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**International Peacemaking in Tajikistan  
and Afghanistan Compared:  
Lessons Learned and Unlearned**

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**Abstract**

Changes in the architecture of international engagements in peacemaking over the last decade can be traced through a comparison of the Peace Accords of 1997 which ended five years of civil war in Tajikistan with the on-going intervention in Afghanistan which began in the context of the global war against terrorism. The comparison points to the challenges that complex interventions face today: the collapse of stabilization, transition and consolidation phases of peacemaking; the lack of clarity about motivations for engagement; the ambiguous methods of state-building and uncertain ownership of peace processes. The success of the externally-led Tajikistan peace process can be attributed to the common search for collaboration between international organizations and regional powers and the gradual sequencing of the different stages: negotiation for power sharing, followed by consolidation, and finally state-building. By contrast, the changing motivations for intervention, the isolation of the Western alliance from regional actors, and the external actors' own role as parties to war, which provokes escalating reactions, are the potential elements of failure in Afghanistan. Ultimately, it is the national ownership of peace processes that creates the necessary legitimacy for peacemaking to be durable.

Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh  
**Les leçons des opérations de rétablissement de la paix  
au Tadjikistan et en Afghanistan**

**Résumé**

Au cours des dix dernières années, les modalités de l'engagement international dans les opérations de rétablissement de la paix ont évolué. Une comparaison entre les accords qui en 1997 ont marqué la fin de cinq ans de guerre civile au Tadjikistan, et le début de l'intervention en Afghanistan menée dans un contexte international de guerre contre le terrorisme, en témoigne. Elle met l'accent sur les défis auxquels ces interventions ont dû faire face : l'échec des phases de stabilisation, de transition et de consolidation du rétablissement de la paix ; le manque de netteté des véritables motifs de l'engagement international ; l'ambiguïté des méthodes utilisées pour la reconstruction des Etats concernés et l'appropriation des processus de paix par les Etats engagés. Le succès du processus de paix au Tadjikistan peut être attribué à la collaboration entre organismes internationaux et puissances régionales, mais aussi à l'ordonnancement progressif des différentes étapes : négociations autour du partage du pouvoir puis consolidation et reconstruction de l'Etat. En revanche, l'échec du rétablissement de la paix en Afghanistan s'explique en partie par la diversité des motifs de l'engagement international, l'isolement de l'alliance occidentale dans la région et les positions prises dans la guerre par certains acteurs extérieurs. Quoi qu'il en soit, seule l'appropriation du processus de paix par les populations locales lui confère la légitimité propre à le pérenniser.

# International Peacemaking in Tajikistan and Afghanistan Compared: Lessons Learned and Unlearned

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## PRELUDE TO A COMPARISON BETWEEN APPLES AND ORANGES<sup>1</sup>

Since the mid-1990s there has been a boom in academic research in terms of evaluations, lessons to be learned and the best practices to be adopted in the field of peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts at the national and international levels. Research has attracted attention from different disciplines (political science, economics, sociology, psychology, philosophy, etc.) Despite these advances, however, there still is a serious lack of understanding of the architecture of a successful peacemaking process which can have either positive or negative consequences on the peacebuilding stages.

The exceptional success of the 1997 Tajik peace agreement marks an often neglected and little known achievement in international relations literature. The case of Tajikistan can be considered as one of the most successful of UN peacemaking efforts, a model of conflict resolution and reconciliation. By contrast, the Afghanistan case has been one of the

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most controversial “peace” missions in recent history, and its future remains unclear. The Afghanistan peacebuilding movement, first launched with the Bonn accords of December 2001, has been marred by difficulties in terms of stabilization and reconstruction, casting doubt on the long term success of the intervention itself. A comparison of international peacemaking efforts in Tajikistan in the 1990s and Afghanistan since 2001 may, although the two differ greatly, offer valuable lessons on the evolution of the modalities and motivations of international interventions during the past decade.

At first glance, a comparison between the role of international actors in supporting peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan and Tajikistan seems like a futile exercise. The two conflicts have very different causes and consequences, stemming from differing national contexts, steeped in widely divergent histories and geographies, taking place in geopolitical situations that seem to have little in common. This article does not attempt to compare in detail the entire dynamics of war and peace in the two countries, which would not only be a Herculean task but one that requires much more exhaustive evidence and analysis, and might in the end be considered misguided. Both the combination of internal and external dynamics that led to war in each case, and the essential national policies and processes that were designed to establish peace, are extremely different. One can not even begin to draw parallels between a conflict that has spanned decades of war and has led to the loss of more than a million lives, as is the case in Afghanistan, with a conflict that was swift both in the way it erupted and ended, as in the case of Tajikistan, with casualties perhaps under 50,000. The Afghan wars, as there have been a multitude of them, cannot be categorized as mere civil wars as in the case of Tajikistan, and they cannot be understood without delving into the history and geography of this crossroads of geo-strategic interests and examining the direct interventions by foreign forces. Afghanistan has thus gone through multiple conflicts, with the last one unfolding in the context of a global War on Terror, the stabilization of which is not a matter of simple peacemaking between two warring sides. The implications, in the two cases, for war and peace at every imaginable political and geographical level (local, national, regional and global) are also beyond comparison.

Tajikistan constitutes a classical case of peacemaking, while the intervention in Afghanistan is not a classic peacekeeping one, but a military campaign. And yet, a scrutiny of the role of the international community in creating stabilization in both countries may have some merit, especially as it may present lessons for the international community’s engagement from peacekeeping to peacemaking to peacebuilding.

This article takes as its point of departure the specific positive and negative roles that international actors can play in peacemaking. Undoubtedly, a peace process is the culmination of a dialogue between internal and external actors, and the way in which the former expropriate for themselves ideas that come from outside. The internal dynamics of the Tajikistan peace process have been analyzed extensively elsewhere<sup>2</sup>. Yet few articles

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<sup>2</sup> Djalili et al. 1998, Jonson 2006 and Roy 2007 among others have analyzed the geopolitical context and political Islam; Dadmehr 2003 and Tadjbakhsh and Jawad 1995 have examined the internal weakness of the state brought about through regionalism; Juraeva 1996 has explained the ethnic dimension of the conflict, while Atkin 1998 and Roy 1996 its Islamic interpretation.

have specifically focused on the role of external actors<sup>3</sup>. The actual process of peacemaking, especially by the UN, has seldom been examined. This process was documented by Goryayev<sup>4</sup>, a Senior Political Affairs Officer in the United Nations Department of Political Affairs who served as the adviser to all the UN Special Envoys and Special Representatives. Attention has also been paid to the actors' own accounts of their involvement in the process ten years after the 1997 Peace Agreement through a series of workshops organized by the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica. These accounts need to be further examined in light of the possible lessons to be learned by comparing cases. It is with this perspective in mind that we shall reopen the case of Tajikistan and compare it to the involvement of the international community in Afghanistan ten years later.

### **Caveats to Keep in Mind**

The article, it is important to stress, does not take into account the internal processes but only the role of external actors, with a specific focus on the efforts of the UN as the most visible representative of the international community.

The Tajikistan case as presented in this article may seem overly positive, since the consolidation of peace in the country is as yet incomplete, what with the need for political integration of political actors, the tackling of poverty, unemployment, corruption, as well as the potential rise of new opposition groups and the spread of small arms, etc. Ten years after the peace accords, tensions among regional groups are reviving, the opposition has been stifled, and a policy of recentralisation of power is being put into effect by President Rahmon. These internal dynamics are intricately linked to the changing geopolitical situation in the region, with the failure of stabilization in Afghanistan, the revival of Russia and China as regional powers, and the precarious future of Iran. The challenges remaining today in Tajikistan are, one can argue, the direct result of the failure of the consolidation of peacebuilding over the past ten years, coupled with the inevitable geopolitical factor.

Yet, for the purposes of a rudimentary comparison, we have chosen to concentrate on elements of a successful peacemaking process that was able to put an end to the civil war, a period between 1992 and 1997, in order to draw out the possible lessons to be learned or unlearned, while remaining conscious of the fact that such an elementary analysis might be open to criticism for simplification.

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<sup>3</sup> Collins 2003 argues that the badly designed peace agreement allowed for the continuation of conflicts, but bases her argument on the existence of clan politics which led to institutional and regime collapse in the first place and continues to exert pressure in Tajikistan, making external interventions ineffective *ceteris paribus*.

<sup>4</sup> Goryayev 2001.

## Yet a Relevant Comparison

With these caveats in mind, the article first presents the historical background to the conflicts in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. It then gives a comparative analysis of international actors' roles in the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes in the two cases around six arguments:

First, it is argued that motivation for engagement can have a direct impact on the success of conflict resolution. In Tajikistan, a classic case of a civil war, intervention was motivated by a responsibility to protect the civilian population and to prevent an internal war from spreading to neighbours. The US-led international engagement in Afghanistan, on the other hand, was in the context of a global war against terror in which America saw itself increasingly implicated, not just as an observer and pacifier, but as one of the parties to the "war".

Second, ulterior motivations inevitably hamper effective cooperation with regional powers that may also have a stake in the stabilization of a conflict. In the case of Tajikistan, the sharing of the burden for a regional solution was sought, while in Afghanistan a "global" war against an abstract enemy neglected the regional context where the drama was unfolding.

Third, the article argues that a peace process, if it is to be called such, needs to initiate negotiations with defeated parties early in the process. The Tajikistan case was a classical peacemaking mission where success stemmed from the willingness of all sides to negotiate a peace agreement brokered by the UN and regional powers. The difference in the case of Afghanistan was that not only that negotiations with the defeated enemy were initially by-passed, but that when they were finally considered as the solution to peace, diffused ownership of the negotiations delegitimized them for the long run.

Fourth, there has been a significant tendency in recent years, both in the academic literature and in practice, to "integrate" peace-enforcement, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. However, such integration may indeed have important unintended negative consequences. When United Nations interventions took a more gradual approach, settling the conflict, consolidating peace, and only then supporting state-building, as was the case a decade ago in Tajikistan, success was more evident.

Fifth, this article will argue that a legitimate state is a requirement for peacebuilding; under conditions of sustained war and occupation, the state cannot take on its proper role, regardless of democratization and reconstruction efforts of external actors.

Sixth, we will examine the issue of aid disbursement in the two cases. Given that absorption capacity determine the extent to which a country can make efficient use of aid, the fragile predicament of post-conflict situations requires a gradual increase in aid.

The conclusion presents three main lessons learned about chances of peace succeeding that depend on unified motivation, on phasing, and on the legitimacy of national institutions.

## TWO DIFFERENT SETTINGS

It is often said that Central Asia and Afghanistan belong to the same regional conflict complex, that instability in one country can carry over into the other. At the same time, however, the trajectory of war and peace in the two instances has followed very different paths.

### Tajikistan, From a Swift War to a Swift Peace

The peacemaking process in Tajikistan was as swift and unexpected as was the war-making momentum.

On August 25, 1990, Tajikistan proclaimed its sovereignty and laws of the republic were changed to replace the laws of the USSR. In the aftermath of the coup in Moscow in August 1991, Tajikistan was declared, top down style, as an independent state on September 9, 1991. The Communist party was officially abolished, but re-emerged later under the name of the "Socialist Party of Tajikistan". In 1991 Tajikistan became a member, with ten other former Soviet republics, of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It also became a member of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in January 1992 and the United Nations in March of 1992.

But independence from a dismantled Soviet Union in 1991 left the new republic with the challenging task of building a state in difficult conditions: a combination of widespread poverty; a weak administration without a viable economic and fiscal base for state power or genuine national security forces; ambitious but inexperienced politicians; regional rivalries born of Moscow's divide-and-rule policy; and the intervention of outside forces taking advantage of the chaos to further their own national interests. The results were disastrous. The Tajik civil war which began in the spring of 1992 and ended with a UN-brokered Peace Agreement in 1997, cost the lives of approximately 50,000 and the displacement (both domestically and through migration to Afghanistan) of some estimated 500,000 people.

Although the conflict in Tajikistan was originally interpreted by the Western and Russian press in ideological terms, supposedly having been instigated by a coalition of democrats and Islamic party members that opposed the "old-guarders" and communists immediately after the demise of the Soviet Union, the interests at stake were in fact hardly ideological. The political conflict was an excuse for revived regional confrontations due to the geographical fragmentation. As many scholars<sup>5</sup>, including this author, have written, the conflict in Tajikistan had a "regional" (meant here below the state) and not an ideological character: it resulted from a power vacuum and the break-down of institutions providing opportunities for those

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<sup>5</sup> Tadjbakhsh 1993 a,b,c, 1994, 1997; Rubin 1995; Roy 1996; Djalili 1995; Jonson 2006; Collins 2003.

who had been marginalized by past Soviet policies that had denied them a share of the power to mobilize against traditional *nomenklatura* leaders. The mobilization was based on regional alliances of leaders tied to their places of origin.

