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SOCIALIZATION IN VIOLENCE AND THE POST-2014 APPROACH IN AFGHANISTAN

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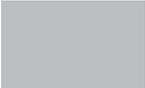
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BISHKEK

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KEY POINTS

- Taliban activity has intensified dramatically in recent times, caused by the gradual withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the reduction of the US presence, and the Afghan presidential elections in April 2014. Experts and governments have voiced concern over the overall deterioration of the situation in the country.
- In spite of heavy criticism of the international presence in Afghanistan, complete withdrawal will not be feasible for years to come, as the Afghan administration and army are not ready to take up the responsibility for the country's future and rely heavily on donor support.
- Caught in a cycle of dependency, Afghanistan needs humanitarian assistance more than ever before as almost 90 per cent of the country's public spending comes from foreign aid. Despite pledges, some donors have failed to fulfill their commitments and increasingly have lost interest in the country. Moreover, the aid committed is not sufficient to meet the needs of the population and achieve the goals of donors, since a part of it bypasses the Afghan administration, another part goes back to donor countries and the aid that enters the system is deployed ineffectively.
- Afghanistan is important both in and of itself and regionally, with instability there affecting Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan. Many elements in the country combine to promote sustained conflict, which makes it a hostile environment for peace-building. One factor largely overlooked is socialization into violence, which in turn has been reinforced by an emphasis on the military intervention in the country that has led to significant and regular losses of civilian life.

- An analysis of the activities performed by organizations suggests that the specific factor of socialization into violence as one fueling the conflict in Afghanistan in combination with other drivers is not specifically addressed by the international donor community.
- A new stabilization strategy should be considered within a humanitarian effort that prioritizes breaking the self-reinforcing cycle of socialization into violence and increasing aid that focuses on education and new job opportunities for the local population.



ACRONYMS

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AGE	Anti-Government Element
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLU	National Labour Union
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan has been a battleground for decades resulting in variable levels of interest on the part of the international community. It is important in its own right, regionally, and in the overall context of global security. It contributes to instability in Iran and Pakistan as well as Central Asia and has provided a launching pad for Al-Qaeda operations in the past. The ISAF withdrawal in 2014 provoked gloomy regional and global security forecasts among experts and strengthened international pessimism over the country's course.^{1,2} The withdrawal led to eventual cuts to development aid and, more worryingly, the deterioration of the security situation within the state and on its borders.

The focus of this study is socialization into violence and how the emphasis by international actors on military intervention might reinforce this factor. It also suggests that just as military operations in Afghanistan suffered from the absence of a clear and adequate strategy, poor coordination and unfulfilled commitments in terms of providing civilian aid has limited the impact of development interventions in the country. This research paper also includes research findings based on an analysis of the organizations and their work showing that factor of socialization into violence as one fueling the conflict in Afghanistan in combination with other drivers is not specifically addressed by the international donor community with only a small number of projects looking into the issue as a side-effect of their major activities.

There is huge gap between military and humanitarian assistance, which remains detached from the issue of socialization and may also serve to continue turning socialization

1. Jair van der Lijn. Afghanistan post-2014: Groping in the dark? NIIR, May 2013.
2. Stefan Olsson, Erika Holmquist, Samuel Bergenwall, Helene Lackenbauer. Afghanistan After 2014: Five Scenarios, 2012.

into violence. The overall aim of this paper then is to provide an analysis of previous peace building efforts and draw attention to the prospects of reconsidering the aid balance in favor of the humanitarian effort and breaking the self-reinforcing cycle of socialization into violence. Several suggestions and recommendations are made in respect to both the government of Afghanistan and the international community that remains committed to bringing peace to the Afghan people.

Conflict drivers in Afghanistan

The quantity and complex interdependence of conflict drivers in Afghanistan make it difficult terrain for the peace building process. The Afghan state is weak, with state employees often lacking adequate qualifications, and suffering from corruption and rent-seeking behavior that has lowered their legitimacy among the population. The troubled presidential elections and the compromised National Unity Government led by President Ashraf Ghani and his opponent Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah since 2014 has only added to political disenfranchisement and division. These factors also weaken the state's potential in the face of a reduction in international military presence and cuts in financial aid.

The security situation remains shaky and Afghans increasingly fear insurgent attacks with civilian deaths peaking at 10,000 in 2014, the most deadly year since 2001 according to the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA).³ The Taliban and other insurgent groups see the transition period as an opportunity to strengthen their position and return previously lost territories and areas of influence.

3 Security Council briefing on the situation in Afghanistan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom, 16 March 2015. Retrieved from <<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/about/speeches/pid/25919>> (25 June 2015).

According to the Fund for Peace that creates the annual Fragile States Index, Afghanistan was ranked 8th out of 178 countries in 2015 and is on the “high alert list” adding 1.4 points to its position from the year before.⁴ Following the idea of Paul Collier’s spillover effect⁵ the Index puts the entire Central Asian region on the “warning list”.⁶ Widespread endemic corruption evokes the grievances of the Afghan population and fuels conflict.⁷ Large inflows of poorly controlled international assistance result in stolen and misused funds, due to the unaccountability of the Afghan government to its own people and the connivance of donors, which has been one of the factors aiding corruption.^{8,9}

The dominant factor fueling both corruption and conflict in Afghanistan has been by all means the enormous drug economy, which now accounts for 13 per cent of country’s GDP.¹⁰ Easy to cultivate and drought resistant opium crops bring high revenues, negatively affecting the state, while an aggressive eradication strategy alienates the Afghan population that profit from the crop. It is also said to provide funding for the Taliban and other Anti-Government Ele-

