in Afghanistan.¹⁸³

Issue #5/2: Casualty-aversion vs. counter-narcotics

In this chapter I already discussed the counter-productivity of crop eradication programs, describing a clash between counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency goals. This latter clash is

from his power base in Herat province; Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek commander of the Junbesh-e-Milli faction, saw several of his commanders turned against him, and former and current rivals appointed as governors in provinces where he traditionally had the most influence.

¹⁸² See: Arthur Kent: „Cashing in on Karzai & Co.,” *Policy Options*, November 11, 2007, available re-published at: <http://www.e-ariana.com/ariana/eariana.nsf/allArticles/083BC022E34969ED87257391000669B6?OpenDocument>, accessed

on April 5, 2008.

¹⁸³ In a 2007 volume, Jalali took a slightly less critical angle on this and said: „the absence of organized political blocs makes the parliament a wild card with a potential either to strengthen or weaken the political process in Afghanistan.” In other words, he saw at least the chance for something positive in the current arrangement (Jalali, 2007: 45).

often portrayed in the discourse as an argument featuring the U.S. vs. the rest. There is an element of truth to this. Even those countries that are otherwise ready to take on a counterinsurgency role, unlike major NATO countries such as Germany, Italy or Spain, may be reluctant themselves when it comes to supporting U.S. efforts in the field of counter-narcotics. A particularly notable example is the Netherlands.

The reason for this is the rational expectation on the part of these countries that crop eradication in the insurgency-struck southern provinces, such as Kandahar or Uruzgan, would fuel the guerrilla war. Certainly, this is not beneficial from either a counterinsurgency or a state-building point of view. But one of the primary reasons for both Canada and the Netherlands' approach is also casualty-aversion, which results from the interplay of the multiple levels of politics, affecting their role in Afghanistan, that were described at the end of Chapter Three.

Most NATO countries, including Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Greece, accepted it only grudgingly – although at least nominally they did accept it – when the U.S. began a push for a more aggressive counter-narcotics role for ISAF, at NATO's informal ministerial meeting in Budapest, in October 2008.¹⁸⁴ A policy shift that the Obama administration has so far carried on with.

Hungarian diplomacy was in a somewhat uncomfortable position playing host to the NATO ministerial back in 2008. Hungary even has a national caveat in force that excludes the possibility of Hungarian troops' participating in counter-narcotics operations: a perfect example of refraining from counter-narcotics primarily out of casualty aversion.

Issue #5/3: Cost-aversion vs. Security Sector Reform (SSR)

As I discussed in Chapter Three, referring to Fang and Ramsay (2007), coalition burden-sharing is usually lopsided – unfavourable particularly to the “lead nation” that initiates bargaining over collective action. To mitigate this effect, in Afghanistan, the role of lead nation was delegated to key G-8 partners in several areas, or “pillars” of Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Afghanistan. The United Kingdom took responsibility for counter-narcotics, Italy for the development of the judicial sector, Japan for DDR programs, while the U.S. took the inevitably most costly task of building up the new Afghan National Army (ANA). Germany received the task of training the Afghan National Police (ANP).

¹⁸⁴ See: „Nato troops given new mandate to attack heroin drug barons in Afghanistan,” *The Times*, October 11, 2008, available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article4920523.ece>, accessed on May 8, 2009.

Even this did not secure an equitable sharing of the burden. The designated countries did not adequately resource their commitments. The United Kingdom was practically forced to ignore its own role in counter-narcotics when it took over Helmand province as an area of operations for its forces from the U.S. The latter is the centre of opium production in Afghanistan, where in light of the previous section (see *Issue #5/2*), it would not have been practical to try to live up to expectations corresponding to the UK's status.

An especially spectacular example is Germany's negligence of its role in developing the ANP. This task was one that Germany was never to take entirely on its own. The U.S. began to contribute significantly by training the rank-and-file of the Afghan police force from 2003 – providing basic, mass training to a large number of policemen who would serve under the German-trained officers, the elite of the force (ICG, 2007: 7-9). The concept was that quantity would meet quality in this way.

Yet, Germany eventually spent a mere one-fiftieth of what was spent by the U.S. on the Afghan National Police (Korski, 2008: 12), even while it had the leading role in this field. Then it called for an EU Police Mission (EUPM) instead of its own one – this EUPM is understaffed, both nominally (in light of commitments made) and in absolute terms (in light of the needs on the ground), up to this day.¹⁸⁵ Germany criticised the U.S. on a number of occasions for providing only very poor training to Afghan policemen whom it then uses as human cannon-fodder against the guerrillas, while the U.S. criticised Germany for neglecting the original commitment it had made. The police force created amidst these debates was described in this way by an “insider” for the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2007: 9): “The Germans are creating high quality – but too few....The other side, the U.S., churn out a conveyor belt where quality is not an issue....there is nothing in the middle”.

In light of commitments not respected in good faith, Germany has to take more of the blame.¹⁸⁶ One also has to note that their criticism about the U.S.' using policemen against the guerrillas is detached from Afghan reality, where, in many areas of the country, ordinary policemen may face well-equipped guerrillas attacking at a time of their choosing with mortars, 107-mm rockets, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, grenades, machine guns and sub-machine guns.

¹⁸⁵ See Marton Péter: Az EU Afganisztánról tanácskozott..., blogbejegyzés, *Risk 911 – A Corvinus Küliügyi és Kulturális Egyesület blogja*, February 24, 2009, available at <http://risk911.blogspot.com/2009/02/az-eu-afganisztanrol-tanacskozott.html>, accessed on February 24, 2009.

¹⁸⁶ Although it needs to be noted here that Turkey' blocking of effective NATO-EU cooperation on the ground in Afghanistan, for example in providing adequate security to police trainers, because of the issue of Cyprus, made Germany's (and then the EU's) task more difficult. Michael Williams – Alastair Cameron: NATO's Strategic and Operational Challenges. *A RUSI Transatlantic and European Security Programme Study* (RUSI occasional paper), 2008.

Category #6: Real trade-offs

In some cases, one finds real trade-offs between tasks that all inevitably stem from what state-building eventually requires, because of the specific circumstances one finds on the ground, in Afghanistan.

Issue #6/1: Counter-terrorism (and force protection) vs. counterinsurgency (and, again, force protection)

On January 13, 2006, a U.S. drone aircraft launched Hellfire missiles at a compound in the village of Damadola, in Bajaur Agency, Pakistan, not far from the Afghan border, to kill al-Qaida commander Ayman az-Zawahiri. It was a failed assassination attempt. Not only did it fail to kill its designated target; it killed many local villagers and evoked protests in Pakistan. It was a classic example of how counter-terrorism, inevitably enemy-centric as it is, can go wrong. Similar incidents occur in Afghanistan as well. Troops there as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, the U.S. counter-terrorist operation that is independent from ISAF, are mostly involved in hunting down major insurgent leaders. (Al-Qaida commanders generally do not operate inside Afghanistan, except for the eastern provinces, in areas from which they can cross back over the border to Pakistan.) When the attempted assassination of Taliban leaders produces non-combatant casualties, it can also be very counter-productive for the counterinsurgency effort.

Yet it has to be noted that Close Air Support (CAS), often required by ISAF ground troops if they want to minimise their casualties in fire-fights with guerrillas, is currently proving to be *the* major hindering factor in waging an effective counterinsurgency campaign. Innocent non-combatants almost inevitably end up dying as a result of CAS sorties flown by coalition aircraft, partly because of the way guerrillas consciously position themselves. No matter how precisely bombs are dropped on target, among the typical mud huts of Afghan settlements, even ordnance hitting within the so-called CEP, or Circular Error Probable, can cause much damage and harm. Consequently, this “collateral damage” feeds guerrillas’ propaganda efforts and is built into their master narrative of the war.

To this comes added – not the other way around, in fact – when similar collateral damage is the result of decapitation strikes carried out in counter-terrorist operations.

Regardless, on a rhetorical level, criticism is often targeted at the U.S. even by NATO countries for the non-combatant casualties, with the underlying allegation that it is mostly as a

part of Operation Enduring Freedom, that air strikes take place.¹⁸⁷ The presentation of ISAF's mission as one which focuses on "reconstruction" is misleading in how it might obscure that ISAF patrols also very much rely on CAS themselves, for force protection, when in contact with enemy forces.

Thus both force protection and counter-terrorism produce a trade-off, when it comes to what would work better in a counterinsurgency campaign: less enemy-centricity and consequently less lethality of tactics and standard operating procedures.

In the long run, as already discussed in the section "Issue #2/2: Force protection vs. counterinsurgency," this is not good even from a force protection perspective. Being so counter-productive, the reliance on air power may also prove to be detrimental in the wider framework of counter-terrorism.

Issue #6/2: Counter-narcotics vs. counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency

Drugs traders are often privy to a treasure trove of information. Their trade and their smuggling activities traverse wide areas under different strongmen's control. For the security of their shipments and their personnel, they are dependent on these strongmen, and they are constantly in need of information about facts of life and changes in their areas of operations – things they are usually aware of.

The information they possess can be of use in both counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency.