The mahalgaroi, translated as the “regionalist” (meant here at a sub-national level) or the “localized” element of the war, stemmed from the fact that state and Communist Party leaders had traditionally been chosen from the Northern province of Leninabad (which changed its name to Khojand in the 1990s and subsequently to Sughd in the 2000s) during the Soviet period, while representatives of the central and eastern regions (Gharm and Badakhshan) were consistently excluded from leadership positions. The population from the southern parts of the country (Kulob, now called Khatlon) was among the poorest and most marginalized, locked into a clientele relationship with the northern more affluent regions. During the war, they were to serve, as many poverty-stricken populations often do, as the “foot soldiers” of the better-off protagonists and instigators of the conflict in the north. Roughly speaking, each region provided its own particular contribution to the conflict: Northerners were the economic financiers; central and eastern Tajiks provided the intellectual figures as well as members of the Democratic Party, Islamic leaders and military commanders when sectors of the opposition migrated to Afghanistan; and southerners furnished the bosses of the criminal world. Thus, communist, Islamic, nationalist and democratic ideals were brandished as labels in the attempts to legitimize the different regional clashes.

The break-up of the Soviet Union increased the attractiveness of the pie to be divided among regional authorities. For the first time in more than seventy years, different socio-political groups saw the possibility of sharing some of the power that had hitherto remained in the hands of a *nomenklatura* chosen by Moscow. A crucial explanation of the war therefore could be that the first opportunity to take power coincided with the break-down of the mechanisms for governing a newly independent country. Poverty and economic dependence, a variety of ethnic groups competing for local resources, the refusal of the military industrial complex to keep a low profile after the break-up of the Soviet Union, and the proximity of a chaotic Afghanistan: all provided favourable conditions for the war to break out in Tajikistan.

Four distinct periods can be delineated in the chronology of events: first, a period of political activism, extending from the introduction of *perestroika* in Tajikistan in late 1989 to the culmination of the civil war in October 1992. The political openings created by the collapse of the former Soviet Union led to the creation of a number of parties and organizations by journalists, writers, historians and members of academic circles that collectively sought political and economic reforms and the strengthening of the Tajik national identity. Initial organizations, such as the 1988 “Yavaron-i-Bozsozi” (Friends of Reconstruction and Restoration) had been dismantled by the First Secretary of the Communist Party, Qahhar Mahkamov. But beginning with 1990, movements such as “Ru Ba Ru” (Face to Face) and “Vahdat” (Unity) and later “Rastokhez” (Renaissance) became more organized, based on the model provided by the Sajudis National Front of Lithuania. The campaign of Rastokhez (Renaissance) for example began primarily with cultural demands: adoption of Tajik as the state language, return to the traditional Arabic-Persian alphabet, replacement of city and street names with their pre-Soviet appellations or with new titles from Tajik history, revival of the Islamic cultural heritage, and pressure on the Uzbek government to grant greater



cultural autonomy to Tajiks living in their republic. Following on the success of Rastokhez, the Democratic Party, the Islamic Revivalist Party, the La'le Badakhshon and dozens of other religious, cultural and political organizations were officially registered between 1990 and 1991. Although all favoured democratic reforms and a gradual transition to a market economy, each had a specific program of goals, rules and regulations and each attracted members from different walks of life<sup>6</sup>. In mid-February 1990 a major demonstration was organized against the national, political and economic policies of the government, which led to riots fuelled by rumours that Armenian refugees had been given housing priority by the government.

A second stage can be considered as lasting from 1991 to 1994, when the demands became increasingly political and confrontational, leading to a civil war. The opposition exercised pressure on the government through massive demonstrations, by mobilizing dissatisfied elements of the population, and by uniting all the alternative parties and associations. The united opposition nominated a candidate for the 1991 presidential elections, Davlat Khudonazarov, who received 30% of the votes but lost the elections to Rahmon Nabiev, the former Secretary of the Communist Party who had been dismissed by Gorbachev. In February 1992, the united opposition organized a mass rally to demand political and economic reforms, among them the resignation of a number of high ranking officials. Discontent with Nabiev's government escalated in the spring of 1992 as Dushanbe became the centre of fifty days of sit-in demonstrations and counter-demonstrations. By May, the capital Dushanbe was split into two sectors located a few blocks from each other: supporters of the opposition gathered at Shohada (Martyrs') Square, while those who backed the government, most of whom were from the southern city of Kulob, camped out on Ozodi (Liberty) Square. After a brief but bloody clash between the two sides in May, the opposition managed to obtain eight posts in a coalition government. When authorities in Kulob and Leninabad refused to recognise the newly established coalition government, fighting spread to other provinces, mainly in the south. Only Badakhshan and Khojand remained outside the turmoil, which had spread throughout the south-western regions. In early September, Rahmon Nabiev was forced to resign when he was captured by a group identifying itself as the "Young People of Dushanbe". But in November 1992 the parliament, meeting outside of the capital Dushanbe, staged a strong comeback, rejecting all the opposition candidates, and designating a government made up mostly of representatives from the province of Leninobd and the city of Kulob. At the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Parliament meeting in Khojand, Tajikistan was declared a parliamentary republic, and Emomali Rahmonov (now Rahmon), the former head of the Executive Committee of Kulob, was chosen as Speaker of the Parliament, the highest position in the country.

A third stage can be considered as the period of active combat, both within Tajikistan and across the Tajik/Afghan border, while a parallel process was underway to implement a cease fire. The civil war that ensued was especially violent due to the wide availability of weapons, including arms imported from Afghanistan, and through the presence of the Russian 201<sup>st</sup> Division stationed near Dushanbe, as well as the participation of criminal bands set free

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<sup>6</sup> Tadjbakhsh 1993b.

from local prisons and the involvement of a paramilitary organization, the National Front, under the leadership of Sangak Safarov. Full-scale civil war spread to the southern provinces of Kulob and Kurghan Teppe, with scores of deaths, hundreds of injured and thousands of people leaving their villages for safer areas. The opposition was defeated in Dushanbe, Kofernihon and Kurghan Teppe, its leaders initially retreating to Kofernihon, Gharm and the Pamir mountains, and then on to Afghanistan, Moscow and Tehran. The government then moved to consolidate its rule by outlawing all political parties and associations and closing down opposition newspapers such as *Charoghi Ruiz* (Light of Day), *Adolat* (Justice), *Haft Ganj* (Seven Treasures) and *Nejat* (Salvation) and opening criminal proceedings against leaders of the opposition labelled as “enemies of the people”. In the meantime, the opposition organized itself in Moscow and in Afghanistan. In Moscow, nationalist intellectuals and journalists created the Coordination Center for Democratic Forces, headed by prominent journalist Otokhon Latifi, in order to work with international and Russian organizations. In Afghanistan, refugees and fighters rallied around the Qazi Hoji Akbar Turajonzoda and Abdullah Nuri who formed the “Islamic Movement of Tajikistan”.

The final stage marks the end of the civil war, when the United Nations, with help of the Contact Group (including Russia and Iran) brokered a Peace Accord which was signed in Moscow in 1997. The Peace Accord led to the formation of a National Reconciliation Committee which negotiated a power-sharing agreement by which 50 positions (30 percent) were reserved for opposition representatives in government structures. The implementation of the peace accord meant the end of fighting, the return of refugees, and the demobilization of former combatants. In February 2000, the first multi-party, pluralistic parliamentary elections were held in Tajikistan, and the stage of consolidation of peace began in the country. By the winter of 2007, after a decade after a bloody civil war, the country had seen years of sustained peace, with renewed economic growth, the flourishing of civil society and the rebuilding of government institutions. President Emomali Rahmon had consolidated his power and his popularity, celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> year of independence in September 2006 with the opening of roads and tunnels linking the different parts of the mountainous country and with the promise of jobs and economic security.

## **Afghanistan: From Protracted Conflict to an Insecure Future**

By October 2001, when US-led coalition forces launched an attack against the Taliban regime, Afghanistan already had a long, unfortunate, and intimate experience of more than 23 years of almost continuous war, during which one million people had died and another million had been disabled. The causes of the conflicts in Afghanistan can be ascribed both to motives of grievance and to opportunities for enrichment (greed) caused by a complex history of internal violence and external domination. In its history of violent domestic power struggles and external domination, the transition from “war” to “peace” had never been smooth in Afghanistan. The Afghan conflict, continuous since 1979, had nevertheless

undergone a series of transformation that can be divided into distinct phases:

From late 1979 until February 1989, Afghanistan was occupied by Soviet military forces, which encountered fierce resistance from the Western-backed Afghan guerrilla fighters known as the Mujaheddin. The resistance movement received substantial international assistance starting with \$30 million from the United States in 1980 reaching \$630 million in 1987, with Saudi Arabia roughly matching US aid<sup>7</sup>. During this period, approximately three million refugees settled in camps along the Afghan border with Pakistan and about two million fled to Iran. Various international non-governmental organizations established operations in the refugee camps, providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and also helping to channel international aid to the Afghan areas that were under the control of the Mujaheddin, aid that often amounted to free handouts without any form of monitoring<sup>8</sup>. Soviet occupation was also characterized by large-scale changes in rural Afghan society and its institutions, as villages emptied and existing village hierarchies were eroded by massive displacement. Consequently, authority was increasingly based on the newly acquired wealth and power of local Mujaheddin militia commanders, supported by the aid-arms industry.

A second phase started when the Soviet troops withdrew in 1989 following the international Geneva Accords of 1988. The Accords however failed to address the issue of post-occupation government institutions and peacebuilding, and the war continued between the Mujaheddin and the Soviet-installed regime of President Najibullah. In 1992, the United Nations negotiated a deal with Najibullah under which he would step down to make way for the establishment of a broad-based transitional authority. However, this attempt was derailed by the divided Mujaheddin factions who could not agree on a power-sharing formula and instead stormed Kabul from different directions, launching a massive and destructive civil war. Afghanistan was renamed the Islamic State of Afghanistan, although the coalition did not have a united strategy for running the government. In the course of the conflict, various parts of the country were taken over and controlled by different commanders. Front lines and coalitions between warring factions changed frequently. The infighting was fuelled by neighbouring countries backing different Mujaheddin factions and commanders, in pursuit of their own interests in Afghanistan. A second wave of massive migration ensued. As financial assistance from the superpowers declined with the end of the Cold War, fighters were obliged to procure alternative local sources to fund their activities. Consequently, during this period the war economy expanded and Afghanistan became a transportation and marketing corridor for drugs and contraband.

The third phase of the Afghan conflict was initiated by the arrival of the Taliban on the Afghan military scene in 1994. The Taliban, consisting mainly of Pashtun youth, emerged from the refugee camps, bringing with them the conservative values of the madrassas in Pakistan. They enjoyed the financial and military support of Pakistan through its Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI) and were also welcomed by the majority of the Afghan population that was fed up with insecurity and the behaviour of local Mujaheddin fighters.

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<sup>7</sup> Rubin 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Barakat 2004.

Initially, the role of the Taliban was to secure the main transport routes and to remove or disarm the different Mujaheddin checkpoints. In response, the groups opposed to the Taliban formed "The United National Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan" (The Northern Alliance) in 1996 and open conflict broke out between the two camps. The Taliban, however, enjoyed military superiority and advanced with relative ease, taking control of Kabul in September 1996. In October 1997, the country became the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, with the Taliban regime basing its doctrine on a very strict interpretation of the Sharia law, which prohibited in particular the free circulation of women and their participation in public life. Simultaneously, the Taliban abandoned many of the core functions of the state, such as welfare and representation. By mid-2001, they were controlling more than 90% of Afghanistan and the overall situation in the areas they controlled was one of relative security in the sense that factional fighting had ceased. Nevertheless, the Taliban were never accorded official international recognition and their strict policies (especially those regarding women) earned them the opprobrium of the international community and of world opinion.