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- 4 The Fragile States Index, The Fund for Peace, 2015. Retrieved from <<http://library.fundforpeace.org/library/fragilestatesindex-2015.pdf>> 15 May 2015.
 - 5 Paul Collier. *The Bottom Billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it.* Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, p. 37.
 - 6 The Fragile States Index, The Fund for Peace, 2015. Retrieved from <<http://library.fundforpeace.org/library/fragilestatesindex-2015.pdf>> 15 May 2015.
 - 7 The annual Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Afghanistan 172 out of 175 assessed countries in 2014, leaving behind only the worst Sudan, North Korea and Somalia. See Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2014. Retrieved from <<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>> 10 May 2015.
 - 8 Leo Shane III. Agency accused of covering up misuse of Afghanistan funds. 3 April 2014. Retrieved from <<http://archive.militarytimes.com/article/20140403/NEWS/304030043/Agency-accused-covering-up-misuse-Afghanistan-funds>> 20 June 2015.
 - 9 Christine Anderson. Aid Flows Despite Corruption Concerns in Afghanistan. 30 January, 2014. Retrieved from <<http://www.pogo.org/blog/2014/01/20140130-aid-flows-despite-corruption-concerns-in-afghanistan.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>> 20 June 2015.
 - 10 RAB, DPA, UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014: Socio-economic Analysis. Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_Socio-economic_analysis_2014_web.pdf> 10 May 2015.

ments (AGE), act as a source of bribery money for officials and finance training camps, arms purchases and operations for terrorist groups. Another dangerous consequence of the eradication strategy has been rising opium prices, but also the facilitation of recruitment into insurgency groups. The crops' eradication resulted in economic insecurity pushing people into alternative illegal activities, and worsening an already unstable situation.¹¹ With international forces leaving, pressure on poppy cultivation has eased, leading to a "sobering" 36 per cent rise in production in 2013.¹²

The combination of these factors creates a high risk and seemingly hopeless environment for ordinary Afghans. Insecurity, lack of development, lack of access to education, health services, job opportunities and low income frustrate people causing many Afghans to leave, turn to opium cultivation and/or reinforce insurgency groups. According to the National Labour Union (NLU) there are 12 million people unemployed.

These factors, extensively covered in the literature on Afghanistan, provide a background to the focus of this study, which is the role socialization into violence plays in perpetuating the conflict in Afghanistan.¹³

11 Sultan Barakat et al. A Strategic Conflict Assessment of Afghanistan. PRDU, 2008, pV.

12 Warren Mass. Opium Crop in Afghanistan Up 36 Percent, Says UN Report. 15 November 2013. Retrieved from <<http://www.thenewamerican.com/world-news/asia/item/16964-opium-crop-in-afghanistan-up-36-per-cent-says-un-report>> 20 May 2015.

13 Noor Wali Sayeed Shinwarai and Ali Arash. 12 million unemployed in Afghanistan, December 15, 2014. Retrieved from <<http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2014/12/15/12-million-unemployed-in-afghanistan.html>> 20 May 2015.

Continued Socialization into Violence

There are various definitions of socialization used among social scientists. For the purposes of this study, the most appropriate is the definition of socialization as a developmental process by which an individual, through interaction with others and his or her own experiences, takes the culture, norms and values of a society to be 'socially acceptable'. The socialization process begins early in life and continues for its duration. Among the socializing agents - factors psychologists determine as influencing the socialization of an individual - are family, peers, school, religion, media and other factors. Socializing agents can have both positive and negative impacts on an individual. According to Chinoy, socialization transmits culture between generations and provides an individual with the beliefs, values and habits necessary to be accepted into the society.¹⁴ Individuals are rejected by society due to deviant behavior. When social norms are disrupted and institutions are not properly functioning, deviant (violent) behavior becomes a norm in society and is thus self-reinforcing. Based on this, we can work out the definition of socialization into violence, which is the continuing process of interaction and experiences in a violent, conflict-based environment, through which an individual forms attitudes and behavioural patterns to adapt.

Afghanistan, devastated by decades of conflict represents a case where socialization reinforces violence, because it socializes generation after generation into a culture of violence and conflict. According to Durch, populations caught in prolonged conflicts tend to "support extreme alternatives if they offer the only prospect for restoring order".¹⁵ Ojiganov stresses the importance of early socialization in the violent environment as one of the key factors for choosing this model of behavior in the future. When conflict lasts for

14 Ely Chinoy. *Society: An Introduction to Sociology*, New York: Random House, 1961.

15 William J. Durch. *Afghanistan: Keeping the Peace Without Hardly Trying*. Henry L. Stimson Center, 2002.

years like in Afghanistan it becomes a process, which is able to stimulate and reproduce itself, so “the process of terror becomes modus vivendi of distinct groups”.¹⁶ Moreover, some groups, if we follow Ojiganov’s thought cannot live in non-conflict settings any more. This is supported by the study on causes motivating young people to reinforce combatant forces. Among other stated reasons that motivated young males “to join Taliban forces was their thinking that they are used to fighting and cannot do any other job than being a Taliban fighter, which shows how their lives have been molded into being a fighter forever and actually with no cause.”¹⁷

In the opinion of Shireen Burki, an independent consultant and writer on the Middle East, counter-terrorism and strategic communication:

“socialization into violence” did NOT occur at some readily identifiable juncture. What I mean by that is that given the geographical, historical, physical cards the people of the place were dealt, war, raids, looting have been an integral part of the socialization period for over a millennium, the Greek even commented on this as did those who followed them... the Soviets by destroying the rural social fabric exacerbated this socially embedded tendency.”¹⁸