Haji Bashir Noorzai's case is a textbook example of the loss the taking out of a major drugs lord can be. Many Noorzai families are involved in running a network of smuggling in the Iran–Afghanistan–Pakistan region. Haji Bashir Noorzai was a major trader since at least the first half of the 1990s. In the summer of 1994, he was the very first financial supporter of the fledgling Taliban movement in Maywand district, Kandahar province.¹⁸⁸ He readily

¹⁸⁷ See e.g. Richard Norton-Taylor – Ewan Macaskill: „UK troops killed in 'friendly' air strike." The Age, August 26, 2007, available at <http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/uk-troops-killed-in-friendly-air-strike/2007/08/25/1187462582815.html>, accessed on April 5, 2008. Quote: „The Pentagon is sensitive about friendly fire incidents, particularly those involving British troops. It regards US airmen as unfairly stereotyped as trigger-happy. Relations between the US and Britain have been strained in recent weeks, with the British criticising US bombing in Afghanistan for alienating the local population after a rising toll of civilian deaths.”

¹⁸⁸ Alex Strick van Linschoten, a researcher working on assembling an oral history of the Taliban in the course of interviews, working entirely independently, in Greater Kandahar, forwarded to me this excerpt from mullah Zaeef's history of the Taliban: „Hajji Bashir the district administrator of Kashkinakhud of Maiwand wilfully donated two vehicles, a Hino truck and a single-cabin Toyota, and he took responsibility of fuel, mobile oil and spare parts for the vehicles.” Other interesting details are revealed in a classified U.S. Embassy cable message from Islamabad, Pakistan, “Subject: Finally, a talkative Talib; origins and membership of the religious students' movement,” February 20, 1995, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/tal8.pdf> (The National Security Archive, George Washington University), accessed on May 20, 2009, pp. 3-4.

provided support to the small vigilante militia led by mullah Omar (who is up to this day the leader of the Taliban), as Omar used to be under his command in the Younis Khalis-led faction of Hizb-i-Islami.¹⁸⁹ After the Taliban gradually extended their control over the south of Afghanistan, and then even went on to conquer Kabul and much of the rest of the country, Haji Bashir's share of the drugs trade was set to grow. He is likely to have profited significantly from the Taliban-introduced ban on opium poppy cultivation in 2000, which affected the trade in a *positive* way: men like Haji Bashir could sell off their large stockpiles unhindered, while the world price of heroin shot back from a low-point to record highs. In 2001, at the time of the U.S.-led intervention, the U.S. was eventually forced to accept Gul Agha Shirzai as the governor of Kandahar province, because Shirzai had Haji Bashir's backing. According to an award-winning investigative report, Haji Bashir had around 10,000 militiamen under his command at this stage – he was certainly someone to reckon with.¹⁹⁰ Even his business activities were not disrupted significantly, and this suggests that he might have had an arrangement with the U.S. military, in which he provided vital information to U.S. forces. Among other things, he is reputed to have pointed out the Taliban's remaining caches of anti-aircraft missiles in the south, leading to the collection of over 400 such weapons. These could have been major game-changers in the insurgency that was to flare up again over 2003-2005. He was the archetype of the “cooperative kingpin” who can be very beneficial to law enforcement officials' work in the domestic fight against organised crime.¹⁹¹

This *modus vivendi* was destroyed by an informal coalition within the Bush administration in 2005, involving Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials and others from the White House and the State Department.

Time correspondent Bill Powell recounts:¹⁹²

“On June 1, 2004, the White House put out a press release listing the top 10 international drug kingpins, who “present a threat to the national security, foreign policy, or economy

¹⁸⁹ This is the original Hizb-i-Islami (Islamic Party) from which Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's faction split off. The Younis Khalis-led faction comprised of elements that would later on stand on their own, such as the Haqqani clan and their allied forces, or Abdul Haq's faction. Younis Khalis himself was a major strongman in the Jalalabad area even after 2001; he died in 2006, of natural causes. Mullah Omar lost one eye fighting in the ranks of Younis Khalis' forces, in a major battle pitting insurgents from Maiwand and Panjway against withdrawing Soviet forces near Omar's home village of Sangisar, in Kandahar province, in 1989. See Alex Strick van Linschoten (2008): The tale of mullah Omar's eye. *From the Frontline*, November 23, 2008, available at: http://www.fromthefrontline.co.uk/blogs/index.php?blog=16&title=the_tale_of_mullah_omar_s_eye&more=1&c=1&tb=1&pb=1, accessed on November 25, 2008.

¹⁹⁰ Mark Corcoran: „Afghanistan – America's Blind Eye.” Transcript of the original *ABC report* (shown on ABC on April 10, 2002), available at <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2005/s1379788.htm>, accessed on August 20, 2008.

¹⁹¹ See Bill Powell: „Warlord or Druglord” *Time Magazine*, February 8, 2007, available at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1587252-1,00.html>, accessed on August 20, 2008.

¹⁹² Powell, 2007.

of the United States." Robert Charles, then Assistant Secretary of State, recalls that when he saw the draft list, he asked, "Why don't we have any Afghan drug lords on the list?" An interagency debate ensued, then a scramble to come up with names. Several popped up. And so, on the final list, coming in at No. 10 was the name "Haji Bashir [*sic* – P.M.] Noorzai."

In April, 2005, Haji Bashir was invited to the U.S. to answer questions about his role "in the war on terrorism." His informal interrogation took place in the Embassy Suites Hotel in Manhattan, New York, and it lasted for a couple of days. After this he was simply dropped: the DEA arrested him. He has since been sentenced to life imprisonment in the U.S.

It is difficult to establish how much of a loss this exactly was. But since over a million people belong – with a stronger or a weaker identity – to the Noorzai tribe in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it seems not too daring to conclude that Haji Bashir's arrest may have been detrimental even for counterinsurgency efforts in southern Afghanistan. At the same time, we know for certain that the arrest did not have a major impact on opiate production and trade – the latter steadily grew over the course of 2006 and 2007.

With this in mind, the U.S. decision to take Haji Bashir out of the equation seems not to have been a very wise one.

Issue #6/3: Counterinsurgency vs. state-building

In order for state-building to succeed in Afghanistan, the counterinsurgency campaign has to – first – succeed as well. This means that the insurgency has to be pushed below a critical level of intensity. There are basically three options that can be followed in achieving this. Foreign troops might try to wage counterinsurgency in the long run (#1). Foreign troops' role may gradually decrease as their leading role could be eventually taken over by Afghan security forces, the ANA and the ANP (#2). Something that may yield results faster is the slicing off of local commanders off the insurgent movement where possible, with the use of "carrots," or if one can find other "substitute forces" for those of the Afghan state, to cover areas and deny them to insurgents (#3).

Option #1 does not seem feasible given how there is not enough public and elite support, especially in Europe, for a significantly increased commitment of troops to Afghanistan, and for their long-term deployment there. As a result of this, in 2007, a NATO Parliamentary Assembly report stated (NATO PA, 2007):

"The NATO mission still suffers from a lack of personnel and assets, the delegation assessed. While NATO forces are able to clear any given area of insurgents, they do not

have enough personnel to ‘backfill’ and hold a cleared area after a successful operation. Nor are there enough trained and capable Afghan National Security Forces to do the job independently. The end result is the re-infiltration of cleared areas by insurgents, and an inability by local populations to commit to actively support NATO and the central government (...) General McNeill, COMISAF, called remaining caveats ‘vexing,’ stating that they still hampered his ability to concentrate military mass when needed, with sufficient speed to make a difference.”

Option #2 is ISAF’s official strategic vision for now, but in fact option #3 was also, ever since 2001, used on many occasions in Afghanistan.

For instance, the Mangal tribe worked together with U.S. and Afghan forces in excluding insurgents from certain districts of Khost province [Tariq, 2008: 12] (with insurgents fighting back).

In 2007, Abdul Salaam Alizai, a member of the Pirzai clan within the Alizai tribe, defected from the Taliban with an unclear number of fighters (as many as two-thousand according to some reports, only a handful according to others¹⁹³) thus playing some role in the taking back of the town of Musa Qala (in Helmand province) from the Taliban, under whose control it was for much of the year, from February to December (Abdul Salaam also became a target of Taliban assassination attempts from thereon).

It is, in a sense, a success when defections are successfully instigated, or when cooperative local social institutions (such as the *jirga* and the *arbakai* of the Mangal tribe) can be found and co-opted. The question is how these structures – for example the defected militiamen of Abdul Salaam Alizai – can later on be integrated into the official security forces of the country, serving the public interest of *the country*.

Recent plans to start experimenting with setting up village guards in Afghanistan are also worrisome in that they claim to build on traditional tribal structures, whereas the latter are only strong in a relatively small area of south-eastern Afghanistan, in but a small part of the supposedly highly tribal Pashtun belt (see *Figure 4.7*).

¹⁹³ See e.g. Tom Coghlan: „Key tribal leader on verge of deserting Taliban,” *The Telegraph*, October 31, 2007, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1567858/Key-tribal-leader-on-verge-of-deserting-Taliban.html>, downloaded on November 1, 2007. A very different, and probably more reliable account, presenting Abdul Salaam as a commander of only minor importance, is Stephen Grey’s book, *Operation Snakebite* (London: Penguin Books, 2009).