The last phase of the Afghan conflict started in October 2001, when, as a response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, an international coalition led by the United States invaded Afghanistan and ousted the Taliban regime with the help of the Northern Alliance. The Taliban were then replaced by a government composed of the of the three Mujaheddin coalition groups, consisting of the Northern Alliance, an alliance of Tajik and Uzbek political parties most of which had been close to Commander Massud, the Peshawari group of Mujaheddin, and the Rome group led by the former King, Zahir Shah. The set up was negotiated by the international community in Bonn in December 2001 as a roadmap for Afghanistan's political transition to democratic rule. Under the terms of the Bonn agreement, major Afghan factions formed an interim 30-member administration until the convening of an emergency Loya Jirga, or grand council, in June 2002. The Loya Jirga chose a transitional government and established procedures for instituting a new constitution, which was adopted in January 2004. As stipulated by the Constitution, presidential elections were held in October 2004 and parliamentary elections in September 2005. Despite some constitutional shortcomings regarding the lack of District Council elections, the Bonn roadmap was declared accomplished in late 2005.

Yet despite the fact that the Bonn checklist of the institutions required of a "democratic" state was completed, it has thus far proven impossible to bring peace and national reconciliation to Afghanistan without the Taliban. Taking as motivation the presence of a large international army (about 13,000 troops in the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom and approximately 47,000 troops of the International Security Assistance Forces [ISAF] commanded by NATO by March 2008), the Taliban have intensified their violence. It can be confidently asserted that the conflict in Afghanistan is far from being stabilized.

By January 2008, two simultaneous reports released in the United States warned of massive failure in Afghanistan. The Atlantic Council of the United States warned: "Make no mistake, NATO is not winning in Afghanistan. Unless this reality is understood and action is taken promptly, the future of Afghanistan is bleak, with regional and global impact. On the security side, a stalemate of sorts has taken hold. NATO and Afghan forces cannot be beaten by the insurgency or by the Taliban. Neither can our forces eliminate the Taliban by military

means as long as they have sanctuary in Pakistan. Hence, the future of Afghanistan will be determined by progress or failure in the civil sector. However, civil sector reform is in serious trouble. Little coordination exists among the many disparate international organizations and agencies active in Afghanistan. Legal and judicial reform (including reducing corruption), and control of narcotics are interdependent efforts and must receive the highest priority. To add insult to injury, of every dollar of aid spent on Afghanistan, less than ten percent goes directly to Afghans, further compounding reform and reconstruction problems. Urgent changes are required now to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a failing or failed state. Not just the future of the Afghan people is at stake. If Afghanistan fails, the possible strategic consequences will worsen regional instability, do great harm to the fight against Jihadist and religious extremism, and put in grave jeopardy NATO's future as a credible, cohesive and relevant military alliance"<sup>9</sup>.

The Afghanistan Study Group Final Report released by Center for the Study of the Presidency, Co-Chaired by General James L. Jones, and Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering, similarly claimed that "the progress achieved after six years of international engagement is under serious threat from resurgent violence, weakening international resolve, mounting regional challenges and a growing lack of confidence on the part of the Afghan people about the future direction of their country. The United States and the international community have tried to win the struggle in Afghanistan with too few military forces and insufficient economic aid, and without a clear and consistent comprehensive strategy to fill the power vacuum outside Kabul and to counter the combined challenges of reconstituted Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan, a runaway opium economy, and the stark poverty faced by most Afghans"<sup>10</sup>.

## **WHO INTERVENED AND WHY? MOTIVATIONS FOR EXTERNAL ACTORS' ENGAGEMENT**

The peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts of the international community in Tajikistan and Afghanistan have to be understood in the context of the changes in the international community's motivations for engagement. Much had changed between the time of the Tajikistan Civil War (1992-1997) and the Taliban regime take-over in Afghanistan (2001).

On the one hand, the international community had come to rethink the rationale, if not the modality, of its interventions after a number of particularly challenging initiatives: the questionable legitimacy of the intervention in Kosovo, the failure to intervene in Rwanda,

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<sup>9</sup> Atlantic Council 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Afghanistan Study Group Final Report 2008.

a withdrawal before the job was completed in Somalia, and a failure to protect vulnerable communities in Bosnia. Based on the recommendations of a Canadian International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), the norms of the Responsibility to Protect program were adopted during the United Nations Summit of 2005, which stipulated that when a population “is suffering harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect” (ICISS, 2001). In normative terms, the international community shifted from asserting the right of some states to intervene in the name of collective security to the responsibility of all states to intervene in the name of human security.

At the same time, the notion of “threats” also evolved. Given the increasing interdependence that had been fostered by globalization, industrialized states of the North became more concerned by the problems of underdevelopment and weak institutions in other states, often those in the developing societies of the South. September 11<sup>th</sup> came to justify the fears of some that ultimately, as they bemoaned, “failed” and “fragile” states characterized by underdevelopment, poor governance and an institutional vacuum, could not only be dangerous for regional security, but could be a menace as well to the security of other nations far away. A global War Against Terror was initiated, which cast rich and powerful nations against non-state actors.

Against this mutation at the global level, the main difference in the two cases is the degree of success as directly related to a clear motivation for engagement. The Tajikistan case was a test case of a civil war on the territory of the former Soviet Union, hence localized to a specific region. As a classic case of a civil war, intervention was motivated by the responsibility to protect. Regional powers and international organizations were thus involved in a peacemaking mission to stop a civil war from spreading vertically and horizontally. Regional powers, including the remnants of a super-power of the time, each had vested interests but acted in concert, and ultimately allowed for specialized international agencies to engage in peacemaking.

The US-led international engagement in Afghanistan, on the other hand, was in the context of a global war against terror in which the United States and NATO countries saw themselves increasingly implicated, not just as an observer and pacifier, but as one of the parties to the “war”. Thus the original motivation for engagement went through several revisions in the course of events, deviating from a clearly delimited attempt to go from war to peace. In Afghanistan, peacebuilding is occurring in the context of war fighting, further increasing the implication of multiple actors with differing mandates. This by itself explains the major difference why one case turned out to be a successful “*mission accomplie*” of peacemaking, and the other, steeped in ambiguity, seems like a deadlock: a war mission which became a peacebuilding effort and then returned to open combat.

The motivations for engagement hence can directly affect chances of success. If stabilization of a conflict is sought with the aim of preventing its vertical and horizontal spread, chances of cooperation with concerned regional actors increase. On the other hand, peace stands less chance of success if international actors are engaged in proxy wars in defence of their own geopolitical and national security interests and do so using peacemaking as a guise.

## **Tajikistan: Putting Out the Fire for a Young Member of the International Community**

The intervention in Tajikistan by the international community was a clear case of “Responsibility to Protect” before it became a norm. In less than six months starting in May 1992, almost 50,000 people had been killed and half a million displaced within the country or had walked across the border to Afghanistan. At least three organizations considered themselves responsible for putting out the fire in one of the latest additions to the international community: the CIS, the UN and the CSCE (now OSCE). Once the independence of Tajikistan was recognised internationally following the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, the country had become first a member, with ten other former Soviet republics, of the Commonwealth of Independent States, then of the CSCE in January 1992, and finally, of the United Nations in March 1992.

Instability in Tajikistan was initially a subject of concern for the CIS countries of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, which by September 1992 had signed a joint declaration calling for an immediate cease-fire and peace negotiations among the warring factions. The declaration announced that the three would use “all necessary means” for a negotiated settlement to ensure the interests of Tajikistan and the CIS. By July 1993, Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbaev had declared that peace in Tajikistan was not only the responsibility of the Central Asian countries and Russia, but depended also on the efforts of the United Nations to find a formula to stabilize the region. In August 1993, realizing that a political solution was the only way out of the ever-widening Tajik conflict, Russia began a diplomatic offensive. The circle of concerned CIS members widened and leaders of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan met with Boris Yelstin and Emomali Rahmonov as well as the representative of the President of Turkmenistan in Moscow in early August 1993 to discuss the situation in Tajikistan.

For the first time, Russia, followed by Uzbekistan, exerted pressure on the Tajik leader to conduct political negotiations with the leaders of the opposition. At the same time, a decision on the collective protection of the Tajik-Afghan border, constituting the southern border of the CIS, was taken during the CIS summit of September 1993. A 25 thousand-strong CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force was called upon, which was to be comprised of one battalion each from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as well as Russian Border Troops, in addition to the 201<sup>st</sup> Motor Rifle Division of the Russian Federation which had remained behind after the Soviet army’s departure from Tajikistan. However, it proved more difficult to implement the plan: Kazakhstan sent its promised battalion only in 1994; Kyrgyzstan had to resort to incentives for volunteers in order to keep its units in Gorno-Badakhshan; and the troops of Uzbekistan were for the most part stationed in the province of Leninobod, far from the fighting. Russia therefore found itself bearing the major burden of the CIS presence in Tajikistan.

During the UN General Assembly in September 1993, Kazakhstan and Russia asked the world body to give the CIS armed forces in Tajikistan a mandate to operate as a United Nations peacekeeping force. Fearing a less than neutral involvement of the 201<sup>st</sup> division in the midst of the political turmoil and the civil war, and with a general reluctance to give

mandates to regional organizations to act on their own behalf, the assembly did not grant the CIS an official mandate in Tajikistan.

It was therefore up to the United Nations itself to become engaged in the peacemaking efforts directly. The situation in Tajikistan was discussed at the UN Security Council at the end of August 1992. An initial delegation was sent on a fact-finding mission in September 1992 followed by a goodwill mission two months later comprised of representatives of the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP), which urged a more permanent engagement by the United Nations in response to the appeal to provide political assistance in mediating the conflict. These first initiatives laid the ground for the establishment of a UN political office in Dushanbe in January 1993. By November 1993, Boutros Boutros-Ghali had appointed Ramiro Piriz-Ballon the Uruguayan ambassador to the United Nations, as his new personal envoy to Tajikistan. Following the peace agreements, the UN established a United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), supported by the Contact Group of Guarantor States and International Organizations, which proved instrumental in assisting the parties in the implementation of the Peace Agreement in 1997.

Perhaps one of the biggest successes for the reputation and effectiveness of the UN was the deployment of a variety of experienced professional diplomats as special representatives of the Secretary General who were keen on finding a common ground with major actors of the region in addition to all sides involved in the Tajik conflict. The continuity in the personnel at headquarters that dealt with Tajikistan at the United Nations (unfortunately a rare practice) could also be considered a key element of success.

In the immediate years after the war, the UN oversaw a process of political negotiation between the government and the opposition in exile, and monitored the internal process of stabilization within Tajikistan, including institution and confidence building, while disarmament and national reconciliation became the responsibility of the office of the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe, headed by the French scholar Olivier Roy. The two processes (the UN overseeing direct negotiations and a political dialogue between the warring sides for the first time, while the CSCE promoted democratic reform) were interdependent. The CSCE saw in its engagement the opportunity to welcome Tajikistan into the concert of European nations that it had orchestrated, emphasising norms of human rights and democratic procedures, as well as collective and comprehensive security. Although a number of CSCE responsibilities were subsequently taken over later by UNTOP, the organisation continued its presence in Tajikistan, adding an economic dimension to its human rights mandate.

### **In Afghanistan, an Escalating Reactive Response**

In Tajikistan, the three actors were engaged with different mandates and different means of action, *i.e.* the CIS exerting pressure and sending peacekeeping forces, the United Nations conducting direct negotiations and political dialogue between the warring sides, and the



CSCE promoting democratic reform; yet they were united in their goal of ending the civil war and establishing a democratic peace.

By contrast, the rationale for international intervention in Afghanistan has changed over time, in much the same way that the nature of conflicts in Afghanistan has changed over the last century: fighting remained a status quo while the target kept shifting. Initially, the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), which began on October 7, 2001, was conceived as a response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. The stated purpose of the invasion was to capture Osama bin Laden, destroy Al-Qaeda, and remove the Taliban regime which had provided support and safe harbour for Al-Qaeda. With what can be considered a revenge mission, a US-led international coalition officially launched the start of the War on Terror. The UN then passed a resolution on December 20<sup>th</sup> 2001 (Resolution 1386) allowing for the deployment of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in a classic Chapter 7 intervention: to protect the security of the international community. The motivation was the removal of the threat to international security, whereas providing for the human security of the Afghan people was but an afterthought. After all, the Afghans had already been continuously suffering from a combination of poor governance, chronic poverty, and human rights violations for decades and had been literally abandoned by the West once the Soviet troops had moved out of the country in 1989. In the ensuing years, little attempts had been made to put an end to the suffering of the Afghan people until danger menaced the West.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2001, one month after the fall of the Taliban regime, talks brokered by the United Nations resulted in the Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions at a conference in Bonn. At the same time, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established on March 28, 2002 through the United Nations Security Council resolution 1401 to oversee the Bonn process implementation, headed by one of the UN's top experienced negotiators, Lakhdar Brahimi.