People tend to reflect the worlds they live in. For Afghanistan, where about 42 per cent of the population (13 out of 32 million) is under the age of 14¹⁹, socialization into violence represents a particular threat because as Halperin states, children exposed to repeated violence are more likely to become violent. In Perry’s words they are “incubated in terror”.²⁰ Although socialization lasts for the lifetime of the

16 Edward Ojiganov. Modeling antiterrorism strategy. Guardian, 2007.

17 Idrees Zaman, e-mail communication, 10 Aug. 2009 08:39:08 +0430

18 Shireen Burki, e-mail communication, Tue, 11 Aug. 2009 11:37:57-0700 (PDT)

19 Afghanistan Demographics Profile 2015. Index Mundi. Retrieved from <http://www.indexmundi.com/afghanistan/demographics_profile.html> 23 June 2015.

20 Bruce D. Perry. Incubated in Terror: Neurodevelopmental Factors in the ‘Cycle of Violence’ The Child Trauma Academy. Retrieved from <<http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/cta/incubated1.htm>> 22 June 2015.

individual, most of the influence is received during childhood when an individual is more vulnerable and susceptible.²¹

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) conducted qualitative research on everyday violence in the four Afghan provinces of Bamiyan, Herat, Kabul and Nangarhar. The results highlight the accepted and “normal”, forms of “everyday violence” directed at children in family units. It supports the notion that Afghan youth are raised in a particularly violent environment. The central and worrying finding is that violence towards children is accepted, recognized, widely used and sometimes even recommended in the community.

Violence is accepted, as many psychologists state, due to the socializing effect of the family unit. For instance, during the AREU research it was found that many respondents’ attitudes and parenting techniques were influenced by their own experiences of violence in childhood.²² This negative experience thus has a huge effect on their general outlook. Perry states that experience is the “major modifier of all human behavior”.²³ Russel Fazio and Mark Zanna also support the idea that “when attitudes arise from experience, they are far more likely to endure and to guide actions.”²⁴

Violence experienced constantly in childhood is likely to result in similar violent behavior later. In addition, the theorists of contemporary social learning theory posit that “learning

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- 21 It is necessary to distinguish between two forms of violent socialization for the better understanding of the issue: socialization into violence resulting from overall culture or family behaviour patterns and socialization into violence occurring as a result of the prolonged conflict that affects not only separate families, but population at large. Although the difference and causes of the violent behaviour in these two cases can be clearly distinguished theoretically, in reality it is often very difficult to distinguish between the two as their effects may go together.
- 22 Deborah J. Smith. Love, Fear and Discipline: Everyday violence toward children in Afghan families. Issues Paper Series. February 2008. p. 55.
- 23 Bruce D. Perry. Incubated in Terror: Neurodevelopmental Factors in the ‘Cycle of Violence’ The Child Trauma Academy. Retrieved from <<http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/cta/incubated1.htm>> 22 June 2015.
- 24 Russel Fazio and Mark Zanna (1981) cited in David G. Myers, Social Psychology, 5th edition, McGraw – Hill Inc. USA, 1996.

occurs through imitation of, and identification with, other people”²⁵, and that people learn through observing and modeling behavior of someone they consider “admirable or powerful or much like themselves”²⁶. It works perfectly in parent-child relationships. It also works with other socializing agents outside the family unit that can be considered powerful models for behavior. These role models can have both positive and negative effects in the socialization process whether they are found within the immediate community or in the wider community. Afghan society places importance on masculinity, bravery and strength, while the ability to kill and use a gun helps young boys identify themselves as Afghan men.²⁷

For a community it is particularly dangerous when warlords and insurgents become the violent role models. In Afghanistan, as in other conflict-prone environments a “person responsible for killing thousands of civilians, destroying thousands of houses, and looting thousands of private properties can become a hero for many people; at the same time, a betrayer, looter, rebel, and traitor for many others.”²⁸ For many desperate young people in an insecure economic and social setting, these warlords become role models and heroes, whose behavioral patterns they may readily copy and repeat. The violence experienced in family units combined with the overall violent environment Afghan children are forced to live in, influences and shapes their attitudes and behavioural patterns adapting many of them to violence.

Socialization, as explained, heavily depends on the environment. “Successful” socialization has different meanings in different societies. Following this idea scholars state that “our modes of thought and behavior are generally

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- 25 Bandura, 1977. cited in *Developing person through childhood and adolescence*. Worth Publishers, Inc. USA, 1995.
 - 26 David G. Myers. *Social Psychology*, 5th edition, cGrow – Hill Inc. USA, 1996.
 - 27 Zahidullah Jalali, CICA, SPECA, CIRDAK Desk Officer MFA of Afghanistan, e-mail communication Thu, 6 Aug. 2009 22:27:35-0700 (PDT)
 - 28 Zahidullah Jalali, CICA, SPECA, CIRDAK Desk Officer MFA of Afghanistan, personal communication Thu, 6 Aug. 2009 22:27:35-0700 (PDT)

adaptive”²⁹ with the aim of being “socially accepted” in a given environment in which people are socialized.³⁰ This does not mean that socialization in Afghanistan is unsuccessful - on the contrary it has proven to be successful for decades and interested groups have learned to use it for their benefit. However, socialization might be viewed from a “trap” perspective, wherein multiple analyses suggest it is a major predictor for higher rates of homicide in conflict-based environments. Others point out that socialization into aggressive and violent behavior is a consequence of war. Combined with religious appeals, the idealization of violent “heroes” is promoted through different media channels that also affect the socialization process of younger generations. Adjusting its information campaign to an illiterate audience, the Taliban proved to be clever ideologists, utilizing DVDs, audio cassettes and radio broadcasts for disseminating propaganda. At present, they have been no less successful at winning the hearts and minds of the population than the allied forces and the official administration. They have managed to create a perception among many young Afghans that to participate in an insurgency is righteous, beneficial and prestigious:

For example, interviewees in Uruzgan described how, after the bodies of some Taliban were dumped in the centre of Tarinkot as a humiliation, young men kept sneaking up and cutting pieces off their clothes, in the belief that the men were martyrs and the pieces of cloth would be powerful talismans. Such a reaction arises from the Taliban’s effective psyops campaigns, which lean on local belief systems to give the Taliban an almost otherworldly quality.³¹

Experienced and witnessed violence has a socializing effect on children in Afghanistan that may later result in the re-

29 (Funder, 1987; Kruglanski & Ajzen, 1983; Swann, 1984) cited in David G. Myers Social Psychology, 5th edition McGraw – Hill Inc. USA, 1996.

30 Hawkes, 2001 cited in Bruce D. Perry. Incubated in Terror: Neurodevelopmental Factors in the ‘Cycle of Violence’ The ChildTrauma Academy. Retrieved from <<http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/cta/incubated1.htm>> 22 June 2015.

31 Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam et al. Afghan Hearts, Afghan Minds: Exploring Afghan perceptions of civil-military relations. For ENNA and BAAG, 2008. p. 66.

inforcement of insurgent and terrorist groups. The socialization process is an important component impeding the peace-building process. Continuously increasing numbers of civilian casualties during allied operations have helped escalate the conflict, resulting in growing everyday animosity and violence. Taking into consideration the importance of the socialization on the continuing conflict in Afghanistan it would be reasonable to use a re-socialization³² strategy in humanitarian projects. The younger the audience the easier it will be to implement, as children and young adults are more open and sensitive to new experiences, behavioral patterns and values.

Afghanistan and the international community have long been in search of stabilization and a more balanced development strategy. Such a strategy must break the self-reinforcing cycle of socialization into violence. To do so prior and current efforts must be assessed and analyzed. In the following sections we will take a closer look at the international military and civil presence in Afghanistan and try to assess the extent to which the current strategy takes into account and tries to ameliorate the situation concerning socialization into violence.

Assessment of Military and Civil Effort Balancing in Afghanistan

The Effect of the Military Effort and Civilian Casualties on the Continuation of Violent Socialization

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), a response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, began on October 7, 2001. It proved fast and successful, resulting in the overthrow of the Taliban regime by November of that year and the creation of a tran-

32 Re-socialization is defined as a process of unlearning former patterns of behavior or attitudes and accepting new ones.

sitional government.³³ However, while victorious at first glance, the NATO operation backed by international forces has proven to be only the dawn of a protracted counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, which has absorbed time, resources and lives.

Allies committed ever-increasing numbers of troops to the mission in Afghanistan after it began. The largest single contributor of forces and resources has been the US.³⁴ The ISAF at its peak exceeded 130,000 people.³⁵ Thus the expenditures of the US and other parties to the coalition grew. Expenditure has overwhelmingly tilted towards the military side. It is estimated that US military spending alone amounts to around US\$ 200 million per day³⁶, while the humanitarian aid requested by the UN for the whole 2015 fiscal year amounts to US\$ 405 million.³⁷

Yet casualties endured while growing resources were committed, leading to increased domestic criticism and opposition for the allies.³⁸ A study conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found in 2007, 2008 and 2009 that the military operation in Afghanistan grew largely unpopular even in those countries that initially encouraged it. Recent public opinion polls in the US show a majority favoring complete withdrawal from Afghanistan.³⁹

Until recently, the strategy of the allies has been heavily reliant on expensive military measures, most of which were car-

33 Under the Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions (Bonn Agreement) in December 2001.

34 Amy Belasco. Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001-FY2009: Cost and Other Potential Issues, Congressional Research Service, 2 July 2009.

35 ISAF's mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014). Retrieved from <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm> 23 July 2015.

36 Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/09/25/war-costs-syria-afghanistan/16211545/>

37 UNOCHA. 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan. Retrieved from <<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Afghanistan/Afghanistan%20HRP%202015%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>> 15 May 2015.

38 <http://icasualties.org/oef/>

39 Source: <http://countdowntodrawdown.org/facts.php>

ried out by international rather than local forces. Distanced from an understanding of local culture and social fabric the “winning hearts and minds” strategy has not brought a satisfactory outcome. It stood little chance to begin with as the military effort was given too much emphasis over the humanitarian effort, and was disproportionately aggressive, failing to take into account the effect of civilian casualties. A simple comparison of international and Afghan fatalities since the beginning of the NATO military operation explains why many Afghans want international forces out of their country. Although accurate counts do not exist, ordinary Afghans suffered more casualties than the international forces or the Afghan army in this war. The conflict has caused thousands of civilian deaths either directly from insurgent and foreign military operations or as a consequence of “displacement, starvation, disease, exposure, lack of medical treatment, crime and lawlessness”.⁴⁰ According to The Nation’s interactive database of civilian casualties in Afghanistan initial air strikes launched by OEF in a period between October 2001 and January 2002 caused 3,152 civilian deaths.⁴¹ Civilian fatalities grew rapidly resulting in mounting tension between the international community, Afghan people and the administration.⁴² The UNAMA also has been vocal on the issue of civilian deaths, urging all parties involved to take action to protect ordinary Afghans.⁴³ Its recent report states that in the first quarter of 2015 “civilian casualties from ground engagements rose by eight per cent compared to the same period in 2014”.⁴⁴ Casualties although having a

40 John Robles. Civilian deaths in Afghanistan continue unchecked, 29 May 2012. Retrieved from <<http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2012/05/29/civilian-deaths-in-afghanistan-continue-unchecked.html>> 20 May 2015.