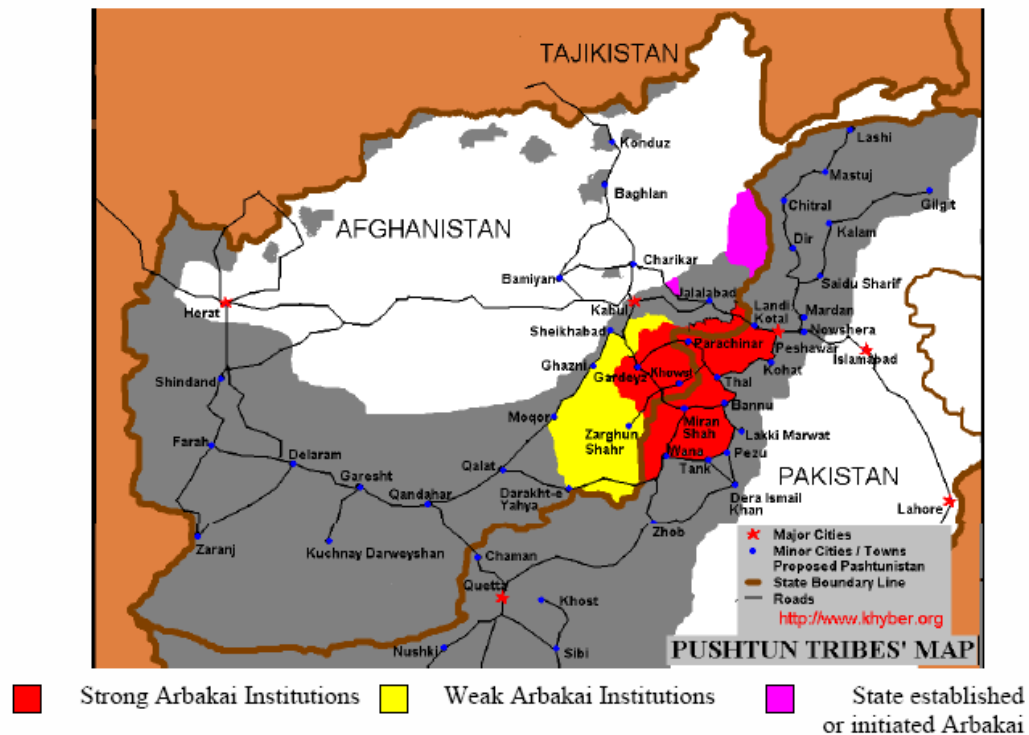


Figure 4.7. The extent of the presence of the institution of the arbakai in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Tariq, 2008: 2)

Also, the plans for “tribal militias” rest on setting up and arming militias, which is arguably not what Afghanistan needs after decades of militias fighting militias. This injection of new institutions of violence in the countryside is threatening to introduce a whole set of new security dilemmas in different locales across the country, raising the spectre of the re-emergence of a version of the AIV-GIV hydra (autonomous institutions of violence + government institutions of violence), that wreaked havoc in Afghanistan in the 1990s (regarding the concept of the AIV-GIV hydra, see Reyna, 2003: 279-308). Only, in the Afghan case the “IVs” would be more aptly described as “quasi-GIVs,” serving the state’s monopoly of legitimate violence in name only, with their members (dys)functioning as “sobels,” i.e. behaving neither as soldiers, nor as rebels (the term “sobel” is taken from the Sierra Leone context).¹⁹⁴ In Wardak province the experiment has already started, and the pilot program is dubbed “Afghan Public Protection Force.”

The greatest paradox is that the possible use of local militias as substitute forces was “discovered” by some within the U.S. establishment after seeing how Sunni militias of

¹⁹⁴ A telling recent example from Turkey is that of the clash between two Kurdish „village guards,” that were armed and organised by the Turkish state against PKK infiltration, which left 45 dead in the village of Sultansehmuz on May 4, 2009. The killings and the fighting occurred when one guard’s members ambushed a wedding ceremony, possibly with jealousy over the bride involved as a key motive in the conflict.

different sorts (not only tribal militias) pushed out al-Qaida-in-Iraq operatives from Iraq, with the U.S. supporting them in this. This “Anbar experiment” (referring to the name of Anbar province in Iraq’s so-called Sunni Triangle) is what many would wish to see repeated in Afghanistan. This is nothing less than a ridiculous misreading of Afghanistan’s post-2001 history, in the course of which foreign troops have relied, from the start, on substitute forces of all kinds, in many areas – not only for counterinsurgency; in fact, in most places, control of the terrain was knowingly ceded to local strongmen, with no comprehensive DDR program ever carried out. Proponents of indirect counterinsurgency are effectively proposing the “light footprint” approach that has been the approach generally followed from the start – creating all the known problems that have already been discussed in this study as well.

The illusion of Afghanistan as a practical unit of analysis

In discussing problematic issues of sequencing in the Afghan context, one may be misleading. The “Afghan context” cannot be delimited simply at Afghanistan’s borders. One not only does not have such a neatly and comfortably separable unit of analysis in Afghanistan: in terms of sequencing, this means that measures that are necessary in Afghanistan have to be sequenced together with a set of inter-related measures connected to other issues. In the ideal case, Afghanistan policy has to be compatible with other policies, and vice versa.

E.g. the Pakistan, Iran, and Russia policies of the U.S. are all relevant to mention here.

In the case of Pakistan, cooperation is required for the U.S., with a partner of dubious use, in a relationship that is characterised by a lack of trust and sunken investments at the same time. Pakistan policy has to be exercised in the shadow of the possibility of informal nuclear proliferation, and with the need not to threaten the safety of Pakistani nuclear assets in mind. This is a real Gordian knot for policy, as much as there ever was one. Acting right seems not really possible: the choice has to be made between bad and even worse options all the time.

Iran, for its part, is a nominally hostile power from the U.S. vantage point. Meanwhile, in fact, given its sophisticated institutional set-up, the country’s leadership is equally difficult to fathom as Pakistan. The possibility of cooperation between Iran and the U.S. does exist in Afghanistan, yet, even while Iran generally supports the Karzai administration, and deplores the Sunni radicalism of the Taliban and al-Qaida, even Iran may be interested in subversion in Afghanistan, in the short run – to undermine the U.S. position somewhat, as long as there is no sufficient degree of trust between it and the U.S.

Russia is also, inevitably, a part of the equation. Central Asian supply routes, to which access is largely controlled by Russia, could relieve NATO in re-supplying the ISAF mission. Logistics will still, in any case, depend on Pakistan as well, unless Iranian–Western (or Russian–Western) relations radically transform in the meantime, allowing for tolerating (more) logistical dependence on them. But the chance to diversify supply routes is absolutely important, in any case. Provided Russian support is given, every week some 2,000 to 3,000 TEU containers’ load, or about 42,000 to 63,000 tons of cargo could be supplied by train from the direction of Riga harbour, in Latvia, across Russia.¹⁹⁵ Mind that from Pakistan, by road, a similar amount of cargo is *potentially* carried by trucks through the Chaman and the Khyber border crossings (through the Bolan and Khyber Passes, respectively) – nearing (from below) 2,800 truckloads per week. Meanwhile, in July 2009, at a meeting between Presidents Obama and Medvedev, Russia has also agreed to allow 4,500 transit flights for arms shipments and troop transport to the U.S, to help with operations in Afghanistan.

The question is what kind of price should one be ready to pay for Russian helpfulness, for instance when it comes to NATO’s eastward expansion. Russia is usually doing everything it can to maximise its bargaining power. This is less of a concern when relations are harmonious, but when contentious issues come to the fore, as they tend to do, the situation may become uncomfortable to the West as a result.

In early 2009 Russia offered major economic assistance (worth about \$2.15 billion) to Kyrgyzstan to get the Kyrgyz leadership to order the closure of a U.S./NATO-run airbase in Manas, near the capital Bishkek, within 180 days. This decision now appears to have been reversed (as of July 2009). Manas, as long as it is running, reportedly provides for about 500 tons per month in throughput itself. If that figure is correct (albeit it seems much too small to me), this is a minor, but needed contribution to ISAF logistics. ISAF’s yearly need is

¹⁹⁵ I am counting with numbers known from news monitoring, which I will briefly outline here for an explanation of the cited figures. There are plans for sending 20-30 trainloads of supplies across Russia, with the average train carrying about 100 freight containers. If these are standard TEU (20-foot equivalent unit) containers, one gets the chance to ship cca. 21 tons of cargo in each. My projections were made on the basis of this. As to Pakistan, I count there with less than one container per truck on average, knowing how many trucks “cross” the two major passes to Afghanistan, per day, on average, as of January, 2009. These are potentially inflated figures, as a “crossing” truck may be coming or returning from Afghanistan, and since many of these trucks do not carry supplies for NATO. Sources: “Commercial Supplies for Afghanistan to be Shipped Through Riga.” U.S. Embassy in Riga, Latvia, February 11, 2009. <http://riga.usembassy.gov/pr20090212.html>, accessed on February 12, 2009; “Afghan force supplies face Pakistani disruption.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, January 13, 2009, available at http://www.rferl.org/Content/Afghan_Force_Supplies_Face_Pakistani_Disruption/1369350.html, accessed on January 15, 2009; “U.S. Says Talks On Extending Manas Lease Progressing.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 29, 2009, available at http://www.rferl.org/content/US_Says_Talks_On_Extending_Manas_Lease_Progressing/1618105.html, accessed on May 1, 2009.

estimated altogether at around 70,000 containers, however, at a minimum, and if ISAF troop numbers continue to grow, this figure shall increase.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, it is not only ISAF that needs to be supplied, but Operation Enduring Freedom forces and Afghan security forces do as well, not to speak of refuelling operations required for providing a constant aerial presence above Afghanistan (literally 24/7). Manas is an important facility in fulfilling the latter needs as well. Having discussed this, however, while Russia is certainly ready to play all its cards in general, to see NATO and the U.S. lose in Afghanistan would not be in its interests, either. It is simply the case that for now, there are policies for Russia that are further up the hierarchy of its foreign policy agenda (e.g. its policies vis-à-vis the Ukraine and Georgia).