The UN mission in Afghanistan, however, could not function as successfully as the one in Tajikistan given the higher stakes involved. UNAMA was not only responsible for coordinating the UN relief and reconstruction activities, but also implementing projects in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reforms (SSR), relief, reconciliation, etc. The challenges were many: first was the scope of the mission, burdened with the sometimes conflicting mandates of both coordinating a large number of international actors and implementing projects directly. Second, was the size of the mission. Despite the idea of a "light footprint" that Brahimi had initially in mind for the international presence in Afghanistan, media attention and the substantial pledges by the international community inevitability attracted a large number of actors to the terrain. Finally, lack of authority was perhaps the main difference with the Tajikistan experience. Despite the respect that Lakhdar Brahimi commanded internationally and in Afghanistan, his actions and authority were overshadowed by the presence of Zalmay Khalilzad, the American ambassador informally called the Viceroy, who not only had a better contact with the Afghans, being of Afghan descent himself, but in particular because he represented the main international actor under whose initiative the Afghan campaign had been launched.

The uneasy relationship between the subsequent UN Special Envoys and representatives of

the OEF or NATO forces was an indication of a larger problem: the main impediment to the success of the United Nations in Afghanistan continues to be the fact that the intervention is not a classic peacekeeping one, but a military campaign. And as the experience of Kosovo, Bosnia and later Iraq demonstrated, the UN was neither in practice nor in theory, at an advantage during military interventions led by or initiated by other countries. In Afghanistan, parallel to the state-building efforts of the international community supervised by the UN, an increasingly violent military campaign was under way. The US-led military campaign concentrated on fighting a war through Operation Enduring Freedom, while security was provided by the ISAF international stabilization force which, when handed over to NATO to lead, took on an additional humanitarian and development agenda in the battle "for the hearts and minds" through civil-military operations known as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), 25 of which were operating by February 2008. But the Taliban were not pacified and have been resuming increasingly violent activities since 2005 with the result that the military front, according to NATO and US officials, officially became a counter-insurgency campaign.

In Afghanistan, the motivations, goals and strategy of what was essentially a military campaign for regime removal underwent several revisions. After September 11<sup>th</sup> the immediate response was for quick action through a substantial aerial bombing campaign to "punish" the Taliban and strike at the nerve centre of Al Qaeda. Initially, the United States was not keen on state-building, let alone nation-building, but the vacuum that the removal of the Taliban had created needed to be filled. The longer-term creation of stability in Afghanistan and in the region surrounding it required a more engaged strategy, one that needed to be worked out before intervention, and not left to ad-hoc reactions to unfolding events. Among the numerous results of the quick-fix regime removal approach, one can count the unleashing of the Northern Alliance, a group of Tajik former Mujahiddin with little support in southern areas, the choice of Karzai, who was unable to rally the Pashtun tribes, and, most important of all, the alienation of hearts and minds of ordinary Afghans subject to bombardments which continued to claim hundreds of civilian lives more than six years after the involvement of the international community to bring so-called peace in Afghanistan.

The problem of the change of scale of the international military engagement, which no doubt was in response to the growing violence on the Afghan side, was that it was also increasingly undermining the other international engagements in Afghanistan, namely, the efforts of UNAMA with its UN sister agencies and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to establish political stability, democratization, development and reconstruction. By the winter of 2007, the military tactics used by the OEF and NATO had led to growing civilian deaths and further radicalization of the "insurgencies". So much so that as of the fall of 2007, a new mandate was added to those of the US Secretary General's Special Envoy, Tom Koenigs: to protect civilians during war.

The US-led military campaign, far from creating the conditions for stability to evolve, was having the opposite effect. Much of the violence that raged throughout the country was now directed against the international military presence. It was therefore no longer possible to interpret the Afghan drama in terms of internal dynamics, warlords, ethnic factions and religious fundamentalism only, without considering that violence and insecurity were now

a direct result of the international intervention in Afghanistan.

It may be possible to conclude, in hindsight, that the major shortcoming of the Afghanistan engagement was the rush into an ambitious and complex operation so soon after September 11<sup>th</sup>. It was the haste for “regime removal” as a sanction for rogue behaviour which made adequate political preparation impossible, but which may have sacrificed, in the long term, stability, solid alliances, and humanitarian interests. As a counter-terrorism operation, Operation Enduring Freedom and NATO operations in Afghanistan left an enormous strategic wake, with the inadvertent effects over-shadowing the intended objectives<sup>11</sup>. Despite the change of regime in Kabul, Afghanistan is less stable today than before the operation. And so is the region. The war left Pakistan and its president in a precarious position, battling against the ripple effects among the tribal region of South Waziristan. The build-up of American bases in Central Asia and in Western Afghanistan along the borders of Iran also raised alarm among neighbouring countries, namely Iran, Russia and China. And the operation fed anti-American sentiments throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

Perhaps the real culprit is the ineffectiveness, if not the amorality, of the “realist” approach to the eradication of terrorism. Without looking into the conditions that create certain regimes, the realist approach proposes an offensive solution, namely to simply act rapidly and through large-scale action to remove the offending actors through the use of force. This approach may underestimate the possibly negative and inadvertent repercussions, such as destabilization and a “blowback” reaction<sup>12</sup>. In dealing with terrorism, the lesson should be that attention needs to be paid to the “cluster of problems” of which terrorism is a part: a weak state structure, a war-ravaged society, massive underdevelopment, inter-communal and inter-ethnic-conflict, and regional rivalries. Solutions should therefore accentuate conflict reduction, humanitarian relief, and development assistance, in addition to the use of force. Otherwise, combating against terrorism may contribute to interstate instability.

In the final analysis, the motivation of a War Against Terror (the case of Afghanistan), inevitably involves national interests which should not be confused with a desire for regional stabilization by international means (the case of Tajikistan). Stabilization, peacemaking, and responsibility to protect a population against a rogue regime can seldom be the outcome of an ulterior motivation, that of waging war. In the case of Afghanistan, the human predicament of the people plagued by massive underdevelopment (lack of basic commodities), insecurity and human rights violations (breeding fear) and indignities brought on by successive regimes of terror (be they Soviet occupation, Mujaheddin rule by the gun, or the Taliban) played in fact only secondary roles in the motivations for engagement of the international actors bent on defending their own strategic interests, in this case the so-called security of their own people, oceans away. The maintenance of international security requires that the solution to trans-national problems be independent of any one nation’s (or alliance’s) exclusive interests or position of power.

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<sup>11</sup> Conetta 2002.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

## METHOD OF PEACEMAKING: SHARING REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ulterior motivations inevitably hamper effective cooperation with regional powers that may also have a stake in the stabilization of a conflict. One of the major differences in the way that peace was negotiated by the international community in the two cases was in the willingness to involve concerned external parties. It cannot be said that regional actors had more of a stake in the pacification of the conflict in Tajikistan than they did in the one unfolding in Afghanistan. It is instead testimony to the willingness of the western alliance to share the burden in one case where regional solutions were sought, unlike the other in which a “global” war against an abstract enemy neglected the regional context where the drama was unfolding.

### Tajikistan: A Regional Concert

With its first intervention in a post-Soviet area (parallel to the efforts being made in the Caucasus), the United Nations from the beginning understood and acted upon the need to involve major regional actors in Tajikistan. Demonstrating considerable diplomatic skills, the UN Special Envoys worked the capitals of countries surrounding Tajikistan and negotiated their constructive involvement. Ultimately, it was with the help of a Contact Group including Russia and Iran as Guarantors that the United Nations finally brokered a Peace Accord, signed in Moscow in 1997. The Peace Accords were monitored by an Observer group of the remaining Central Asian countries plus Iran, Russia and Pakistan.

Russia’s interest in Tajikistan was basically of a strategic nature. It saw itself as responsible for collectively protecting the Tajik-Afghan border, the CIS’s southern frontier, from penetration by Islamic “fundamentalism”, extremism, drugs, and arms. A unit of border troops had been sent directly by Russian president Yeltsin to guard this frontier, a strategic imperative for the CIS. In addition, thousands of Russian troops, which had been stationed in Central Asia as part of the Soviet army, were still in the region, with the Russian government having neither the means nor the possibility to reintegrate them within Russian territory. The remnants of the Soviet forces in Tajikistan, in the form of the 201<sup>st</sup> Division, served both as a peacekeeping force, by helping control stability in Dushanbe, and also as a weapon of war, since arms were said to have been supplied by them mostly to the government side. Russia also had a stake in Tajikistan given that the economic relations of the two countries were part of a complex network dating from the time of the USSR. Russia was Tajikistan’s largest sponsor and creditor; 70% of Tajikistan’s annual budget was covered by Moscow in 1993 and the country remained in the rouble zone long after others had opted out<sup>13</sup>. Finally, one

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<sup>13</sup> Toshmuhammadov 2004.

of Russia's stated interests in stability in Tajikistan also stemmed from its desire to protect the approximately 500,000 Russian-speaking community which was still living in Tajikistan in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Uzbekistan was also worried by the escalation of the civil war in Tajikistan. The relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan stem from their shared borders and from the ensuing history of mixed families; the majority of the population of Sughd Oblast, of western Hissor Valley and a part of Khatlon Oblast speak the two languages. With the creation of Uzbekistan in 1924, Soviet policymakers divided the Tajik population between the two republics, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Tajikistan's traditional capitals of Samarqand and Bukhara with a majority of Tajik population were included in the newly established Uzbekistan. With the arrival of nationalist and Islamic forces in Tajikistan, the thorny issue of Samarqand and Bukhara, two Tajik enclaves in Uzbekistan, and the emergence of Muslim political parties in the Ferghana Valley worried the Uzbek government. The escalation of the civil war in Tajikistan, the general unrest in the Ferghana Valley beginning in 1989, the establishment of a number of Tajik movements and organisations in Uzbekistan, and the fear of the spread of (Islamic) "fundamentalism" throughout Tajikistan were of major concern for the government in Uzbekistan. The growing pressure from the opposition parties in Uzbekistan, including political organisations formed by the Tajik minority, for democratic reforms and the Tajik nationalist movement in Tajikistan, as well the parties and popular movements representing the interests of Uzbek nationalists, could not but affect the political scene in Uzbekistan. Like the Russian army, Uzbekistan was also said to have played a role in the conflict when, in the summer and fall of 1992, various groups from Hissar and Kurghan Teppe were said to have received training and armament in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan also justified its direct and indirect intervention in the Tajik civil war by the need to protect the more than 1.2 million ethnic Uzbeks living in Tajikistan.

Iran, in the meantime, had actively pursued relations with Tajikistan based on its shared historical, linguistic and religious characteristics. Perhaps it was the added threat of the advancing Taliban in Afghanistan, Sunni enemies of the Islamic Republic, that led the Iranian government to actively seek a resolution to the Tajik conflict and stabilization of the region. At the same time, Iran had consistently been in favour of peace in Tajikistan and, despite what the Western press proclaimed, was not interested in exporting its own Islamic revolution to Tajikistan – or rather was incapable of doing so, given its internal economic difficulties, its political isolation and the lack of popularity of the regime's Eastern front policy. With the presence of a large number of minorities on its own territory, it could also not be seen as encouraging small-scale nationalist movements. Even if Iran was keen at the time to curb the influence of rival Turkey in Central Asia, it did not support an Islamic revolution based on its own model, at least officially<sup>14</sup>. Yet Iran did become an interested party when a number of opposition figures were exiled to Tehran after 1993, and it made use of the opportunity to convince the Tajik opposition of the necessity of political negotiations.

One of the countries that was not part of the Contact Group but played an important role as an observer was the United States. By the time the civil war had unfolded in Tajikistan, and

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<sup>14</sup> Maleki 1992.

although James Collins had been appointed as a possible mediator for conflicts in the former Soviet Union, the United States initially adopted a “constructive criticism” approach that recognized the Russian sphere of influence. Yet it sought to take advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the initial weakening of the Russian state in the early 1990s to find new “clients” for its financial, economic and technical potential in the region, for its goods on the consumer market, and for its democratization promotion ideals. The United States became a large donor of bilateral and multilateral projects in Tajikistan, and the first one to tie its aid to a political resolution. In September 1993, US Special Ambassador Strobe Talbott travelled to Tajikistan to speed up US aid, but insisted that the aid depended on the Tajik officials instituting political reform and respecting human rights. After the peace agreements, the United States was also the first donor to officially and specifically fund the Accord when it provided funds for DDR initiatives launched by the World Bank.