41 The Nation’s interactive database of civilian casualties in Afghanistan 2001-2012. Retrieved from <<http://www.thenation.com/afghanistan-database/>> 21 July 2015.

42 Statement by Afghan President Hamid Karzai, 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 24 September 2008. Retrieved from < http://www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate/pdf/afghanistan_en.pdf> 24 July 2015.

43 Latest UNAMA figures show continuing record high civilian casualties. Retrieved from <<http://unama.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=12254&ctl=Details&mid=15756&ItemID=38675&language=en-US>> 24 July 2015.

44 Ibid.

deadly impact on attempts to stabilize Afghanistan are not the only negative consequence of the military campaign. Millions of refugees and internally displaced Afghan civilians have been suffering for years. UNCHR estimated about 3.7 million Afghans fleeing the country to neighboring states primarily Pakistan and Iran.⁴⁵ Unable to support more refugees these states closed their borders with Afghanistan and started deportation programmes, forcing Afghans to leave the refugee camps. Many were concerned the camps were places for the Taliban to recruit new fighters.^{46, 47, 48}

Violence fostered by the foreign military presence has caused growing animosity towards international forces while fueling socialization into violence through cyclical revenge attacks and anti-ISAF riots. Civilian deaths have had severe and damaging consequences. Afghans have voiced their anger via numerous demonstrations usually following attacks.^{49, 50, 51, 52, 53}

Experts also see the damaging result of a situation in which young and desperate Afghans are caught between international forces hosted by a government incapable of providing basic security and services and the appeals of an insurgency empowered by smart propaganda and the lure of benefits: “for instance, it is a privilege to be a bodyguard or a driver of

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- 45 Source: <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/refugees/afghan>
- 46 EASO Country of Origin: Information report Afghanistan Taliban strategies –Recruitment. Retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/european-asylum-support-office/bz3012564enc_complet_en.pdf> 24 July 2015.
- 47 Aamir Latif. Taliban Finds Fertile Recruiting Ground in Pakistan’s Tribal Refugee Camps, 9 February 2009. Retrieved from < <http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2009/02/09/taliban-finds-fertile-recruiting-ground-in-pakistans-tribal-refugee-camps>> 24 July 2015.
- 48 Rhoda Margesson. Afghan Refugees: Current Status and Future Prospects, Congressional Research Service. 26 January 2007.
- 49 Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2090101.stm
- 50 Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2007/09/26/afghan-protest.html>
- 51 Source: http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/200808/r285127_1214615.asx
- 52 Source: <http://www.answers.com/topic/civilian-casualties-of-the-war-in-afghanistan>
- 53 Frank Jordans. NATO airstrike in Afghanistan kills up to 90, Associated Press, 5 August 2009.

a warlord, the more powerful he is the more privileged you will be. Because, if something wrong happens he is gonna take charge of that.”⁵⁴

Brian Williams writes on the motivations of men reinforcing the insurgency:

“Many of the fighters I interviewed had no other options. They couldn’t read or write, they had few skills, they were well paid to fight. There was little in life to live for except fighting. Dostum⁵⁵ recruited from amongst the poorest Turkmen and Uzbeks and gave them something to fight for besides survival. Guns give prestige, safety, money and power. Many of the fighters I interviewed did not know how to live in post-war Afghanistan”⁵⁶

Civil Effort and Analysis of IOs Activities

Although fighting the insurgency requires substantial military force, peace building involves more than simply triumphing in combat. However, while non-military aid has a long history in Afghanistan, ranging from food programmes to large-scale humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts⁵⁷, there is still a huge crevice between military and humanitarian assistance. Most importantly, the effort so far in large parts of the country has not resulted in a post-conflict situation. This makes the peace building process more difficult than in other conflict zones. Reconstruction and development were identified as the main priorities for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan given their link to security. Despite pledges, between 2001 and 2008 some leading donors failed to fulfill their commitments.⁵⁸ Moreover,

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- 54 Zahidullah Jalali, CICA, SPECA, CIRDAP Desk Officer MFA of Afghanistan e-mail communication. Fr, 28 Aug. 2009 10:30:30-0700 (PDT)
 - 55 Abdul Rashid Dostum is an Afghan Vice President, former warlord fighting Mujahideen and Taliban.
 - 56 Brian Williams, e-mail communication. Sun, 9 Aug. 2009 11:55:30 -0400 (EDT)
 - 57 Goodhand, Jonathan. Aiding violence or building peace? The role of international aid in Afghanistan. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 5, pp. 837–859.
 - 58 Matt Waldman. *Falling Short: Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan*, ACBAR Advocacy Series, 2008.

committed aid has not been sufficient to meet the needs of the population and achieve the goals of donors. A part of the aid bypasses the Afghan administration, another 40 per cent return to donor countries and an unknown percentage is used ineffectively. This is particularly worrying given the fact that aid is essential for peacekeeping in Afghanistan as almost 90 per cent of public spending comes from aid. Concerns over the issue of how and on what the civilian aid money is spent are still present. Catherine Lutz and Sujaya Desai clearly state in their report on US reconstruction aid that “the majority of the funds have gone to the military and police sectors rather than to civilian needs.”⁵⁹

The balance of assistance is overwhelmingly on the military side both in terms of pledges and commitments. Civilian aid has been negatively affected by various factors ranging from poor coordination to unfulfilled commitments by some donor countries. Although Cordesman rightfully points out the lack of reliable and accurate data on aid,⁶⁰ tables below give a hint on the fulfillment of pledges made by the international community and the balance between aid and military spending in Afghanistan. As clearly seen from Table 1, up to 60 per cent of the pledged aid in some cases has either failed to materialize or has yet to be disbursed:

59 Catherine Lutz and Sujaya Desai. US Reconstruction Aid for Afghanistan: The Dollars and Sense, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, 5 January 2015. p. 2.