Meanwhile, NATO countries, other than the U.S., also have political interests and goals that affect their calculations regarding the Afghanistan mission. Norway is concerned with Russian bombers occasionally flying into its airspace, and warns NATO of its “northern” tasks; the Netherlands (and the U.S. and NATO) cannot entirely ignore the prospect of a “Falklands scenario,” with Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez having already threatened with “liberating” Curaçao in the Caribbean; Turkey does not want to share NATO intelligence with the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan, because it does not want to share any information of a sensitive nature with the Republic of Cyprus; and so on. Examples of this are abound.

Conclusion

At least within the context of Afghanistan policy, some of the contradictions outlined would not emerge if appropriate resources were committed to the tasks there. That security is to be provided first of all should become crystal clear.

“The presence of international peacekeepers and their success in suppressing renewed conflict, rather than the levels of economic assistance, seems to be the key determinant of economic growth (...) security without economic assistance is much more likely to spur economic growth than is economic assistance without security,”

was the conclusion of the RAND Corporation’s comprehensive study of the UN’s role in past attempts at state-building (Dobbins et al., 2005: 241).

¹⁹⁶ The source of this figure: Arnaud de Borchgrave: „Russia trumps NATO,” *The Washington Times*, February 9, 2009, available at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/feb/09/kremlin-trumps-nato/>, accessed on February 11, 2009. In a recent development, news surfaced that South Korea’s KAL airlines is working with subcontractors on upgrading Uzbekistan’s Navoi facility which U.S. and other NATO forces are already using for transferring supplies to Afghanistan. Eventual throughput there is planned at 300 tons per month, which equals roughly 5,214 TEUs.

“...the successful disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants after violent conflict represents the touchstone, the moment of truth, for any peacebuilding process,”

writes Salomons, in a study titled *Security: An Absolute Prerequisite*, in an oft-cited volume on peace-building (2005: 19) – he does so even without reckoning with a full-blown insurgency, such as the one currently faced in Afghanistan.

Gains in parts of Afghanistan will come down to meaning nothing in the long run if the counter-guerrilla war is not won against the Taliban and the other insurgent groups. At the same time, there are areas of the country where no gains (in security, governance or development) are possible for now, because of the insurgency. Overcoming this takes sacrifice, in many a sense: in terms of troops deployed, and getting killed and wounded; in terms of aid dollars; in terms of civil servants ready to work in Afghanistan etc.

While I am in general recommending that additional troops and an increased amount of aid is needed in Afghanistan, this is not equivalent to saying that “marginal returns” on all additional soldiers and aid dollars deployed would grow endlessly, regardless of how they are “used.” But certainly, in general, we have yet to reach the inflexion point of any such marginal-returns curve.

As long as basic infrastructure is lacking even in parts of Afghanistan where there is no insurgency, there is what to spend aid dollars on. As long as insurgents continue to occupy district centres from time to time, because there are not enough ground forces to secure even the areas with generally more supportive populations, and even though insurgents could not hold on to their positions when challenged by Western air power, there is reason why additional troops should be deployed (as shown in the sections “Issue #1/3: Counter-terrorism vs. state-building” and “Issue #6/3: Counterinsurgency vs. state-building”).

Especially having an adequate number of troops would be important. More areas could be permanently secured, and thus humanitarian aid could be safely and reliably delivered to more areas. Development projects may be carried out. Not only could they be finally realised under the improved security conditions, but they would be more cost-effective as well, having to spend less on the provision of security. Having more money available would also allow for important improvements. Policemen’s and soldiers’ pay could be increased in the ANA and in the ANP, reducing the risk of corruption somewhat and generally allowing for attracting better human resources. The same is true for civil servants, who currently represent a “B team” of officials, as the best are employed by the booming IGO/NGO sector, through which countries like the United States channel most of their aid to Afghanistan.

As of end-2008, ordinary patrolmen of the ANP, 1st and 2nd rank, earned \$70-80 – definitely not enough in itself to keep them from using opportunities to accept the occasional bribe or to collect a protection racket from shopkeepers in their area.¹⁹⁷ Better training and better equipment should also be provided to Afghan security forces.

In safer parts of Afghanistan, if development could be achieved faster, a revitalising local society and economy would make for a more attractive context for foreign investments, just as less corruption could – and the latter could be reduced if generally better-skilled civil servants would work in the Afghan public sector, for higher salaries.

I am arguing with all this in mind that claims about the potential downsides to having a big state-building footprint in Afghanistan are absurd, in fact. A bigger footprint is very much needed at this point, in the sense outlined above. Meanwhile, in another, negative sense, the “international” footprint is already large enough, as Afghan state institutions do not get a vote of confidence from the donors, and much of even the Afghan government budget itself is a so-called “external element,” channelled outside the Afghan Treasury – as late as in budgetary year 2006-07, the external budget amounted to nearly two-thirds of the core budget (Nixon, 2007: 6). In May 2007, the Afghan finance minister, a minister of the state “under construction,” noted that “We are accountable for only US\$3.7 billion of the US\$12.8 billion of aid money that has been spent in the country in the last five years.”¹⁹⁸

For now, the problems of sequencing remain. If we imagine Afghanistan policy in abstract terms as a search for optimal trade-offs in sequencing necessary steps, the problem, given the lack of adequate resources, is that our opportunity curve, the curve of *currently possible* combinations of things we want, does not intersect with the indifference curve of *acceptable* combinations. This is compounded by the politics- and security-related limitations of Pakistani throughput capacity, on the resources one *can* deploy in Afghanistan.

Ceteris paribus, especially if supply routes cannot be diversified, it would be very hard to exert changes over the course of the Afghanistan campaign. Provided that Russia does come in for the long run in the aid of ISAF logistics, the following scheme is offered here for sequencing tasks related to state-building, in areas characterised by an unstable security situation. Four key points are highlighted in it, below. Policy recommendations on the basis of

¹⁹⁷ Take from Cordesman, 2009: 33, where the source is named as „Department of Defense, Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan January 2009 Report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), January 2009, pp. 46 & 47.”

¹⁹⁸ See „AFGHANISTAN: Gov't questions effectiveness of foreign aid billions,” IRIN News, May 7, 2007, available at <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=72002>, accessed on May 2, 2009

these and other features of the scheme, as well as – first of all – a general explanation of *Figure 4.8.*, follow afterwards.

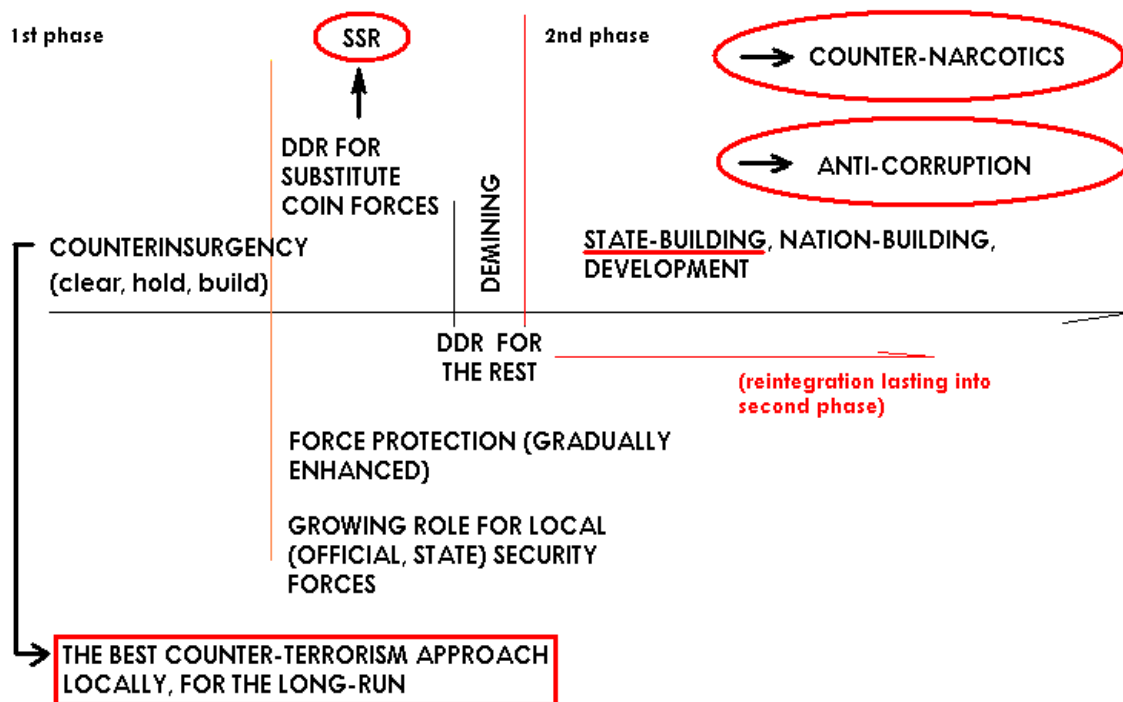


Figure 4.8. A scheme of more effective sequencing, drawn up on the basis of observations about the Afghan case.

An explanatory description of the scheme.

1. With the challenge of an insurgency, countering that challenge – “counterinsurgency” – is the priority. Population-centric COIN does not entail kinetic operations alone, although they are necessary, to clear areas, and sometimes to hold onto them when challenged by guerrillas swarming in for a kinetic operation of their own. A COIN approach does entail, however, that predominantly military means will have to be relied on at this stage. Neither intervening-country civil servants, nor NGOs are likely to set up operations in cleared areas at an early stage. Thus, imperfect a solution as this is, the intervening-country militaries, together with local security forces, have to start the “build” phase themselves. With the consolidation and the expansion of cleared areas, they can pass on these tasks at a later point.