With more than seven thousand kilometres of border with Central Asia, China could not remain indifferent to the developments in the region. In the early 1990s, however, while the drama of civil war and reconciliation was unfolding in Tajikistan, China was a silent observer. Its conservative stance also came from its own fears of an Uighur uprising and from the potential territorial claims of bordering countries which were awaiting resolution. It was only after Western powers had formally entered the region through the deployment of troops in Central Asia and in Afghanistan after 2001 that China chose to take part in the Central Asian scene, adapting an aggressive economic position as a major donor and a more subtle anti-western position through the regional platform of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) while pursuing an agenda of security, stability and the development of the region with Russia and the Central Asian states.

The interests of super-powers in Central Asia in the 1990s were thus both strategic as well as economic. The new independent republics of Central Asia possessed large reserves of oil and gas as well as gold deposits, uranium and fresh water. Tajikistan, while not that valuable in terms of its own water reserves, electric power, coal, and uranium, played mostly a role as a route for the transportation of energy and other natural resources of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan via Afghanistan, Pakistan and China. This made Tajikistan a key transit state in which peace and stability had to be maintained. On the eve of the civil war, Tajikistan was at the crossroads of the interests of major regional and global powers. It was therefore imperative for the peace negotiations to allow the major countries involved to play a key role, which the United Nations facilitated through the reconciliation mechanisms of the Contact Group of Guarantee States and through “shuttle diplomacy” by the UN Special Envoys.

### **Afghanistan: The East/West Rift Once Again?**

By contrast, the stabilization of Afghanistan is unfolding today without a constructive involvement of regional actors in the peacemaking (if not war-making) process. Although donor support has been significant, with the international community pouring large amounts

of aid into Afghanistan, the main responsibility for the stabilization of the situation through military means has fallen on the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and other major NATO members.

In here lies a major issue: although in both cases regional powers may have had a stake in the initiation of conflict and interfered under various forms, they also had an important role to play in the stabilization and peacemaking processes – which was recognized in one case and not in the other. The difference is fundamentally linked to the nature of the involvement of the international community. In the Tajikistan case, the United Nations was able to lead what was a peacekeeping operation and to use diplomatic means to engage regional actors constructively. In Afghanistan, the office of UNAMA was relegated to the secondary role of implementing the Bonn Agreement: institution building, human rights protection, humanitarian and development coordination. The major international actors on the scene are in fact the US military forces and NATO. On the one hand, Afghanistan has not yet reached the stage, or perhaps more accurately it has already missed the opportunity, when active combat takes a secondary position to political negotiations involving regional, and not only extra-regional powers.

Efforts were made to gain regional support at the beginning. In a November 2001 meeting between Secretary of State Colin Powell and the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, six neighbours and Russia, a document was drafted outlining the political intention to create a broadly based democratic successor government to the Taliban. However, the informal collaboration was unable to withstand the cold winds of *realpolitik* at the international level. Instead, the burden fell on NATO countries.

The NATO-led ISAF mission, operating in its first ground operation outside Europe, metamorphosed from an initial peace-keeping operation to full-scale combat. Since the beginning of the operations, the debate concerning the presence of NATO troops in Afghanistan, seen as a “test” for the future of the transatlantic alliance, has been a contest of force among Western nations and their new allies. First, the contention was about free riding among western powers, with those sending more troops decrying the lack of commitment of others, especially those with national caveats that prevented countries such as Germany, Italy, France and Spain from either active fighting, or from being based in the more dangerous provinces. Second, the debate has been about NATO’s projection of its broader-than-Western identity, that of not just a western power of the G7, but including troops from Turkey and former Eastern block countries who were reminded by the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that with the changed world order, they should align with the “powerful”. Central European countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia), South-Eastern European and Balkan countries (Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia), Baltic countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia) and even some countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States have, as in the case of Azerbaijan, provided troops as a down-payment on their membership fee for being associated with NATO either directly or through its Partnership for Peace Program. Hence when NATO members declared their commitment to send in more troops or more trainers in 2007, it was seen as a victory in the capitals of these nations, and also in the United States which long been seeking burden-sharing. But despite this surge, it soon became increasingly clear that tactical victories were

not being translated into the strategic defeat of the insurgents. In the meantime, reliance on air strikes with high civilian casualties led to the growing alienation of the population.

The real problem, however, has been obfuscated. If Afghanistan is a test case for the future of NATO, it is not by continuing to perfect the art of hand-wringing among European capitals, and wrangling between the United States and Europe, and between western Europe and its new eastern front, that the alliance will be able to carve out a survival strategy, and for that matter, prove its relevance and benevolent intentions. The debates have so far been more about NATO alliance building than stabilization of Afghanistan. For had it been really about the latter, two principles would not have been violated: the necessity of addressing the needs of the host country itself, and if the latter happens to be strongly tied to its neighbours, then addressing them too.

First, the expansion of NATO troops in Afghanistan, although in principle with the agreement of the Karzai government, failed to address the demands of the government, which sought to gear NATO assistance towards supporting its own national army and police. Apart from receiving a small number of trainers, including from France, this demand was hardly registered, as Western alliances deemed the "problem" of insurgents in Afghanistan as too important for international security to be dealt with through the small, untrained and ineffective national forces. Seen from the Afghan point of view, however, with their long experience with warfare on their territory and their intimate knowledge of ground realities, they should have been trusted more. In addition, when NATO renewed its mandate in Afghanistan in September 2007, the proposal was not even presented for debate in the National Assembly, which had been put in place in conformity with the Bonn Accords. The parliament then continuously raised the issue of the legalization of foreign troops on the territory. This negligence in itself showed that NATO forces were not to be seen as a peacekeeping force in a sovereign state, but as a party to war in an occupied country.

Second, unlike the case of Tajikistan, where the involvement of regional powers was key to bringing peace, direct cooperation with regional countries, apart from Pakistan, in the stabilization of Afghanistan has not been a course followed so far. NATO and the United States are currently engaging Pakistan in the pacification of the Taliban and insurgents. Pakistan, with its historical ties to both the Mujaheddin groups and to the Taliban originating from the madrassahs on its own territory, and with a porous border along the tribal regions of Waziristan and the fear generated by its own terrorist problems, has a stake in cooperating with NATO for the stabilization of Afghanistan. Other regional actors, however, are not part of the extended coalition. In 2001, the launching of OEF to remove the Taliban regime was largely welcomed by the Central Asian countries, most of which provided either airbases or logistical facilities for the operation, a move not objected to by Russia and China because it suited their short-term strategic interests. However, since then, with an economy expanding from oil and gas revenues, with the strengthening of the coalition between China, Central Asia and Russia through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and with a growing dispute between NATO and Russia over the establishment of defence systems in Eastern and Central Europe, Russia has increasingly distanced itself from operations in Afghanistan. Russia's strategic alliance with China has further allowed for an increasingly vocal criticism of the expansion of NATO troops and the unilateral policies of the United States. Russia is no



doubt intent on reasserting its presence in Central Asia and its extended neighbourhood so as to prevent instability and terrorism from potentially spilling over onto its own territory, but it is highly unlikely that the United States and the United Kingdom would want Russia to play a direct role in peacemaking efforts in Afghanistan. As the operation becomes increasingly unpopular with the local population, the United States and its western allies are also keen on avoiding being associated with memories of the Soviet invasion of 1978 and its aftermath. The lack of a cooperative approach with Russia and China in handling the security problems of Afghanistan, however, may hamper serious efforts at stabilization in the long term.

The marginalization of Central Asian republics in the Afghanistan reconstruction process has also alienated their potential for cooperation. Weary of democratization exercises that ended up removing one of the most reform minded leaders among them, and disappointed ultimately in the promises of development that the West brought to the region as it opened up in the early 1990s, the Central Asian political elite has been increasingly gravitating towards non-Western alliances, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, for security and economic guarantees. Iran, in the meantime, which had initially cooperated with the United States in the early stages of the operation (through allowing over-flights for example) in the hope of defeating its own Sunni fundamentalist nemesis, was met with a January 2002 State of the Union address in which President Bush labelled the country as part of the “axis of evil”, closing the doors to constructive engagement.

In the absence of coordination with NATO, Russia sought an increased role for the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) as a regional security organization that could directly help the Afghan government. Overtures were made to the government in March 2007 by the CSTO for jointly combating the drug trade and terrorism through assistance in building the army, security agencies, and border protection units. The CSTO was in the meantime seeking a UN mandate to deploy its peacekeeping forces outside of the territory of its own member countries, presumably in Afghanistan. If cooperation with NATO was going to prove unworkable, the CSTO was willing to enter the theatre through an international UN mandate or by request of a national government. The question however is to what degree can the government of Afghanistan determine its own independent foreign policy, including cooperation with such organizations as CSTO and SCO, without going through NATO.

The other regional organization which could have played a supportive role in Afghan stabilization, but was bypassed, is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, founded in 1996 by China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan (with Uzbekistan joining in 2001) to demarcate and demilitarize the borders between China and the new post-Soviet republics. By 2005, its activities had broadened to include economic cooperation while retaining its core security agenda. With members pledging to fight terrorism in the region while abiding by the rule of mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, the SCO was seeking a platform for security cooperation while, in effect, providing a strategic lever to deal with the growing US role in the region. By July 2005, the SCO formally asked the United States to present its exist strategy from the region and in November of the same year, a Contact Group was set up between members of the SCO and Afghanistan, essentially to set up security a belt around the open conflict. Although a number of Washington pundits have argued for the benefits of concrete cooperation between NATO and the SCO, including

in the stabilization of Afghanistan, expressions of mutual interest have yet to result in any concrete progress<sup>15</sup>.

In the meantime, the OSCE had taken a more assertive, and sometimes controversial, position in regard to democracy-building in Central Asia. By 2000, the pan-European organization was facing an increasingly contentious attitude among post-Soviet states because of its insistence on democracy and human rights and for its steady criticisms of presidential and parliamentary elections. By July 2004, Russia and eight of the CIS states, including all the Central Asian republics except for Turkmenistan, had officially complained about what they deemed as a double standard and a lack of recognition of fundamental principles such as non-interference in international affairs and respect for national sovereignty. OSCE's critical assessment of the February 2005 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan led the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov to accuse the organization of having been partly responsible for the unrest in March 2005 that saw the overthrow of President Akaev. Since 2005, the policies of the OSCE that played a constructive role in the Tajikistan peace process are perceived as having been abandoned, with the organization facing accusations in the Russian press of having been used as a cover for "manipulating internal political processes in a member country from overseas"<sup>16</sup>. The controversial role of OSCE in democracy-building and elections in Central Asia and the fact that Afghanistan was not one of the 55 partner countries of this Pan-European Security organization prevented the direct involvement of the OSCE in the Afghan theatre. Yet it could also have been considered as the most appropriate organization for the adoption of a broader security approach to the problem of Afghanistan. As the only European Security Forum capable of bridging the East/West gap with membership including the United States and Russia as well as most of the countries of Central Asia, the OSCE could have used its normative and operational capabilities in dealing with the more structural causes of the conflict directly with the parties concerned.

Thus the regional security arrangements have changed since the early 1990s, when the then CSCE had made its first overture to the region by supporting confidence-building measures for UN's peacemaking efforts in Tajikistan, and when the CIS was seen as the main regional organization capable of proposing diplomatic and peacekeeping forces for Tajikistan. A decade later, the Afghan operation was being played out in a very different regional theatre, one where the newcomer, NATO, was failing to coordinate with existing regional organizations and powers. Experience had showed that peace in the region could not be sustained without the participation of regional actors. Lack of coordination and cooperation in the region can have a detrimental effect when other nations seek to balance an activist US military with their own overt and covert influence, escalating the (in)security dilemma and detracting from the long-term search for international and regional peace.

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<sup>15</sup> See for example the proposals put forth in 2006 by R. Weitz of the Hudson Institute in "Renewing Central Asian Partnerships", Autumn 2006, *NATO Review*, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue3/english/analysis2.html>

<sup>16</sup> See for example D. Kosyrov, "OSCE in Kyrgyzstan: Assistance or The Limitation of Sovereignty?", *RIA Novosti*, April 12<sup>th</sup> 2005, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/04/mil-050412-rianovosti03.htm>

## **METHODS OF PEACEMAKING: TO NEGOCIATE OR NOT? AND WHO SHOULD NEGOCIATE WITH WHOM?**

Ultimately, the Tajikistan case was a classical peacemaking mission where success came from the willingness of all sides to negotiate a peace agreement brokered by the United Nations and regional powers. The difference in the case of Afghanistan is that not only negotiations with the defeated enemy were initially bypassed, but that when they did, the diffusion of responsibility for the negotiations delegitimized them for the long run.