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Table 1: Aid pledged, committed and disbursed⁶¹

	TOTAL PLEDGED 2002-2013	TOTAL COMMITTED 2002-2009	TOTAL DISBURSED 2002-2013	% OF PLEDGES DISBURSED BY END 2009
	US\$ bn	US\$ bn	US\$ bn	
United States	38.0	28.4	10.9	28.8%
EU Institutions	2.0	2.0	2.1	102.8%
United Kingdom	2.9	1.8	1.8	63.3%
Germany	1.2	1.0	1.3	108.0%
Canada	1.7	1.2	1.2	70.3%
Japan	1.9	1.4	1.0	52.5%
NetherLands	0.8	0.9	0.8	102.4%
Norway	0.9	0.6	0.7	71.0%
India*	1.2	1.2	0.4	36.1%
Sweden	0.3	0.5	0.4	147.3%
Italy	0.5	0.4	0.4	79.6%
Turkey	0.2	0.2	0.4	213.7%
Australia	0.4	0.2	0.4	98.8%
Iran (Islamic Republic of)*	0.9	0.3	0.3	39.5%
Spain	0.5	0.1	0.3	59.8%
Denmark	0.7	0.3	0.3	40.2%
France	0.2	0.2	0.2	105.9%
Finland	0.2	0.2	0.1	97.0%
Russia*	0.1	0.1	0.1	104.1%
Switzerland	0.1	0.1	0.1	102.9%
Multilateral agencies	5.3	4.0	2.7	50.6%
Other	5.9	3.3	0.7	12.3%
Total	62.0	46.1	26.7	43.1%

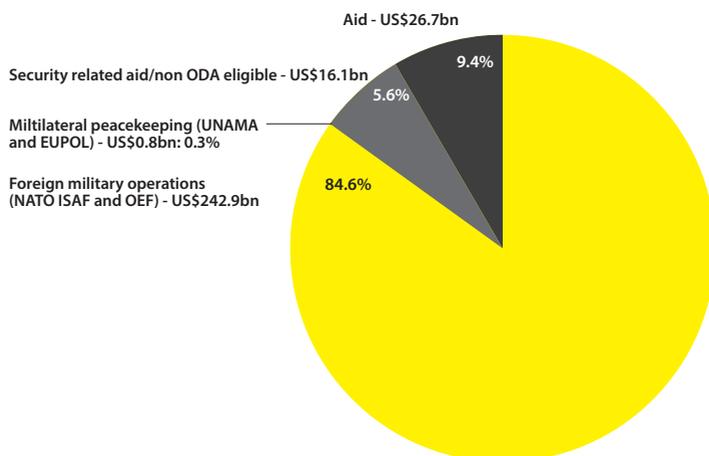
Table 2: International aid for Reconstruction and Development, 2002-2010⁶²



61 Lydia Pool. Afghanistan: Tracking major resource flows 2002-2010. January 2011.

62 Aid Management Directorate Ministry of Finance Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Retrieved from <<http://www.budgetmof.gov.af/index.php/en/com-joomfish-control-panel/using-joomla/extensions/aid-statistics>> 21 July 2015.

Table 3: International aid, security and military expenditure, 2002-2010⁶³

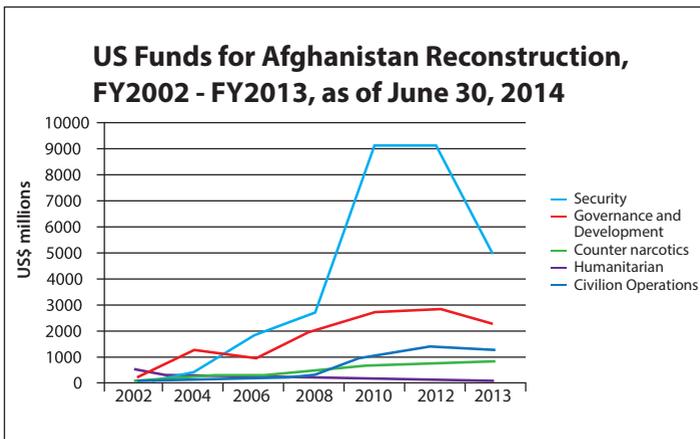


Although smaller in scale, the civilian effort was more adaptive to the changing situation attempting to address the needs of the Afghan population. One important achievement is that the work of the NGO sector is assessed regularly, providing impetus to develop and improve assistance to those in need. The achievements of humanitarian assistance are tangible and visible. More people now have access to education and to improved facilities; more people can acquire better jobs and have better living conditions. Another important achievement of the humanitarian and developmental aid strategies of the international community was to put a special emphasis on making the lives of Afghan women safer, healthier, longer and fuller. In Afghanistan where years of protracted conflict and the Taliban regime have been especially harsh on women, their liberation and inclusion into public life is fundamental for achieving peace, democracy and sustainable development. Women have been beneficiaries of various aid programmes in improving their daily lives and boosting their involvement in social and political processes in the country. All this brings hope to peo-

63 Lydia Pool. Afghanistan: Tracking major resource flows 2002-2010. January 2011.

ple in Afghanistan making them work harder to participate in the development of their own country. Donor money is a crucial necessity for the country's future development. What we observe at the moment is a gradual decrease in overall international spending in Afghanistan with donor countries losing interest and demonstrating fatigue amid a prolonged conflict. The table below demonstrates the alarming trends in spending by Afghanistan's main partners and donors:

Table 4: *US Reconstruction Funding for FY2002-2013*⁶⁴



For a long time international civilian aid was criticized for a strategy that focused on donations rather than capacity building. This has changed over time, however, and now more and more development projects aim for sustainable development by providing people with skills rather than things, which should be understood as a serious achievement.