2. In the course of fighting, over time, local security forces can take a leading role, as soon as they are sufficiently built up to take on the required tasks themselves – this is a gradual process. As this is beginning to take place, foreign troops can afford to become more focused on force protection – but only at this stage.

3. If local substitute forces – be they tribal militias, village guards, or any other armed force – were used in taking away territory from the insurgents, at a certain stage they need to go through a DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration) program, at the end of which some of them may be integrated into the official, state security sector, as part of SSR (Security Sector Reform) – perhaps as local policemen, perhaps as soldiers of the national army. This is relevant for areas unaffected by the insurgency, and very important therefore in Afghanistan’s context. Full-scale, comprehensive DDR is a prerequisite of long-term stability and a functioning state. In Afghanistan, it eventually has to come, once the insurgencies in the Pashtun belt are put down.¹⁹⁹

4. Once the fighting definitively ends in an area, if there is still demining left to do, it also needs to be accomplished, in order for basic security to be fully provided for.

5. It is then that state-building can proceed with all the more complex tasks that a comprehensive notion of it possibly includes. This entails committing sufficient resources, and, once institutional guarantees exist, relinquishing tight control over how they are spent, in order to let state capacities build up, and also in order to let fledgling state institutions gain relevance and legitimacy. This is compounded in the Afghan case with the need to redesign the Afghan polity from an overpersonalised Presidential system to one that is conducive to more transparent and representative political processes. The question is how: it is not necessarily a non-Afghan Ph.D. candidate’s legitimate role to debate the merits of conceivable alternatives.

6. The latter aim might even render the tolerance of well-targeted patronage necessary to a degree (Brynnen, 2005: 245-246). Brynnen concludes this in the Palestinian context, where Paragi also finds that the international community’s contradictory expectations have eroded the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority (Paragi, 2009: 90).

7. This is relevant with regards to all those endeavours which may be seen, in a modernist project, as necessary for transforming the host society, to better adapt it to the goals of building a stable state. These endeavours may have to wait. Chandler shows how anti-corruption is a relatively recent item on the “international peace-building agenda,” and how it was employed largely with political aims in the Bosnian context – there it was used in an attempt to undermine confidence in the political parties defined as “nationalist,” the ones which were thus not favoured by the West (this attempt brought little success) [Chandler,

¹⁹⁹ Using the term „Pashtun belt” should not imply that only Pashtuns are involved in the ongoing insurgencies in Afghanistan. In the Korengal valley, for example, in Kunar province, local insurgents are seen as belonging to a distinct ethnicity.

2002]. Yet, corruption made it into the forefront of international interest vis-à-vis Afghanistan now, as a primary source of supposedly all that is wrong there – and apparently this was the reason why some saw delegating Paddy Ashdown, the former “vice-roy of the Balkans,” as he is informally mentioned sometimes,²⁰⁰ to become a “super-envoy” in Kabul, on behalf of the EU, NATO and the UN. Some saw this as a possible panacea to correcting all that has not gone satisfyingly up till now in Afghanistan. However, corruption is always, to a large degree, a product of instability and poverty. Overcoming it ultimately requires giving people (the agents of “corruption”) better prospects – something that studies simply showing a negative correlation between foreign investment decisions and corruption, declaring the latter to be the independent variable, do not take account of (see e.g. McKechnie, 2007: 109). The same is true of illicit narcotics production. If we include the production of hashish, this is a challenge – should we define it as a challenge – that will most likely remain with us as long as the licit economy does not offer good enough long-term prospects. It will be certainly easier to take effective and sustainable counter-measures against it, once such long-term prospects (“alternative livelihoods”) are guaranteed. That is why the scheme in *Figure 4.8.* shows both anti-corruption and counter-narcotics beginning only later into the state-building process.

Added explanation regarding spatial and temporal dynamics.

The following map (*Figure 4.9.*), included in Cordesman (2009: 53), may illustrate something important regarding spatial and temporal dynamics. See:

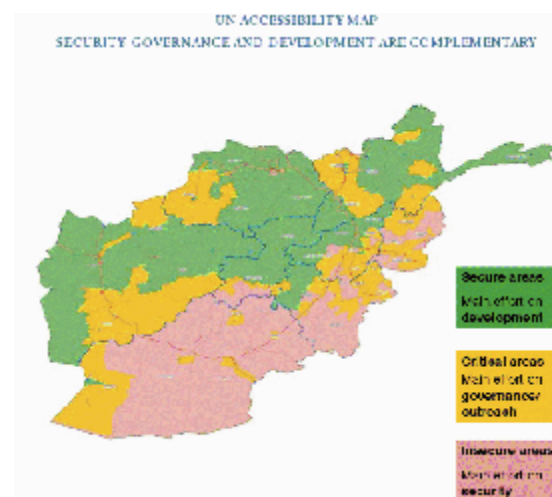


Figure 4.9.: The UN characterised different challenges in different parts of Afghanistan in this way in 2008, rendering a different priority, of either security, or governance, or development, to different areas. Note that “development” is a priority in the safest areas.

²⁰⁰ Because he used to be the international High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina from May 27, 2002 to May 30, 2006.

The scheme I presented in *Figure 4.8.* is one that reflects an adaptation to the presence of an ongoing insurgency in a given area. Elsewhere, if counterinsurgency is not a required task, other steps in the sequence can self-evidently figure more ahead on the agenda.

Some recommendations.

1. Counterinsurgency, if necessary, has to be made a priority. This effectively postpones the application of a more comprehensive approach to state-building, even while counterinsurgency otherwise serves that very end itself. It is military-dominated, but only as long as that is absolutely necessary.
2. A COIN framework is the best counterterrorism approach for the long run. By virtue of its sensitivity to local political, social and cultural circumstances, and its population-centricity, it is the most likely to counter the structural reproduction of the circumstances that earlier allowed the establishment of a home base for trans-national terrorism.
3. Do not leave behind militias as autonomous institutions of violence. It would be a fundamental error to undermine state monopoly over the legitimate use of force in this way.
4. Counter-narcotics has to wait. It can only begin once decent governance and economic development have provided for the opportunity of alternative livelihood.
5. Institutions need to be designed very carefully, and ideally in an autonomous, more transparent and legitimate process, unlike how it happened in Afghanistan. The short-term need for stability-through-control has to be satisfied not through institutions that undermine or weaken the self-sustainability of an entire polity for the long run.

The detailed scheme presented above is not in any major conflict with Péter Rada's general proposition – the BIEN model – regarding sequencing. As Rada writes (2009: 64-65):

“(...) the process of state-building may be divided into two phases. During the first, basic human needs have to be satisfied. Security has to be provided. In the second phase, the development of democratic institutions and the economy may follow. The second phase is not a sequenced process, since it is not possible to set a clearly logical chronological order among all tasks that remain in this phase. It may seem logical to set institution-building as a priority, followed in time by economic development and addressing the enhancement of social cohesion, but in reality this part of the process can take place in numerous forms. The fundamental hypothesis is rather that all these dimensions of the second phase cannot be detached from the others in the long run. Progress is required in all these dimensions at the same time, in a gradual process.”

In *Figure 4.8.*, the end of Rada's first phase comes with demining, the last major remaining challenge that needs to be tackled in order for security to be effectively provided once the fighting had finished. But *Figure 4.8.* is not meant to be an entirely comprehensive overview of state-building tasks. In several sectors, such as education, progress has to be made already during the first phase. Anna Orosz notes that education has a role to play very early on, in survival or "life-skills" education: in increasing mine and HIV awareness, for example. The school system is also one of the spaces where the reintegration of juvenile ex-combatants is imaginable (Orosz, 2009: 133). In Afghanistan, the lack of a well-working local school system, shut down entirely in certain areas by the insurgents, motivates parents to send their children to *madaris*²⁰¹ – religious schools – in Pakistan: yet another factor in the re-production of the insurgency.

The conclusions outlined here may seem rather basic, but in fact there is no consensus in implementing a similar scheme on the ground. This has partly to do with conceptual disagreements about proper sequencing, and partly with organisational interests pitting different actors against each other.

A notable example could be that of opium poppy eradication in the south of Afghanistan. The anti-narcotics coalition within the U.S. administration started pushing for a more aggressive counter-narcotics effort by early 2007, after previous attempts. In *Washington Post* correspondent Rajiv Chandrasekaran's recent recounting:²⁰²

"In late 2007, Bush's National Security Council authorized aerial spraying of poppy fields because of concern that drug profits were financing the Taliban, according to that official and another senior Bush administration official. Bush was passionate about spraying. "I'm a spray man myself," he declared, according to one of the officials.

The plan, according to the officials, was to force the Karzai government to accede to spraying, and then use that acquiescence to overcome opposition from the U.S. military and the British government, whose troops were deployed in the areas of greatest poppy cultivation."

The idea of aerial spraying was eventually abandoned, but cooperation during the 2007 harvest period, with organisations such as the Afghan Eradication Force, was demanded even from the ISAF countries that began operations in the south, such as the Netherlands, the UK,

²⁰¹ The plural form of *madrassa*, in Urdu. The word „*madrassa*” comes from Persian, and it literally means „from mother.”