### **Tajikistan: Pacification Through Dialogue for National Reconciliation**

Negotiations were not necessarily seen at the start as the only solution for Tajikistan. By the time they began, the government had already drafted a new constitution (November 1993), which it was intending to submit to a general referendum, even though very large numbers of Tajiks had taken refuge outside of Tajikistan and could not have participated in any voting. For the government, the solution that consisted of dissolving all mechanisms for power-sharing appeared to be the best alternative. While before the November 1994 presidential elections, the government was willing to adopt a reconciliatory stance, once it did receive its required legitimacy, it could have abandoned all pretence and act as it pleased. Parliamentary elections ended up being held in February 1995 without the participation of the opposition. The opposition, in the meantime, given the lack of provisions for incorporating dissenting views, preferred to operate outside of the political system, mounting an armed resistance from Afghanistan, while calling for the boycott of the political process inside the country until after the return and repatriation of refugees and the lifting of the existing ban on political groups. At one point their demands had even included the withdrawal of the Russian troops, a demand subsequently dropped.

Yet the process of a political dialogue between the government and the opposition started with direct assistance from the international community. The Rahmonov government was thus forcibly “evolved” into understanding that national unity and political stability were important if Tajikistan wanted to receive the continued blessing of Russia and respect and recognition from the international community. Whether the government believed that there was no alternative but to negotiate a peaceful solution, or whether Russia, Uzbekistan, and Iran in the forefront, and the United States in the background, did not want to lose any time in advancing reconciliation in such a strategic region, the inter-Tajik talks on a political settlement and national accord sponsored by the United Nations began in March 1994. Both Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev and the Tajik government had at one point ruled out negotiations with the Tajik armed opposition located in Afghanistan and instead sought a “constructive” dialogue with those opposition groups residing in Kazakhstan, Moscow,

and Iran who were prepared to recognize the legal authority of the government. But the opposition refused to appear divided between “offensive” and “constructive” entities. Despite their many differences in terms of leadership ambitions, tactics, goals, and perhaps even philosophy, the various opposition groups, *i.e.* the democrats split between leaders in Kazakhstan and in Moscow; the Nahzati Muqovemati Islomi (Islamic Resistance Movement) and La’le Badakhshan, the latter making up the bulk of the opposition fighters in Afghanistan; and independent leaders such as Otokhon Latifi and the Qazi residing now in Tehran – presented together a common front in the form of the United Tajik Opposition during all negotiations with the government side.

Between 1994 and early 1997, eight major rounds of official talks were held in several different cities sponsored by the United Nations and aided by Russia, Iran and Central Asian countries, while parallel second track diplomacy meetings known as the Inter-Tajik Dialogue were organized with the help of a US civil society initiative. Several smaller-scale meetings also occurred directly between representatives of both sides including President Rahmonov and the United Tajik Opposition leader Sayed Abdullo Nuri. A ceasefire was signed in October 1994, which was to take effect as soon as UN observers arrived in Tajikistan to monitor the truce. In December 1994, the United Nations Mission of Observers of Tajikistan was established to monitor the Agreement. The two sides first agreed to a joint communiqué in which they reaffirmed their “commitment to political dialogue as the only means of achieving national reconciliation”. The Agreement however suffered a number of serious setbacks until 27 June 1997 when President Rahmonov, UTO leader Said Abdullah Nuri, and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Gerd Merrem, signed the “General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan” in Moscow ending the war.

Subsequently, a National Reconciliation Committee (NRC) was set up in late 1996, which consisted of 26 members, divided between the two sides and headed by the leader of the UTO and the Deputy Speaker of Majlisi Oli (Parliament). The NRC consisted of four sub-committees on military, political, judicial and refugee issues, and subsequently negotiated an Amnesty Law and the appointment of 50 positions (30 %) of UTO representatives in the executive structures. The implementation of the peace accord meant the end of fighting, demobilization of former combatants and their reintegration; disarmament and disbandment of the UTO armed elements; simultaneous reform of the power structures of the government; and the repatriation of up to 800,000 Tajik refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the CIS countries. In February 2000 the first multi-party and pluralistic parliamentary elections were held in Tajikistan, despite certain shortcomings, and the stage of consolidation of peace began in the country.

Peace in Tajikistan was brought about first of all through political means, hastened by security measures, and is currently being consolidated through economic development. Immediately after the elections of 1994, the authorities made a sustainable effort to bring law and order to the capital by disarming irregulars and cracking down on crime. But establishing unity could not be achieved through calling for peace and the reestablishment of authority only. Hence the need for a political negotiation to end the military campaign, followed by a policy of pacification of opposition leaders by giving them

positions of economic power or seats in the parliament. Once pacified, the process could start of ending the impunity of leaders of armed groups who were gradually imprisoned or removed from the political scene.

### **Afghanistan: Who Shall Negotiate?**

If negotiations between the two warring sides, which started a year after the Civil War, was the backbone of the Tajikistan peacebuilding case and the beginning of measures of confidence-building and credibility for a leadership, in Afghanistan, six years after the removal of the Taliban, national reconciliation has yet to take place.

Owing to the misconception at the time that the Taliban were a matter of the past, the 2001 Bonn Agreement was not conceived as an indigenous peace accord, nor had it adequately taken into account the need for a reconciliation process. The lack of representation of the Taliban at the Bonn meeting, coupled with the empowerment of the Mujaheddin forming the Northern Alliance that had supported the US-led military campaign, prevented the Bonn talks from laying the foundation for reconciliation and transitional justice. The Bonn Agreement left one of the warring parties, the Taliban, completely out of negotiations. In the long term, their marginalization impeded the possibility of reconciliation on the one hand, and led to a false premise that war had been won or settled on the other.

The resurgence of the discontented Taliban, removed from power but not defeated militarily, therefore came as no surprise four years later. In the meantime, recognizing that Bonn was, ultimately, not a peace agreement but one which failed to lay the foundations for reconciliation between warring factions, negotiations with the Taliban became an option discussed as early as 2005. By the end of 2007, it had become apparent to all, including those in Washington, London and Paris, that there was a need to talk to the Taliban, who were stronger than ever and a power to be reckoned with, militarily if not politically. But, unlike the case of Tajikistan, where the international community in concert brokered talks between the government and the opposition, in Afghanistan there was a growing competition, on the one hand between the Afghan government and the United States, the United Kingdom and the UN, and on the other hand between western allies themselves, as to who was to initiate decisive talks for power-sharing with the Taliban. In December 2007, two high level UN and EU diplomats were expelled from Afghanistan, accused of holding talks with the Taliban behind the backs of government officials in the volatile Helmand province. The essential point for the government was for it to assume the leading role in its own domestic affairs, and for President Karzai to be seen as the one initiating negotiations with the Taliban to persuade them to change sides. The Americans, in the meantime, had already adopted a discourse distinguishing between what it considered as “good” Taliban with whom it would be possible to negotiate, and “bad” Taliban, those bent on fighting the coalition troops. Even the UN, inevitably seen as discredited for having badly designed the Bonn Agreement, began to

show a willingness to facilitate dialogue between the Afghan government and its opposition. For its 2008 strategy, the UNAMA sought to spearhead a “process of reconciliation and peacebuilding through political outreach to include those Afghans who felt excluded from current institutions and make them part of development and rebuilding”.

By 2008, negotiations with the Taliban therefore were no longer the taboo of late 2001, even though the possible inclusion of any active participation of members of the Taliban movement who had been placed on the Consolidated List could violate the UN resolution 1267. But negotiations were carried out at any rate in secret, by different parties, sometimes along contradictory lines. Yet, it remained unclear as to who exactly should be negotiating with the Taliban and for what purpose. Shrouded in this ambiguity, the United States and its allies could not admit to the past mistake of not having included the Taliban in the power-sharing arrangements drawn up in Bonn and having cried victory prematurely in a military campaign; nor was national reconciliation a project that could be put into effect by the Karzai government. The simultaneous military campaign combined with the heavy handedness of the military response, in the meantime, also increasingly undermined chances for a face saving “deal” which could facilitate national reconstruction and political transition.

## **METHODS OF PEACEBUILDING: COORDINATION BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL ACTORS**

There has been a significant push in recent years, both in the academic literature and in practice, to “integrate” peace-enforcement, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. However, such integration may indeed have important, unintended negative consequences. When UN interventions took a more gradual approach, settling the conflict, consolidating peace, and then supporting state-building, as was the case a decade ago in Tajikistan, success was more measurable.

The genesis of the integrated approach lies in Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s 1992 Agenda for Peace, which spelled out the concept of peacebuilding alongside other UN roles of prevention, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. Thirteen years later, in December 2005, the Security Council and the General Assembly established the UN Peacebuilding Commission to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict recovery. In the intervening period, much had changed in relation to the nature of peace operations: the contexts in which they are conducted and the multiplicity of new actors involved. Traditional separations between peacekeeping and humanitarian mandates are being blurred as a result of the evolution from classical peacekeeping to modern-day peacebuilding. The concept of exclusively military-focused missions has been replaced with a broader notion of peacebuilding efforts. Simultaneously, the notion of neat, chronological phases of conflict followed by stabilization, transition and consolidation have proven obsolete when applied to the realities of today’s complex peace operations and development.

Much has also been developed in the past sixteen years since the Agenda for Peace in terms of guidelines, strategies and doctrines for more effective UN interventions. In the aftermath of the Brahimi Report of 2001, a peacebuilding triangle model was drawn up, outlining the necessity for the UN agencies to work on Security (through DPKO and DPA), on humanitarian issues (UNOCHA) and on development needs (UNDP) in post-conflict situations. So that the triangular model should not mean isolated sector-based interventions by different agencies, the notion of Integrated Missions was elaborated, urging the various actors to go beyond coordination of their different activities and design a comprehensive, cohesive and ultimately unified intervention.

In the classical model of peacebuilding, the pacing and sequencing of post-conflict interventions by the international community takes place in three stages: a) A stabilization stage, during which initial focus is on the creation of a safe environment and managing the immediate consequences of the conflict. This stage is also when humanitarian activities are carried out, but foundations are laid for longer-term steps: needs assessments are conducted and donor conferences organized for the mobilization of resources; b) A transition phase, during which elections are organized to legitimize the transformation of the political process, the establishment of a transition government and activities leading to Demobilization, Disarmament and Rehabilitation. During this stage, humanitarian relief activities shift to development activities; c) A final consolidation phase during which the focus is on support of the newly elected government, and parallel support of civil society, political parties, etc. This phase sees the withdrawal of foreign military forces, the implementation of Security Sector Reforms (SSR) and the establishment of the rule of law. During this time, transition is made to longer-term socio-economic reconstruction, rehabilitation and development.

However in the new theatres of operation, such as Afghanistan, the notion of neat, chronological phases of conflict followed by stabilization, transition and consolidation have proven obsolete. It is increasingly difficult to distinguish when a phase of peacebuilding ends and another starts. At the same time, the multitude of organizations working on specific mandates or across multiple sectors are posing novel challenges in new theatres such as Afghanistan – challenges that reduce the chances of success in ways unlike the Tajikistan case.

### **Tajikistan: A Sequencing Success**

Tajikistan could be considered a classical case of successful peacebuilding, as the intervention was gradual and sequential, characterized by distinct and recognizable phases of transition. In the political arena, an initial deployment of UN peacekeepers from 1993 to 1995 gave way to the civilian presence of the UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan and eventually to the UNTOP. The coordination during the negotiations with the CSCE was marked by a clear repartition of responsibility in which the OSCE was in charge of elections and political processes within the country and the United Nations in charge of negotiations between the various groups. Since 2000, the UN has transformed its mission

from observer of the peace process to peace-builder, replacing the UN Observer Mission with a UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding, involved in state-building processes, mobilizing international support for programmes promoting demobilization, voluntary arms collection, and employment opportunities for former irregular fighters. UNTOP's continued engagement in Tajikistan was based on the assumption that even though much progress toward peace had been made with the signing of the Peace Accords and the holding of parliamentary elections in 2000, the deep-seated roots of the civil conflict in Tajikistan had not yet been fully addressed. By the summer of 2007, UNTOP terminated its mandate in Tajikistan, handing over responsibilities for the implementation of the peacebuilding programmes of economic recovery and institutional consolidation to UNDP among other organizations.