The aim of this project, however, was to look at the actual content of assistance. It was aimed at finding out if a factor, such as socialization into violence is addressed either directly

64 Catherine Lutz and Sujaya Desai. *US Reconstruction Aid for Afghanistan: The Dollars and Sense*. Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, 5 January 2015, p. 4.

or as a side-effect of projects implemented by international organizations.⁶⁵ An analysis of the activities performed by organizations showed that the specific factor of socialization into violence as one fueling the conflict in Afghanistan in combination with other drivers is not specifically addressed by the international donor community. Nor do organizations explicitly state the goal to perform activities aiming at re-socializing people that have suffered violent behavioural patterns caused by the conflict.

It was determined that the vast majority (35 out of 42 or 83% of the organizations assessed) are involved in a wide range of activities using a complex approach to address the needs of the Afghan population. Only seven (16%) organizations remained focused on providing narrow and specialized assistance. For instance, The Children of War was primarily dealing with activities connected to education. Eight (19%) of the organizations examined have not included education in the range of their services. Some provided services to refugees, for example the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugee and Zoa Refugee Care, or were involved in rural development by improving livestock and technical assistance as MADERA and Terre des Hommes. The rest took education as their complete focus or as one of the primary services provided.

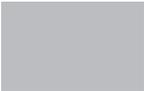
Education in this case is very important because of the indirect effect it has on violent behaviour. As was previously mentioned in the report prepared by AREU, researchers found that because of the increased number of children now attending school violence at home has decreased. Education has its positive impact on the Afghan youth as well as adults because of the opportunities opening after acquiring education. Only a tiny number of the organizations examined implicitly stated the aim of minimizing the effect of a

65 The initial study took place in 2009 when a sample of 42 international NGOs was selected from the ACBAR Member List. Information provided by the organizations on what spheres of assistance they are involved in and what projects they implement was used for analysis.

violent environment or of resocialization away from violent patterns of behaviour that could have been caused by the prolonged Afghan conflict.

One of these organizations is the Danish Demining Group. DDG prioritized demining and mine risk education over other activities and helped people living in a mine-infected area re-claim the area for farming and grazing livestock after ensuring safety there. Another organization working on mine risk education is Handicap International, which also provides complex services to the disabled. A few organizations were providing shelters and psychological rehabilitation assistance to those affected by the incidents or military activities. Sandy Gall's Afghanistan Appeal and the American Friends Services Committee organizations ran shelters and provided psychotherapy assistance and psychosocial trainings to reduce violence among other services. They nevertheless focus not on the rehabilitation for those affected by war but on those suffering from depression and various disorders caused by the situation. The American Friends Services Committee office in Afghanistan was closed in June 2009 because of the increasingly insecure situation and budget cuts. Afghan Aid and Child Fund Afghanistan organized trainings for adults to teach them how they should act with children in a non-violent way, while teaching youth their rights based on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Child Fund Afghanistan also provided rehabilitation services for children. The findings of the study reveal the military operation in Afghanistan suffered from the absence of a clear and adequate strategy that might take civilian losses into consideration. It is important to emphasize that socialization into violence is a self-reinforcing spiral, which is fueled precisely by continued fighting. The challenge for the international effort was and is to break this spiral, which has been made more vicious by the huge discrepancy between military and civil contributions in Afghanistan in terms of money pledged and spent over the years. Within the smaller budget for civilian assistance, socialization into violence was largely

overlooked as a problem to be addressed when designing a humanitarian strategy for Afghanistan, and only a small number of projects looking into the issue as a side-effect of their major activities.



CONCLUSIONS

The years of conflict have severely affected the Afghan population, causing many civilian casualties, injuries, lost opportunities and displacement. The strategy applied was reactive rather than proactive, failing to bring peace and stability to many parts of war-torn Afghanistan.

The conflict has been addressed mainly from two opposite platforms: military and civilian with an overwhelming disbalance that favours the military effort. The military operation has not taken sufficient account of the detrimental effect of collateral damage (accidental killings of civilians) and already under-sized aid projects have also failed to address violent socialization properly. While the military effort is an important factor and should not be underestimated, it should only work to stabilize the situation by providing a secure environment for the civilian effort.

This civilian support is crucial for the peace building process in Afghanistan, a state which remains incapable of providing its citizenry with necessary services and opportunities. The initial international aid strategy was to train local civil servants to gradually replace international staff. Unfortunately, international donors and staff remain the main executors of important functions the state should be fulfilling. There is broad recognition that in spite of largely disappointing outcomes of the allied mission in Afghanistan, its complete withdrawal at the moment would be detrimental to say the least. The new state administration and the Afghan

National Security Forces (ANSF) remain incapable of assuming responsibility for basic security and future development.