²⁰² Rajiv Chandrasekaran: "Administration Is Keeping Ally at Arm's Length: Skepticism of Afghan Leader Shapes Policy," *The Washington Post*, May 6, 2009, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/05/AR2009050504048.html>, accessed on May 8, 2009.

and Canada. The Netherlands, for instance, strongly objected to this, yet, in an April 29, 2007 incident, even they were forced to provide close air support to relieve a combined Afghan Eradication Force/Dyncorp²⁰³ unit which ended up pinned down in a major fire-fight, in the vicinity of a village in Uruzgan province, whilst attempting to eradicate local farmers' opium poppy fields.

In the meantime, the Senlis Council, an influential think tank, recently re-named the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), was working on disseminating information to farmers in the southern provinces that their crop could be used in the legal production of medical opiates, according to the "Poppy for medicine" scheme which they were promoting at the time (Senlis, 2007).²⁰⁴ Spreading word of this at a time when poppy eradication was about to commence in some of these areas, potentially did not serve the interest of stability. The impact of this should not be exaggerated, or even taken as something that had a major role in events, yet this example shows how even non-governmental actors (other than farmers, drugs traders and Taliban) may get involved in the political arena over the counter-narcotics issue.

A further interesting example of this is the U.S. military itself, the "opposition" of which certain Bush administration officials looked to overcome in pushing for a more aggressive counter-narcotics effort. U.S. troops regularly need to tolerate opium poppy cultivation in their areas of operations, as that is what a pragmatic approach to local circumstances entails. Getty Images photographer John Moore's photo reporting from southwest Afghanistan recently revealed how U.S. Marines are even ready to pay cash compensation to an opium farmer when their airdropped supplies accidentally damage plants in an opium poppy field.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Dyncorp is a major U.S. military contractor.

²⁰⁴ This was a rather unrealistic concept. In the insecure environment where the cultivation of opium poppy is a rational choice for farmers (in spite of a risk of eradication), the village-level production of pain-killers, that the Senlis Council conceived of, would have been impossible. Regarding criticism of Senlis' awareness campaign in the poppy-producing provinces, see Lee Berthiaume: "Senlis Council Has 'Nothing to Hide'," *Embassy Magazine*, July 18, 2007, available at <http://embassymag.ca/page/view/.2007.july.18.senliscouncil>, accessed on July 25, 2007. Quote: "Christopher Alexander, the UN deputy special representative of the secretary-general for Afghanistan, said the non-government organization had been "extremely effective in taking their message to Afghan farmers," which was creating tensions between the population, the Afghan government and NATO forces. "You start to wonder which side they're on," he said. "I'm not pleading for the Senlis Council to give up its role as a strong, independent voice of civil society, but we do need to get our act together to rally around a single policy of counter-narcotics." "

²⁰⁵ See photos and attached captions at : http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2009/04/recent_scenes_from_afghanistan.html#photo7 and at http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2009/04/recent_scenes_from_afghanistan.html#photo8, accessed on May 1, 2009.

To summarise, an insurgency in the midst of a state-building effort is a major challenge for the “peace-building community,” united only in name. The actors of peace-building cannot afford themselves the luxury of not coordinating their approach in a more pragmatic way, with different actors single-mindedly pursuing their own agendas. They should be more keenly aware of the inevitable trade-offs, on which many words were spent in this chapter.

Concluding remarks

Reflecting on the original set of hypotheses

The hypotheses listed at the end of Chapter One (*H1* to *H6*, including the sub-hypotheses), generated on the basis of supposedly relevant and valid insights read out from the post-9/11, and “past-securitisation,” state failure discourse, were all falsified in the argumentation of the dissertation. This is summed up, briefly discussing each of the original hypotheses, below.

H1: *Security interdependence is not unlimited.* Even the pre-9/11 Afghanistan hub of trans-national jihadist terrorism did not affect the entire globe, as shown in Chapter Two. A number of countries were not affected by it at all, in any form.

Insert 5.1. Supplement with regards to interpreting “security interdependence”

In fact, even stating that security interdependence has steadily grown, up to the contemporary era, is a statement that has to be taken under critical review. Infectious diseases gave rise to a particular kind of global, issue-specific security complex centuries ago, within which mass-casualty pandemics often occurred. The „Black Death,” i.e. the bubonic plague, introduced by rats that originally migrated to Europe from Asia, wiped out half of Europe’s population in the 14th century. Not long after, European colonisers spread all sorts of diseases, such as the smallpox, to the indigenous populations of „discovered territories,” entirely or nearly completely wiping out some of them. And it has already been mentioned in this study how cholera epidemics, originating partly from India, where the disease was endemic, ravaged Europe up to the end of the 19th century, when advances in Western medicine effectively shielded the continent’s population from the continually devastating worldwide effects of later epidemics.

Stating that global security interdependence has grown is also losing sight of regional peculiarities in the complex patterns of NSEs. For example, sub-Saharan Africa is part of a global security complex related to sub-standard (not necessarily illegally produced) pharmaceuticals (Nordstrom, 2007: 129-138). But it is no major emitter of trans-national terrorism.

Otherwise, in a different sense, and specifically on the regional level, the interdependence of African states has been strong from the beginning. The common defence of the principle of *uti possidetis iuris*, and of the former colonial borders along with it, shows how enmeshed African *states* are in a peculiar *regional* web of security

relations, largely by virtue of their inherent structural weakness. Another side of this very coin is how guerrilla movements have relied on cross-border rear-bases in the history of the continent in numerous cases, taking advantage of porous, largely administrative borders. Such conflicts were also heated and fuelled by global superpower rivalry, as second- or third-order proxy conflicts, during the Cold War.

Arguably, one could present a visualisation of this aspect of African security interdependence in the form of intersecting circles, resembling the Olympic rings. See *Figure 5.1*.

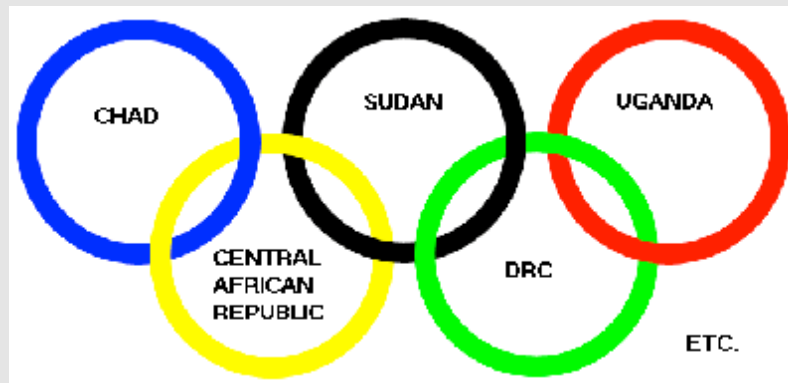


Figure 5.1. A possible visualisation of sub-Saharan Africa's peculiar regional security interdependence patterns related to the issue of borders.

H2 (+ SH 2/1 to SH 2/3): *Neither mass refugee flows, nor terrorism, nor drugs originating from Afghanistan affect the entire world.* Most likely there are not any Afghan refugees in Zimbabwe or the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Probably there never was, and never will occur an al-Qaida-sponsored terrorist attack in North Korea, and with the isolation and the specific blackmail potential of the regime, it is not even likely to feel economic ripple effects of a large-scale, globally disruptive terrorist attack. Finally, opiates exported from Afghanistan do not typically end up consumed in places like Central Africa – a great part of the world can be described as more or less insulated from the distribution chain and the market of Afghan opiates.

H3 (+ SH 3/1 to SH 3/3): *Countries are not evenly affected by mass refugee flows, terrorism or drugs originating from Afghanistan.* As shown in Chapter Two, in many countries where there are Afghan refugees, they may not arrive in flows at all, let alone in *mass* flows. Looking at countries within the ISAF coalition, one cannot claim that Poland or Hungary are equally important targets for a jihadist terrorist as the United States or several Western European countries are. As to opiates exported from Afghanistan, the effects of their trade are quite different at different points „downstream,” as discussed in Chapter Two.

H4 (+ ~~SH 4/1 to SH 4/3~~): *Afghanistan is not simply a „source” of the three mentioned NSEs.*

The closest the contrary comes to the truth is in the case of mass refugee flows, driven largely by internal conditions. Yet it was noted in Chapter Two that even the refugee movements in the 1980s had a certain vicious-circle quality to them, as mujahideen trained in Pakistan fought Soviet forces, and the fighting produced fresh waves of refugees. In general, pull factors of migration also played – and keep playing – a part, even in emergency movements of fleeing people, for example in affecting where they end up, or where they wish to end up eventually. With regards to the other two NSEs: concerning the opiate trade, the role of precursors and arms exported to the so-called „source” were mentioned; in the case of terrorism, its „blowback” element was pointed out.

H5: *Countries participating in the ongoing state-building efforts in Afghanistan do not pursue the same interests.* They tend to define their interests very differently, taking into account their absolute and relative gains, their absolute and relative costs, their alliance dependence etc. Moreover, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) has to be carried out on multiple levels, and it must not miss the importance of factors such as influential decision-makers’ personal, or important state agencies’ organisational interests, either – as highlighted in Chapter Three.

H6: *There are a lot of debates about coalition burden-sharing.* Indirectly, these are also often expressed in the kind of disagreements over the desirable content of “peace-building” in Afghanistan that Chapter Four looked to comprehensively present. Nevertheless the most important dynamics regarding this issue are the ones connected to the relative cost-aversion of many ISAF countries, compared to the lead nation, the U.S., and its more loyal followers.