On the socio-economic front, humanitarian organizations, coordinated by the UNHCR and including WFP, UNICEF and a host of relief organizations, delivered the necessary food aid between 1995 and 1997. A gradual shift from relief to development saw increased coordination of longer-term activities by UNDP between 1997 and 2000, at which stage the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund became increasingly involved in the process of economic reconstruction, long-term planning, and the preparation of development plans at the macro level. The success of this case can be described by the metaphor of an orchestra where each player knows his/her own instrument and the exact moment when he/she should join in the chorus.

### **Afghanistan: A Collapsed Accordion**

By contrast, the Afghan model could be compared to a collapsed accordion, representative of new types of interventions (the other being Iraq), where various actors are operating in the same zone at the same time, often without distinct boundaries and with little idea of where their mandate starts and finishes.

Since the 2001 Bonn Agreement, a multiplicity of actors, ranging from humanitarian to military to development actors, have all converged on the same terrain at the same time, with no clear operational phasing, while combat operations between Coalition troops, backed by the NATO-led ISAF, and the Taliban continue to this day. The blurring of actors and intentions meant that in May 2006, when coalition troops caused a mortal traffic incident in Kabul, angry mobs descended on UN agencies, bilateral offices, and international NGOs such as CARE. To the frustrated population of Kabul, for whom promises of reconstruction and large amounts of aid had not translated into improved well-being in their every day lives, there was no distinction between the military, the diplomatic personnel, and humanitarian or development workers.

The involvement of the military in delivering humanitarian aid and reconstructing local infrastructures, as is the case with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, means that the military are involved in relief and development. But humanitarian organizations criticize the PRTs for blurring the lines between soldiers and civilians, and transforming aid



workers into militant targets. Economic actors, such as the International Financial Institutions, have engaged in reconstruction and economic planning, including the preparation of an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Article (I-PRSP), even while the conflict is on-going. The solution adopted for coordination was the assignment of different “sectors” to different nations: the United Kingdom was in charge of the drug program and security sector reforms, Italy the rule of law, etc. Yet, it has become clear that state-building cannot be separated from the stabilization agenda. Practice has shown the pitfall of focusing on single dimensions without paying attention to inter-connections (including positive and negative fallout) with other sectors. Disjointed efforts among sectors do not develop sufficiently the inter-linkages between sector-based interventions.

To complicate matters further, the operation in Afghanistan has also been the scene of the deployment of private military actors. The 1990’s had witnessed a rise in the international private military and security industry, made up of former soldiers operating within corporate structures. The delocalization of ex-international combatants into the Afghan operations theatre, a consequence of globalization of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration, meant that private security companies provided operational support in combat, military advice and training, arms procurement, and maintenance of logistical support, including guaranteeing security country-wide for the Presidential elections in 2004. The coordination between the military and these private security agents has proven contentious. In post-conflict societies such as in Afghanistan, where the state does not have the capacity to provide security, the presence of private security forces (PSFs), becomes the symptom of state weakness and reinforces the idea that the state has to be replaced in this function. The rules of engagement for PSFs remain unclear; they are not integrated into the regulatory and accountability structures of the state security sector in which they are operating. Ultimately, the Afghan state should be in a position to take back security provisions into its own hands.

## **METHODS OF PEACEBUILDING: PEACE THROUGH A NATIONAL STATE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS**

In both cases, as is true of post-conflict situations, the political consolidation of peace was through international support for a constitution (a new one in Afghanistan, an updated one in Tajikistan), and then presidential elections followed by parliamentary elections. The difference, however, was that in the case of Tajikistan, the state had already existed, albeit as a federal one based in Moscow during the Soviet period; once independence was achieved, it appeared legitimate for the state administration to undergo transformation and profit from new opportunities in the transition period. In the case of Afghanistan, the efforts of the international community to consolidate a “democratic state” were hampered

by the inexistence of a centralized state over the past two decades. Furthermore, if the Weberian state is to be considered the most legitimate actor to possess a monopoly of the use of force, the capacity of the state to do so is of crucial consideration. In Afghanistan, sustained occupation, the deployment of NATO troops, and the competition with private security companies de facto conspired to largely destroy this legitimacy. The lesson is that a state must be considered as legitimate for peacebuilding to proceed: under conditions of sustained war and occupation, the state cannot take on its proper role, regardless of attempts at democratizing and reconstructing on the part of external actors.

### **Tajikistan: Pacifying the Spoilers, then Building State Institutions**

The consensus for peacebuilding in Tajikistan rested on the assumption that peace had to be brought about first of all through politics, then through security measures and further consolidated through socio-economic development. At the same time, the revival of culture as representative of the Tajik people's unity laid the foundations for holding the country together.

Once the opposition had been included, the Government of National Reconciliation with its 30 percent quota according to the 1997 Peace Accords, authorities made a sustained effort to bring law and order to the capital by disarming irregulars and cracking down on crime. Soon began a calculated policy of calming the peace spoilers by giving them positions of economic power or seats in the parliament. Once pacified, the process of ending the impunity of the leaders of armed groups was undertaken, the leaders being gradually imprisoned or removed from the political scene.

All civil wars, regardless of their cause or origin, become a source of wealth and power for certain specific groups. The personal economic interests of leaders and peace spoilers play an important role in war-making and peacebuilding processes. Conflicts are ignited and continued until the final distribution of public goods is carried out, not necessarily through legal privatization schemes, but through behind-the-scene negotiations. Between 1997 and 2000, the main challenge to the implementation of the peace accords in Tajikistan was the successful integration of the warlords into constitutional civilian and military structures while satisfying political and economic leaders by the distribution of goods. Criminal groups, especially organized ones that had ties to external networks, were those who benefited the most from chaos, engaging in the buying and selling of weapons, as well as the drug trade and hostage-taking for ransom. At the start of the war, criminal leaders had mobilized an army of petty gangsters, but they became increasingly sophisticated, merging with economic actors on the one hand, and with the military on the other. A number of self-styled crime lords were also roving the cities and mountains, turning out to be the most difficult mafioso to manage, not only because their interests were purely individual but on account of their personal wealth (often acquired through drug trafficking) that enabled them to gather a loyal following. A second menace to stability consisted of the political or economic leaders who

had not benefited from the distribution of the government portfolios as negotiated in the Accord. These were often former heads of factories or private businessmen who had funded one side or another of the conflict in seeking to advance their private interests. Their dissatisfaction came from not only a lack of any position in the new government, but also from a lack of recognition of their past contributions.

The peace process thus managed to tackle the first group (by demobilizing, removing, or imprisoning warlords), while distributing the booties of war (such as an aluminium plant, cotton processing mills, metallurgic enterprises, the brewery located in the capital, etc) or the peace dividends (funding for political parties etc), among the second group. After the consolidation of the peace treaty, the government, with the help of the Russian army, was able to rid the country of the various criminal groups operating there. By the summer of 2002, as the distribution of economic resources was negotiated, entrepreneurs of war had been silenced (through satisfying their needs) or either done away with or exiled from Tajikistan.

If one of the major causes of the conflict in Tajikistan had been the lack of viable institutions, including those represented by members of the elite groups from the north, the peacebuilding process in Tajikistan also concentrated on consolidating institutions. Civil society organizations flourished, as did a relatively open media; there were an increasing number of openings for other regional groups (such as Gharmis, Badakhshanis, Khujandis and Kulobis), not always in the institutions of power, but in alternative institutions (the private sector, NGOs, the media, universities, etc). Once peace was achieved, the country set out on a path of economic reconstruction which saw impressive revival in a span of ten years, and which concentrated on reviving the country's infrastructures, particularly in the field of transportation.

Ultimately, all parties to the conflict had one thing in common in Tajikistan, regardless of which faction they represented (opposition or government): they were nationalists, and unique perhaps to the case of Tajikistan, were all interested in preserving the nation and its cultural heritage. Political actors thus relied heavily on intellectual leaders, including writers and academics, who consistently wrote articles in newspapers on the need for the unification of the nation and on Tajik cultural values as a way of consolidating a national identity. After the break-up of the Soviet Union and independence in 1991, Tajikistan, like its neighbours in Central Asia, had dug into its historical legacy to celebrate its founding fathers. By 1992, the statue of Lenin in the middle of Dushanbe had been replaced by Hakim Abu-I-Qasem Ferdowsi, a 10<sup>th</sup> century cultural hero of the Iranian world and author of the epic Shahnameh, shown holding a flame in his hand, attesting to his Zoroastrian roots. By 2000, the idea that the Tajik nation stemmed from the Samanid dynasty (spelled Somonid in Tajikistan), a 10<sup>th</sup> century Persian dynasty, had permeated history books, political discourse and the mass media. A large statue of its founding king, Ismail Somoni (Samani) replaced that of Ferdowsi and came to adorn the central square of Dushanbe while the nation glorified its forefather with ceremonial pomp. The modern "Somonid period" then gave way to a revival of the Arian roots of the Tajik nation in 2006. By 2006, in preparation for the 15<sup>th</sup> year of independence, academics were

encouraged to discover the Aryan roots of the people of Tajikistan. Cultural history as a political leitmotif has played an immensely important role in the consolidation of nationhood among the Tajiks and for peace in Tajikistan as the country emerged into its modern, post-war, identity.

### **In Afghanistan, the Dilemma: State-building through Liberal Democracy?**

In the case of Afghanistan, it can be argued that it was precisely because of the inexistence of a strong state and a unified nation that instability and chaos reigned for the two decades preceding the 2001 intervention, and that the stabilization and peacebuilding efforts were thereafter not to be as straightforward as in the case of Tajikistan.

Were the Taliban regime to be considered a strong state, it would only be in the sense that the one Weberian responsibility that it fulfilled was the provision of security; it could only be credited with “securing” the territories it had occupied. While the initial focus by the US-led coalition was on the removal of the remnants of the Taliban, it became soon apparent that Afghanistan needed a stable state. State-building then became an explicit component of post-conflict reconstruction, as it had been in other cases. That a state was needed in Afghanistan was not contested. What type of state, and with what responsibilities, however, was open to different interpretations. Some argued that in the long run, federal models of governance might be more suitable for multi-ethnic Afghanistan, while others thought that a strong, representative central state apparatus was required to achieve stability and security in the short term. Efforts had to be made not only to reconstruct the state and its monopoly of legitimate violence, but to establish a legitimate public authority.

State-building through liberal democratization as initiated by external support actors hence started with the Bonn Agreement of December 5<sup>th</sup> 2001 which laid out a roadmap for the political transition to democratic rule. In hindsight, however, the rapid establishment of the formal tenants of western style democracy (constitution, presidential and parliamentary elections, creation of separate executive, legislative and judiciary bodies) was more attuned to the need for the international community to demonstrate success in Afghanistan than engrained in the deep understanding of the psyche of a traumatised, and ultimately traditional Afghan demos<sup>17</sup>. Democracy and state-building “from the outside in” proved not only an expensive exercise for the international community, but hardly took root in the Afghan traditions of political participation.

The use of a traditional consultative forum among the Pashtuns, the Loya Jirga (assembly of elders) seemed to indicate a consensus concerning the new political frameworks, but the choice had already been made to impose a Western-backed president; a method which, coupled with highly mediatized national elections, seemed to provide ex-post-facto legitimacy. If participation in the 2004 presidential elections surpassed all expectations,

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<sup>17</sup> Tadjbakhsh and Schoiswohl 2007.

the low turnout for the September 2005 parliamentary elections, was on the contrary an indication of the growing scepticism and disappointment that the Afghans felt in “their” participatory democracy. According to a United States Institute of Peace Report, “Many Afghans who had voted in the 2004 presidential elections said they did not feel motivated to vote this time because nothing had improved as a result of the first election”<sup>18</sup>.

The liberal democratization process, imported from outside, also failed to take into consideration the existence in Afghanistan of a multitude of political parties. In its current state and throughout its history, Afghanistan has not lacked for political parties. By the latest accounts of February 2008, there were more than 77 political parties officially registered with the Ministry of Justice<sup>19</sup>, despite Article 35 of the Constitution and a law on political parties which barred the registration of parties that had links to armed groups. Despite their number and potential influence, the formal and constructive participation of political parties in the new democratic system remained inexistent, especially as concerns the one channel through which they could play an important role, namely the National Assembly. A decision was made in 2005 that legislative elections should be based on a Single Non-Transferable Voting system which excluded political parties, vital for mediating tensions in a democratic assembly. In the absence of a formal role for political parties, proceedings often became dominated by powerful warlords manipulating ethnic loyalties. The ban on political parties to stand for the parliamentary elections also reflected the highly personalized nature of Afghan politics. While the executive, dominated by Western-backed liberals, increasingly became associated with a liberal democracy model, the National Assembly increasingly became the stronghold of dissent, Afghan style, with a kaleidoscope of nationalist, ethnic, tribal, and gender-based interests.