Following the official announcement of military drawdown made by President Barack Obama on June 22, 2011⁶⁶ and increasing donor fatigue, the overall situation in Afghanistan has remarkably deteriorated. Experts and governments notice that even fragile and limited achievements related to the intervention are under threat. This is the exact moment when the commitment of the donor community is being tested, since more money will be required for the country not slip into full-blown conflict again.

The 2012 Tokyo and 2014 London conferences on Afghanistan resulted in the Declaration on the Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan: From Transition to Transformation. This marked the transition decade of 2015-2024 as well as the international community pledging another US\$16 billion in aid to support the country over the next four years.⁶⁷ ⁶⁸, ⁶⁹ However positive the news is, experts see a growing threat to stability in Afghanistan. Women's rights, a litmus test of the general situation in the country, are under threat. Social and political processes in the country reflect a predominance of gender-focused violence. The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan for the years 2007-2017 states that: "The current situation of women in the country presents a serious challenge to human develop-

66 The White House, Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan, 8:01 P.M. EDT. Retrieved from <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan>> 25 July 2015.

67 The hand that feeds: More aid is pledged, but it will not solve Afghanistan's many problems. *The Economist*. 14 July 2012. Retrieved from <<http://www.economist.com/node/21558635>> 15 May 2015.

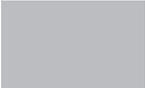
68 Tamim Asey. The Other Drawdown — Why Donor Fatigue Is Threatening to Derail Afghanistan, *Foreign Policy*. 10 November 2014. Retrieved from <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/10/the-other-drawdown-why-donor-fatigue-is-threatening-to-derail-afghanistan/>> 26 July 2015.

69 London Conference on Afghanistan 2014 (Archived). Retrieved from <<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/london-conference-on-afghanistan-2014>> 8 August 2015.

ment. The women of Afghanistan are among the worst off in the world, both in comparison to Afghan men and with women of most countries.”⁷⁰ The success story of The Elimination of Violence Against Women Law passed in 2009 is now overshadowed by the lobbying of anti-women laws,⁷¹ and a growing number of attacks targeting ordinary women and women activists.^{72, 73} Foreign and local aid workers are also increasingly targeted by the insurgency causing some organizations to consider “permanent pullouts.”⁷⁴ One of the most recent attacks happened on June 1 claiming the lives of nine workers of the People in Need Czech humanitarian organization working in Afghanistan since beginning of the allied operation.⁷⁵

At a time when Afghanistan has again become a major issue in world politics, the mere expansion of resources is not enough. Peace building in Afghanistan can either become a success story or a story of great failure in international involvement. Lessons of past failures should be learned and used for designing a better, more effective and efficient strategy for allies capable of breaking a the cycle of growing violence.

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- 70 National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan 2007-2017, Ministry of Women’s Affairs of Afghanistan.
- 71 Fawzia Koofi. Where Afghan law fails women: The loophole in the bill known as The Elimination of Violence Against Women Law. 2 January 2015. Retrieved from <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/01/where-afghan-law-fails-women-2015119256183362.html>> 27 July 2015.
- 72 Gabriel Dominguez and Masood Saifullah. Amnesty slams Afghanistan’s ‘failure’ to protect women rights defenders. Deutsche Welle, 7 April 2015. Retrieved from <<http://www.dw.com/en/amnesty-slams-afghanistans-failure-to-protect-women-rights-defenders/a-18359389>> 27 July 2015.
- 73 Rod Norland. International Aid Agencies Call for Temporary Exit From Afghanistan. The New York Times, 1 December 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/02/world/asia/international-aid-agencies-exit-afghanistan.html?_r=0> 15 May 2015.
- 74 UN official ‘shocked’ by killing of aid workers in Afghanistan. UN News Centre, 11 April 2015. Retrieved from <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50550#.VblYxPmqpHy>> 5 August 2015.
- 75 Aid workers killed in Afghanistan attack. Al Jazeera And Agencies, 2 June 2015. Retrieved from <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/06/aid-workers-killed-afghanistan-attack-150602051956762.html>> 5 August 2015.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the significance of the Afghan conflict for regional and global security, it is necessary not only to expand the humanitarian effort, but also make sure it is done in the right way. The civilian effort should address the problem of designing programmes and projects that take the effect of a long history of violence into consideration. Given humanitarian and development aid request much lesser financial contributions when compared to military campaign, the focus now should be made on long-term (in terms of involvement and results) projects that might bring fruitful results. The AREU report provides us with insights into what these projects can be. The mass migration of Afghans during the conflict can be viewed not only as a challenge, but as an opportunity. Many respondents recall changing their violent parenting practices once outside the country where they witnessed other people's behavior and rearing strategies. This in turn indicates the importance of access to information and media, which provide the Afghan population with new experiences and knowledge to acquire new attitudes and patterns of behaviour.

Flagship aid projects that might help break the cycle of violence include building shelters and rehabilitation centres aimed at minimizing the effect of violent socialization and resocializing people away from violent patterns of behavior; emphasizing education (both because children are removed from the domestic violence of child rearing while at school, and because education in itself can be a tool to change mindsets), and promoting access to modern media that can communicate non-violent ways of solving conflicts rather than violence. Regarding the last point, even improved access to cultural imports such as soap operas might have some positive impact, because they highlight numerous conflicts, which are almost always solved non-violently.

The ability to learn and innovate as well as to apply the lessons of past conflicts is a crucial component of winning conflicts such as the one in Afghanistan. If the pledged resources will be directed toward effectively securing and supporting the Afghan population and including Afghans in the peace building process, the international community has every chance of bringing peace, stability and development to people who have been longing for it for decades.



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