The culture of of state-building

After Chapters Two and Three had already offered much evidence against the hypotheses generated in Chapter One, Chapter Four dealt with problems of sequencing stemming in part simply from a general underinvestment in the Afghanistan objectives. The lack of coordination among members of the “peace-building community,” united in name only, was also highlighted as a key challenge to overcome at least in certain areas. The state-building paradox, of state-builders not willing to loosen their strangling control over the fledgling state they are claiming to build, when spending their aid dollars (and euros, rials, yens etc.), can be highlighted in the following way, as shown in a series of schemes below – from *Figure 5.2.* to *Figure 5.4.*.

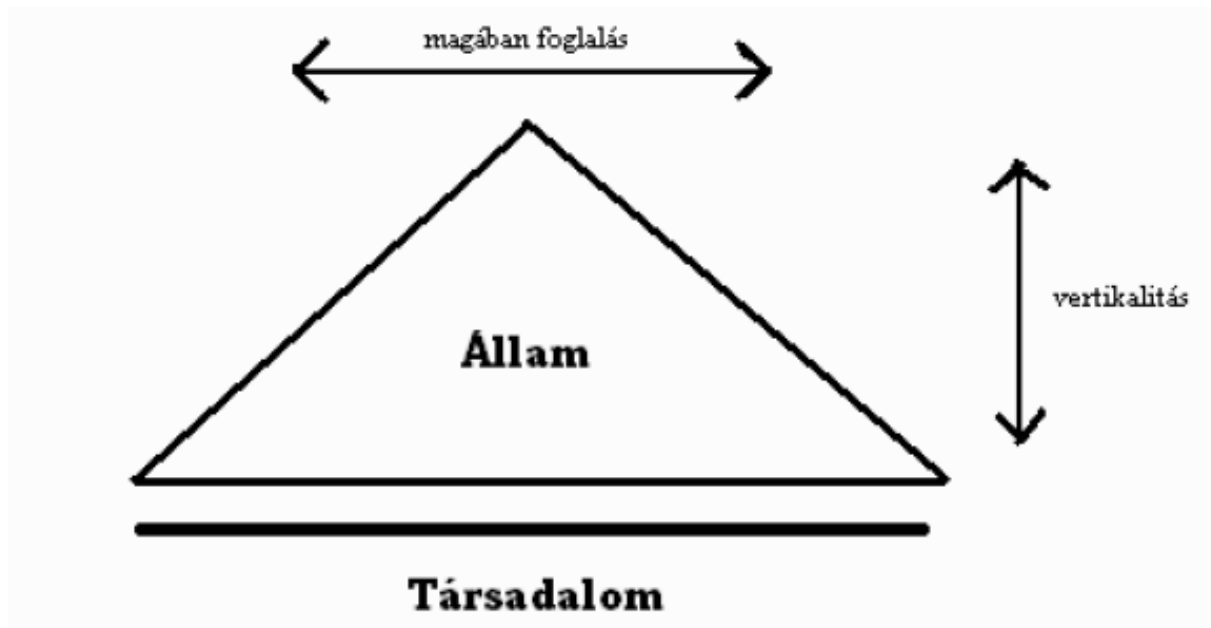


Figure 5.2. Kasnyik's scheme of how Euro-centric discourse conceptualises state-society relations. The key is an assumption of vertical hierarchy ("állam" or state above "társadalom" or society), and all-inclusiveness horizontally (Kasnyik, 2007: 16).

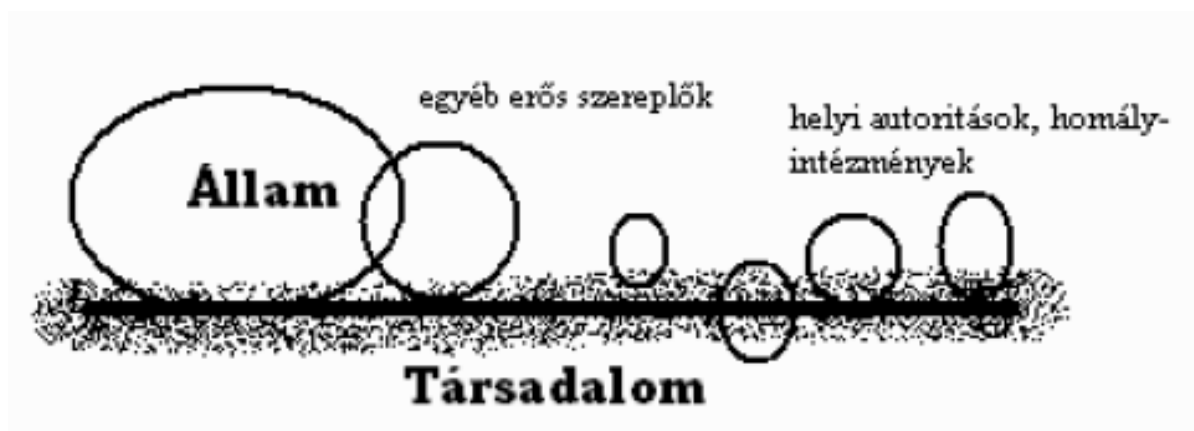


Figure 5.3. Kasnyik's counter-scheme of what we are supposed to find in reality on the "global peripheries" (Kasnyik, 2007: 17). "Állam" or state is but one of the actors in the midst of "társadalom" or society, where one also finds other strong actors ("egyéb erős szereplők"), local authorities ("helyi autoritások") and twilight institutions ("homályintézmények").

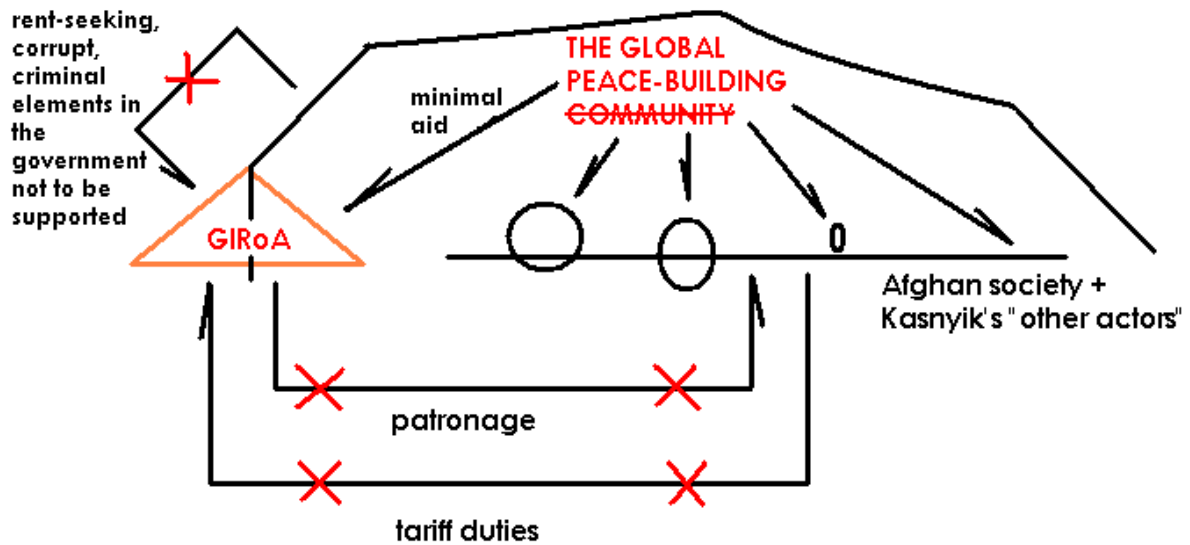


Figure 5.4. A possible visualisation of the concept of state-building as practiced by the “global peace-building community.” GIROA stands for Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. “Tariff duties” and “patronage” are indicated as cut off, to show how resources, that are typically important political economy prerequisites of a polity, the Afghan polity is, to a degree (not fully), deprived of.

What the above series of schemes implies is something that contradicts to a degree with Kasnyik’s argumentation: in Afghanistan, many of the state agencies, IGOs, and NGOs, that are involved in peace-building, cannot be accused of working only with the assisted state’s institutions. In fact, the problem is the opposite, to a degree: the avoidance of a full commitment to standing behind the state institutions. Complaints about corruption, about the warlord past of officials, about their alleged involvement in crime, about rent-seeking behaviour, and about illiberal views – these define the relationships in question from the part of the external actors. Through development contractors and NGOs, even the U.S. is readier to try and work directly with the Afghan “people,” i.e. structures that are an alternative to the government. The sort of power and influence the government is left with is sufficient only to co-opt some, while alienating others, for example through contested appointments to the posts of governors and district sub-governors – in other words, it is relevant, but negative power.

It is probably the most appropriate to reflect on Csicsmann’s criticism of state-building in Afghanistan at this point. As just stated, the problem is not really that external actors would be blind to Afghanistan’s “tribal structures,” which is what Csicsmann argues (2009: 14). In some parts of the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan, where they used to have more of an important

role than elsewhere in the country, some of the tribal institutions (for example confederation-level jirgas for the Durrani and the Ghilzai Pashtun) do not function any more, and what remains, as far as tribal structures go, are fault-lines of widely varying significance from place to place. Their importance depends on how strong the remaining tribal identities are in the given locale, on what content these identities are filled with, and on the nature and dynamics of local inter-group relations. As Glatzer writes: “[the tribal principle] is one of the recruiting principles of corporate and of conflicting groups, though never the only one” (Glatzer, 2001: 385).