In interviews conducted with the leaders of ten leading political parties in Afghanistan on their perceptions about liberal peace and its alternatives as part of a joint research project of the CERI/Sciences Po Paris and the University of Kabul in the fall of 2008, interviewees were asked to spell out the main challenges to long-term state-building in Afghanistan. Although most leaders acknowledged the need to build the future of Afghanistan on the liberal principles of market economy and a democratic system, none thought that Afghanistan had at this juncture sufficient foundations for these principles to be put into effect. In an agrarian economy, and in the absence of generally accepted rules for competition, the idea of market economy had turned into an opportunity for those in power to loot natural resources and accumulate illegal profits from the drug trade. In a traditional society where Islamic, tribal and ethnic values formed the basis of informal institutions, the formal tenants of liberal democracy, such as elections, had become an opportunity for the strong (those either holding the monopoly of illegal trade, or those backed by international allies) to consolidate their power and engage in corruption and nepotism. A true democracy, it was said, had to be based on people-power (*mardom salari*) but the current conditions, ranging from illiteracy

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<sup>18</sup> B. DeGrasse and E. Hsu (2005), “Afghanistan: Old Problems, New Parliament, New Expectations”, *USI Peace Briefing*, [http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace\\_briefings/2005/1025\\_afghanwomen.html](http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2005/1025_afghanwomen.html)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

to massive poverty and insecurity for the population and a close grip on power by decision makers, prevented democracy from taking root. Liberal values, noble as they may be in the long term, could not be reconciled with the traditional and Islamic values of the masses, especially in an environment of economic and political insecurity<sup>20</sup>.

By the end of 2007, president Karzai's power base rested primarily on a small segment of the population, educated and moderate Afghans with secular political tendencies. The economic base of these allies, and the police and military capacities of the government, were hardly comparable to the economic and military resources of the lawless who were able to generate autonomous revenues from drug cultivation and trafficking.

The lack of tangible progress in development and in welfare that concerned the everyday lives of the Afghans, especially at a time that it was public knowledge that the international community had spent massive amounts of money in Afghanistan, was one of the major reasons fuelling distrust among Afghans. That the urgent demands of the population in terms of basic welfare and employment had not been satisfied by the huge amounts of supplies poured into the country had led to suspicions of large-scale corruption and wastage of aid, not only by the government, but also by the international community.

In hindsight, there seem to be two contradictory discourses in Afghanistan which hamper efforts of peace: on the one hand, the international community is in Afghanistan to fight a global War on Terror. In this framework, local voices and local circumstances may not ultimately matter. The other discourse is that the international community is there to give support to the government of Afghanistan, whose efforts in state-building seem to be gravely failing. In this latter perspective, and on the military front for example, ISAF and OEF are not directly responsible for the insurgents whose attacks are increasingly targeting the government's National Police and Army. This duality indicates, ultimately, that Afghanistan does not possess the sufficient national authority to manage its own policy programs, whether they be political, economic or social.

Yet, democratization from-the-outside-in, an ambitious reconstruction program, billions spent on aid, and the replacement of national security forces engaged in counter-insurgency by the international community cannot forge the legitimate and legitimizing process of building a state-society relationship.

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<sup>20</sup> Preliminary results of interviews conducted for a joint project on "Liberal Peacebuilding, Alternative Approaches and Human Security" of the CERI Program for Peace and Human Security (Sciences Po, Paris) and the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Kabul, directed by S.Tadjbakhsh and N. Stanekzi, September 2007-April 2008, with support from the French Embassy in Kabul.

## PEACE THROUGH CASH?

In terms of donor assistance to the peacebuilding process, the two cases also differ sharply, and their differences can serve a lesson for aid disbursement procedures in post-conflict situations.

Research by Collier and Dollar<sup>21</sup> finds that aid in general is subject to diminishing returns, but that absorptive capacity depends upon the level of policy and institutions. For states coming out of conflict, the costly demands for implementing recovery and the need to restore infrastructure make aid a necessity. However, the weakening of civil administration, the break down of institutions that can absorb aid, and incentives for corruption can gravely offset this opportunity, making aid potentially less effective. Thus, the capacity to absorb aid follows a curve whereas in the beginning, absorption capacities are low as institutions are still weak, but they gradually pick up, thus rendering aid more efficacious<sup>22</sup>. But the notion of absorptive capacity includes the idea of a “saturation point” of aid, which would imply that after a certain amount has been donated, the marginal impact of another dollar in aid has diminishing returns<sup>23</sup>. If absorption capacities are low in post conflict situations, saturation points can be induced earlier, and countries cannot meet their development targets even with improved policies and institutions as well as additional external resources.

In the case of Tajikistan, post-conflict aid pledges have gradually increased since the end of hostilities in 1997, keeping pace with the increased capacity of the government to receive and process grants and loans. At the Donor Consultative Group Meeting in Tokyo in 1996, the pledges amounted to 185 million US dollars, reflecting the initial humanitarian needs of the country still considered at war. Immediately following the Peace Accords in 1997, the Vienna Consultation brought in 56.5 million dollars in pledges, most of which were for DDR programs. As the united and consolidated country began its socio-economic recovery and planning, funds pledged at the Donor Meeting in Tokyo in 2001 increased to 430 million dollars and at the Dushanbe Donor Meeting of 2003 to 900 million dollars, of which 200 million were in the form of humanitarian aid and about 2/3 were grants<sup>24</sup>.

This gradual increase was testimony to the progressive build-up of local institutions and their capacity for absorption. Consequently, after 1997, as the government’s own capacity for management of new institutions had improved, donors had better success working directly on post-conflict rehabilitation, social and public sector reforms, macro economic support, and poverty eradication planning and programming. This gradual increase was also testimony to

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<sup>21</sup> Collier and Dollar 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Collier and Hoeffler, 2002

<sup>23</sup> Barder 2006.

<sup>24</sup> The information on donor pledges comes from Toshmuhammadov 2004.

the leeway afforded the government to set up its own socio-economic development planning. It was also evidence of stabilization, as the percentage of humanitarian aid decreased in relation to loans and grants for economic recovery.

In the case of Afghanistan, mediatized and played out against a background of a global war on terrorism on which the legitimacy of the United States and the United Kingdom administrations' foreign policy depended, the sequence was in reverse order: an overflow of aid at the beginning of the conflict due to highly political pledges which may have in fact contributed to the difficulties of consolidating national peace.

It is beyond the scope of this article to examine the problems of aid to Afghanistan, a subject covered extensively by other authors. Suffice it to quote a January 2008 report of Oxfam, which claimed that since 2001, Afghanistan had received more than \$15 billion in assistance, and the US House of Representatives had approved \$6.4 billion more in economic and development assistance. The report however argued that too much aid to Afghanistan was provided in ways that were ineffective or inefficacious. As in Iraq, too much aid was being absorbed by the profits of companies and subcontractors, by expenditures on non-Afghan resources, and on high expatriate salaries and living costs. The cumulative impact was that some 40% of aid to Afghanistan was leaving the country. Oxfam blamed international assistance as too "top-heavy, prescriptive and supply-driven" and insufficiently Afghan owned, hence unsustainable<sup>25</sup>.

Media coverage of the large amount of aid that pours into on-going crises or post-crisis situations, such as in Afghanistan, makes it difficult to resist the temptation to think in terms of quick-fix projects designed to produce rapid results. But the problem that then arises is not one of shortage of the funds but of the absorption capacities and policy priorities, which when badly handled, can lead to waste in the best of circumstances and corruption in the more classical cases.

One again, given that the reconstruction project in Afghanistan did not begin on the basis of establishing a real-needs assessment or a carefully planned process involving agreements among all parties to the conflict, but as part of a hurried "knee-jerk reaction" by external actors to the sequence of events that followed 11 September 2001, it was inevitable that, as is often the case with such reactions, the country's absorption capacities were overlooked, leading to short and long-term deficiencies in the delivery of aid and thus reducing its impact.

Too little aid does not provide states with the means to consolidate peace and provide for human security and public goods. Yet, too much aid for transitional post-conflict states, which are heavily dependent on international funding, can create accountability to international financial institutions and to taxpayers in other countries. This could create frustration among a population whose needs are unmet and mistrust for a delegitimized state.

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<sup>25</sup> Oxfam 2008.



## CONCLUSIONS

It is often said that Central Asia and Afghanistan belong to the same regional conflict complex, that instability in one country can spill over into the other. Instability and unpredictability in Afghanistan have directly shaped events in Central Asia in the past decade and led to reactive policies by political elites. Yet, if conflicts can thus spill over, can peace do the same? Better cooperation in the region could lead to overall improved trade, establishment of conditions necessary to attract larger scale foreign direct investment, confidence building and political stability. Sustainable growth in Afghanistan could have a major impact for all its neighbours in terms of trade and transit to warm water ports and to processing markets in India and Pakistan for Central Asian cotton, let alone transport routes for oil and gas in the region. But the failure of the peace process in Afghanistan can also have major adverse effects in Central Asia, including increased political instability, drug trafficking, and a reactionary rapprochement of the countries of the region in an anti-Western alliance.

The stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan is therefore key for the region. Although the conditions, points of departure, the actors and the timing are very different in the case of the peace agreements in Tajikistan, the international community could begin to examine some of the lessons learned there in relation to peacebuilding efforts. The ending of the civil war in Tajikistan is often considered to be the most successful of UN peacebuilding efforts, and on the surface, at least, Tajikistan seems to offer a model of conflict resolution and reconciliation, a rare success for the international community which has suffered from a negative image of its interventions in the past decade.

A comparison of the international peacebuilding efforts in Tajikistan in the 1990s and in Afghanistan a decade later, however, reveals the very different ways in which the interventions were handled. Tajikistan could be considered a successful case in that the intervention was gradual, sequential and well coordinated. By contrast, a decade later, in Afghanistan, as in many recent interventions, traditional notions of a stabilization phase, followed by transition and consolidation have been blurred. This blurring poses problems for the pacing and sequencing of the international intervention and post-conflict response, and the merging of actors and intentions leads to confusion for the local population which is not conducive to success either in the short or long term.

Ultimately, the ways in which peace is conceived and negotiated ultimately determine its sustainability. Three major lessons are thus to be drawn from an attempt at a comparative analysis:

First, the motivations of engagement by the international community in post-conflict situations can impact the course of success of the mission. If the motives are one-dimensional, as they had been in Tajikistan, they have a better chance of attaining their goals. Launching a multiple agenda of regime removal, political and economic reconstruction, liberal based democratization, and military combat, as has been the case of Afghanistan, can be a recipe for sustained conflict, but hardly for peace.

Second, multi-dimensional and multi-actor engagements – part military campaign, part political stabilization, part private sector engagement – as is the Afghan case, can muddy the waters and risk endangering both the legitimacy and effectiveness of the intervention. Although the international community increasingly advocates integrated missions, often in rapid reaction to complex emergencies, the phasing and sequencing of interventions should certainly not be neglected. Competing priorities confuse the situation on the terrain rather than orchestrating a gradual approach towards peace.

Third, there are limits to the role that external actors can play. Ultimately, it is the state that has to provide security for its population in the broader sense of human security (the use of force for stability, welfare for development, and transparent processes for protecting human rights). For the success of peace initiatives, legitimacy has to be established through providing for wants at the same time as establishing respect for law. Yet the international community cannot replace national institutions in these roles, lest the foundations of legitimacy be endangered. The international community should constantly have in mind the goal of building the capacity of national institutions in order for a state, one that will ideally negotiate a pact with the people on its own terrain, to be in a position to fulfil its function of providing, protecting and empowering. The international community should see itself as a guest in post-conflict situations, one that knows how to respect the host's house even if it is largely destroyed, and one who knows the appropriate time for departure. Neither occupation nor replacement of state functions can bring that long-term legitimacy which is the backbone of any sustainable peace process. Substituting for the state in its basic roles may be the answer to the reporting requirements of large fund providers in post-conflict situations, but it could well be detrimental to the capacity of the state to maintain a legitimate ownership over "peace" in the country.

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