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**Nemzetközi Tanulmányok Intézet**

**A COLLECTION OF THE THESES  
of**

**Péter Marton's**

**doctoral dissertation, titled**

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

**Budapest, 2009**

**Thesis advisors:**

**Professors**

**Dr. László J. Kiss CSc és Dr. Ferenc Szávai DSc**

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## **I. A brief introduction to the subject of the thesis**

This doctoral dissertation develops and introduces new concepts as input for the discourse on the universal reasons and consequences of state failure, prior to which it deconstructively highlights some key 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 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.

### *The structure of the dissertation*

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.

## **II. The formulation of the key research questions and methodology**

### **Conceptualising the notion and the discourse of state failure**

What has been missing from the discourse of state failure, 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*<sup>1</sup>), is first of all 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.

Presenting a possible way to conceptualise state failure, the ensuing sections of Chapter One look to overcome some general deficiencies 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.”<sup>2</sup> Two other negative

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> 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

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.<sup>3</sup>

- II.) The second innovation is to differentiate between different research motivations, which dictate different research agendas. As a result of one or another particular 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.

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

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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.

<sup>3</sup> Consider in this light the rather superficial debates over whether currently insurgency-hit states such as Afghanistan are “failed” or not.



unfoundedly – irrationally or manipulatively – playing to the security fears of the general public. Nevertheless a security-oriented approach offers a relatively clear track to follow.

*(The external, security-oriented definition.)* According to my security-oriented definition, presented in the dissertation, “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.”

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).

*(Humanitarian concepts of state failure.)* 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.

However, 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*?

### **The implications of working with a security-oriented concept of state failure**

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*).

„X”			
		„Y”	

**Figure 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.

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.

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, and on the basis of an overview of the state failure discourse that is presented in the dissertation, it is concluded that only anti-Eurocentrics and post-modern imperialists have a clear policy recommendation. 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.

### **Security interdependence and state failure equal state-building as cooperative threat reduction?**

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.

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,<sup>4</sup> 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*.

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

## **Anti-hypotheses: Issues remaining to be examined in the thesis**

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 is a key goal of the largely qualitative analysis outlined in the 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, by this point, been put forward in Chapter One. Those are temporarily disregarded, however, 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.

### **III. Results**

#### **Issue-specific security complexes vs. security interdependence: Why the need for this new analytical tool?**

Instead of what could be logical to assume if one believed in global security interdependence, even the effects of terrorism clearly do not reach every corner of every state in the world. The impact of jihadist actions and operations was quite different from country to country ever since Afghanistan and Pakistan have become a training hub for militants. Some countries 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 Ghani<sup>5</sup> 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):

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

„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 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 dissertation applies the following modifications in light of this. Some are new, some have already been used 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).

The dissertation discusses five different issue-specific security complexes (ISCs), focusing on Afghanistan. Beyond those related to mass refugee flows, jihadist terrorism, and the drugs trade, it also looks at the ISCs connected to polio and the potential Afghan transit of non-Russian natural gas. These are not detailed in this extensive summary.

In outlining these ISCs, 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.

## **ISCs: Useful in academic discourse, impractical in policy discourse**

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.

Getting back to issue-specific security complexes, this means that they appear to be insignificant as drivers of security community formation. The "mass refugee flows" ISC is contained, the jihadist terrorism ISC is currently at least partly deflected in the direction of Afghanistan itself, while the drugs trade ISC is well-anchored by demand in richer countries. Thus there is seemingly not much that could or should be done differently in their case, when it comes to the question of how these findings should affect the West's Afghanistan policy. 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 official take by the Hungarian Ministry of Defence on the issue of Hungarian interests in Afghanistan, cited in the dissertation, 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.

However, 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 in the dissertation.)

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,<sup>6</sup> 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, key reflection on the *theory* of state-building ventures, the chapters of the dissertation that follow after this point present arguments regarding some of the most problematic aspects of the *practice* of the ongoing state-building attempt in Afghanistan (these are coalition burden-sharing and sequencing).

### **Coalition burden-sharing (Chapter Three in the dissertation)**

Besides a comprehensive discussion of the problems generally found in coalition burden-sharing, the dissertation also presents detailed case studies: those of the Polish and the Dutch involvement in Afghanistan – these give an even more nuanced outlook on the different concerns that tend to arise in the context of coalition burden-sharing debates.

Below is a non-comprehensive list of some of the peculiar-seeming determinants highlighted in the Polish and the Dutch case studies:

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<sup>6</sup> See the recent background paper from the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs on Baluchistan by Magda Katona (2008).



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.

The interpretive frameworks presented in the dissertation's earlier, aforementioned overview of intra-coalition conflicts (these cannot be outlined here for lack of space) 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, Leggold and Unger, 1994);
2. geo-politics = alliance dependence (Bennett, Leggold and Unger, 1994);
3. the military's finances = organisational interests (Bennett, Leggold and Unger, 1994);
4. the need to realise the objectives set = balance of threat (Bennett, Leggold 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, Leppard 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, Leppard 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).

All complex details of coalition politics discussed so far look amazingly simple, however, when one tries to assess Pakistan’s role in Bennett, Leppard and Unger’s terms. Pakistan is a “major non-NATO ally” (MNNA) of the U.S. since 2004<sup>7</sup> (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

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<sup>7</sup> *Bush names Pakistan major ally.* BBC, June 17, 2004, available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/3814013.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3814013.stm), accessed on April 25, 2009.

operations in Afghanistan in a *negative* sense.<sup>8</sup> 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, given its control of the Suez Canal waterway.