In general, the U.S. and other militaries, as well as NGOs, are aware of these *potential* fault-lines. For illustration of this, see Afsar, Samples and Wood’s analysis of the neo-Taliban, with a more detailed cataloguing of Pashtun kin groups than I have seen elsewhere before – in the U.S. military’s periodical, the *Military Review* (2008). Even better illustration could be to point out how *Loya Jirgas* played a key role in the post-Taliban political transition in Afghanistan, and how this role was favoured by the U.S. as well.

Having said that, in Afghanistan it was always very hard for anyone, even for focused anthropologists researching narrow areas for years, or for decades, to develop truly comprehensive awareness of all issues that mattered in a vicinity.

It seems a more relevant question in the Afghan context if almost all major segments of Afghanistan’s otherwise diverse population may be simply too far, in a cultural sense, from the sort of liberal society that can be ideal human resource for a democracy. In other words: if a transition to a liberal democracy may be a bridge too far for the people themselves?

Reflecting on Inglehart et al.’s World Values Survey, cited by Csicsmann (2009: 11), and its proposition that societies can be placed along a continuum between traditional vs. self-expression values, an important problem is that this does not work in the Afghanistan context, in a conceptual sense. It was the continuously aggravating fault-line between Communists and Islamists, and its exploitation by outside actors, that led to internal war in Afghanistan by the 1970s. This was a conflict pitting against each other Communists, as proponents of an insanely radical path to modernisation, and Islamists, some of whom were radical opponents of any modernisation project. Yet the latter represented an essentially modern phenomenon themselves: political Islam, with its reification of an idealised conservative Islam, as a tool of anti-modernist mobilisation. Even the Taliban’s different Islamic extremism, a derivative of what once used to be conservative Pashtun village Islam, is a more complex phenomenon: a product of decades-long re-socialisation in the midst of overcrowded and methodically radicalised refugee camp populations in Pakistani territory (Grare, 2003).

Concerns regarding how extremely long it would take for even carefully designed institutions of a “re-imported state”²⁰⁶ to nurture an adequate transformation (a near-full-scale reculturation) of Afghan society, one that could be conducive to consolidating democracy and also to overcoming the remaining anti-modernist opposition of political Islam in the process, are entirely legitimate. But the currently more pressing questions are:

- 1) whether state-building will founder primarily because of the general under-investment that characterises it;
- 2) whether the none-too-carefully designed political institutions of the state have any prospect of becoming self-sustainable at some point;
- 3) whether Afghanistan will be left unharmed from some future point in time by the external powers that played a destructive role throughout its history.

In order to have the opportunity to establish whether cultural peculiarities are the major obstacle to realising a democratic state in Afghanistan, the endeavour to arrive at it should not fail because of tightfistedness, or because of institutions designed unworkable to start with, or because of destructive external intrigue – or because of a combination of all these three.

Reflections of developments in Afghanistan in the state failure discourse

Highlighting the last of the three factors listed above – that of external actors’ role – is also important in order to make an important point about the state failure discourse in general. This is particularly relevant for the cultural relativist stream of the discourse, which has near-self-evident opposition to offer against even trying Western-led state-building in Afghanistan. The following quote neatly sums up this point: as Duverger once noted,²⁰⁷ “in spite of all of the [French] Fourth Republic’s flaws and weaknesses, it ‘would have continued to exist, if it had not been for the Algerian war’.” Challenges in Afghanistan cannot be properly appreciated if they are not viewed in the broader context of the diverse processes playing out in the region and in the wider world, over the long-run.

Being so a-historical as it usually is, the state failure discourse functions to reinforce in donor countries, self-referencing themselves as “the international community,” a narcissistic self-image. It does this as it presents as its central dilemma one that is largely false: whether one should intervene in countries struck by intra-state conflicts and other forms of misery merely for humanitarian reasons, or out of security interests as well, when there are any. Self-

²⁰⁶ I am using László Csicsmann’s term here (2009: 15).

²⁰⁷ Quoted by Lijphart, 1969: 224.

evidently, when the question is posed in this way, the blame for the need for intervention, i.e. an abnormal situation, can be cast mainly on local conditions, local problems and local actors, *there*, in the designated target country.

This magnifies the perceived sacrifice that is made when an intervention is carried out for statedly humanitarian reasons, and thus shields such interventions from criticism regarding whether they were ever properly resourced to achieve long-lasting results. An example of this could be the recent EUFOR mission in Chad and the Central African Republic – never meant to be a panacea for the problems of the two countries concerned, and a mere bandage on the wound in the case of the spill-over from Sudanese Darfur, that it was nominally created to deal with.

If there are problems that need to be solved and sufficient resources cannot be secured, post-modern imperialism flirts with cultural relativism. When the co-optation of seemingly more traditional social structures (such as the “arbakai,” or “the moderate Taliban”) looks like it could offer an alternative to using up a great deal of one’s own resources, “respect for local cultural values” and an avoidance of “cultural imperialism” will always sound like even morally appropriate arguments justifying this.

In this, lessons of the past are forgotten in the Afghan case. For instance, the Taliban seem neither capable nor willing to provide internationally accountable governance. And they cannot be pressured into behaving differently by the threat of air strikes and special forces raids, as is suggested by some:²⁰⁸ by people who forget about all that the history of Afghanistan in the 1990s may teach us.²⁰⁹

In such argumentation, one finds the recurring idea of the need for an anti-humanitarian stance, based on the erroneous premise of a counter-terrorism vs. counterinsurgency trade-off – the assumption that we cannot afford the luxury to care about

²⁰⁸ See Bartle Breese Bull: „The wrong force for the ‘right war’.” *The New York Times*, November 14, 2008, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/14/opinion/14iht-edbull.1.15292038.html?_r=1, accessed on November 20, 2008; Anatoli Lieven: „America must fight for an Afghan exit.” *Financial Times*, February 1, 2009, available at http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2009/america_must_fight_afghan_exit_10562, re-published at http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2009/america_must_fight_afghan_exit_10562, accessed on February 3, 2009.

²⁰⁹ It caused immense headache for the CIA how to devise operationally and legally sound plans for capturing or killing Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan prior to September 11, 2001, and arguably they did not ever manage to devise a truly feasible plan. One cannot simply deploy special forces or launch air strikes in another state’s territory with regularity, even if one has the necessary intelligence to accurately target certain wanted individuals (but this sort of intelligence may likely be lacking in the absence of a permanent presence on the ground, and with a hostile regime ruling over the area concerned). The above cited authors, Bull, Lieven, as well as many others, simply do not consult Afghanistan’s history when they formulate their recommendations – in Anatoli Lieven’s case, these recommendations even come with the influence of authority, especially in the UK discourse.

Afghans, and that in the end we should not do them the favour of caring about more than merely our own interests.

Meanwhile, the question, “are we merely acting out of humanitarianism, or are we acting out of security interests *as well*,” makes us forget about other possible reasons for interventions, that may be there behind interventions at the present, or may have been behind the interventions of the past – which is all the more remarkable, given that some of the latter have enduringly contributed to problems in the areas where we face instability today. This could be described as the “sub-conscious” of the state failure/state-building discourse: that there has always been much state- and nation-*destroying* taking place as well, over the course of history (and not only during the Cold War). There have been, as well as there are, anti-IRG interventions not only on humanitarian grounds, but on the basis of self-interest on the part of intervening powers as well.

For example, there were, in the past, (i) interventions that took place because of security interests not connected to NSEs from a given country, but to fears that a strategic adversary would establish too good a position there (e.g. in Nicaragua, the case of U.S. support of the *contras* vs. the Soviet-backed *sandinistas*; or in Afghanistan, in the form of support from multiple sources to the mujahideen against the Afghan communists); (ii) interventions because of economic interests (e.g. in Iran, 1953); (iii) interventions driven by a combination of these factors (as in Grenada, in 1983).²¹⁰ Going even further, one could broaden the notion of interventions beyond the use of some kind of force, and beyond ones aiming at changing a government in one way or another. Governance-shaping interventions of the World Bank and the IMF are also not exempt from being influenced by donor country interests, and the state failure discourse, focused as it is on individual countries’ “own” problems, supports the view that responsibility for these problems does not really lie with external actors.

In other words, state failure “theory” could also be described as a theory of intervention – one that was formed on the basis of biased case selection, and in a generally misleading way.

Nevertheless, if one is aware of the fallacies it can *indirectly* lead to, and consciously avoids misusing it, the concept of NSEs may still be useful in interpreting and describing important phenomena of the present, such as issue-specific security complexes. The latter may be profiled by adding up issue-specific patterns of NSEs, and by describing mechanisms

²¹⁰ Of course, the Soviet Union and a number of other countries (India, China, Syria, Israel, Cuba, Rwanda etc.) also carried out such interventions (especially in the broad sense that is implied here) in the past.

that shape them: by explaining how qualitative, quantitative and directional shifts of the NSEs concerned come to occur – as demonstrated in Chapter Two.

Thus, they may offer some guidance to policy, if carefully applied.

Afterword

Grand theories of radical socialist modernisation, Cold War containment, light-footprint state-building, and anti-modernist cultural counter-revolution have clashed with the endless complexities of people, politics and place in Afghanistan, in a lethal encounter, over the course of the last three decades – in an encounter that was lethal for the people and the ideas concerned alike.

This study attempted to shed some light on the mentioned complexities with the help of some new concepts *and* careful reflection on their significance and on their potential implications in Afghanistan's context. The primary aim was to present some key arguments regarding what policy goals may be realistically set in Afghanistan, to let us see clearer in an age of inevitably difficult, uncertain policy-making.

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