### **Sequencing (*Chapter Four in the dissertation*)**

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

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<sup>8</sup> 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](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.

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 of the dissertation, I 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.

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,"

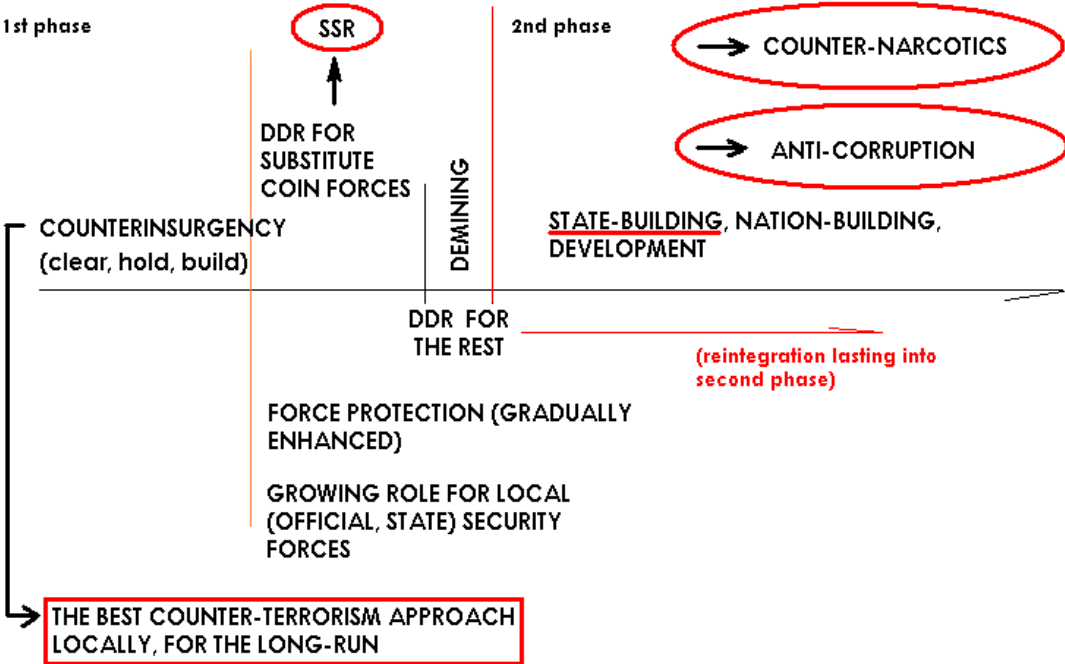
was the conclusion of the RAND Corporation's comprehensive study of the UN's role in past attempts at state-building (Dobbins et al., 2005: 241).

In discussing problematic issues of sequencing in the Afghan context, as is extensively done in Chapter Four of the dissertation, 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.

Provided that Russia does come in for the long run in the aid of ISAF logistics, allowing a more robust and consequently more appropriately sequenced mission in Afghanistan, the following scheme is offered here for sequencing tasks related to state-building, in areas characterised by an unstable security situation. Chapter Four's argumentation functions to

highlight the rationale of the sort of arrangement presented here as generally valid advice for state-building when the latter is challenged by armed insurgency.



**Figure 2.** A scheme of more effective sequencing, drawn up on the basis of observations about the Afghan case.

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 2.*, 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 2.* 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*<sup>9</sup> – religious schools – in Pakistan: yet another factor in the re-production of the insurgency.

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 would need to be more keenly aware of the inevitable trade-offs, on which many words were spent in this chapter.

### **Conclusion: 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, are 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 transnational 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.

**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

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<sup>9</sup> The plural form of *madrassa*, in Urdu. The word „*madrassa*” comes from Persian, and it literally means „from mother.”

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.

A cultural relativist response to the difficulties of the state-building effort in Afghanistan (the ones connected to how misplaced the theory of state-building is and how that makes it

troublesome for governments to maintain public support for policy; and the ones connected to coalition burden-sharing, inappropriate sequencing, and the troublesome prioritisation of policies towards *all* the countries in Afghanistan's region) is claimed to be inappropriate in this thesis.

Elaborated in more detail, this thesis makes the point that the key source of difficulties in Afghanistan has never been a blindness to the supposedly tribal structures (or in general a blindness to the traditions) of Afghan society – an Afghan society otherwise quite heterogeneous in fact (for which reason, arguably, it is more appropriately referred to as „Afghanistan's population”).

Concerns regarding how extremely long it would take for the sake of democratisation for even carefully designed institutions of a “re-imported state”<sup>10</sup> 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.

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<sup>10</sup> I am using László Csicsmann's term here (2009: 15).



## **Conclusion: Reflecting on 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,<sup>11</sup> “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-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.

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Lijphart, 1969: 224.

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:<sup>12</sup> by people who forget about all that the history of Afghanistan in the 1990s may teach us.<sup>13</sup>

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 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

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<sup>12</sup> 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](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](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](http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2009/america_must_fight_afghan_exit_10562), accessed on February 3, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

combination of these factors (as in Grenada, in 1983).<sup>14</sup> 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 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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<sup>14</sup> 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.

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