

Losing Afghanistan: The Failure of the Petersberg Declaration of 2001

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Introduction

It is six years that American boots stepped on Afghan ground. In Afghanistan, there was no one who fought for the Islamic Emirate, while the legitimacy and resources of the Taliban had rapidly diminished. Only the foreign fighters of the “First International Islamic Army” – Al Qaeda – and some Pakistani regular and irregular forces continued to put up desperate resistance and, if not taken out by the US air strikes near Mazar-e Sharif, fled across the Durand line into Pakistan.

What is left today of that victory that began five years ago? Despite some analysts, Afghans shared a sense of nationhood and no region wants to secede or join their kin on the other side of the border. This has led to continued societal, cultural and political volatility, rooted in traditional and indigenous political and cultural developments, which is not the case in other countries such as Iraq. But when things start to go bad in Afghanistan, they do so quickly.

There are only few leaders, no institutions or organizations that can serve as firewalls. The conflict in Afghanistan will inevitably have an impact beyond its borders. For this reason, if Afghanistan fails again, it is more than the failure of the policies of the U.S. administration and its allies. It will also reflect the world community’s inability to improve the situation in Afghanistan, in face of the high stake of a trans-national terrorist threat!

Despite this, there have been enormous changes in Afghanistan over the past five years. But there is a lack of security, law and order and of institutions and there is no functioning national economic sector. The power

of the Afghan government is, in spite of all international efforts, limited to Kabul and few other places.

In the beginning, the government had more legitimacy than all the other governments of the past 29 years, but it is losing it day by day. Even with the support of nearly 40,000 NATO-led soldiers, the Karzai government was not able to regain the monopoly on the use of force. Corruption, nepotism and incompetence are signs of the new Afghan government, implemented by Western policies. The most crucial mistakes were not made by the Afghans. It was the U.S. government that changed the political agenda. The basis of the new Afghan government is derived from the Petersberg Declaration of December 2001.

The Petersberg Declaration was half-hearted, highly manipulated and the international engagement was cheap and symbolic – with the intention of gaining control in Afghanistan and step into Central Asia. The U.S. government, via the UN, invited war criminals, mass murderers, criminals and drug dealers, or with regard to Karzai, a person who is only corrupt and incompetent. All members of the different official Afghan delegations at Petersberg – Rome process, Cyprus process, the Gailani group and Panj-Shir group, including some other members of the Northern Alliance (General Dostum) – were defeated by the Taliban or were without any significance. The “light footprints” as Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN special envoy for Afghanistan, described the future process was nothing else but selling Afghanistan out. The U.S. delegation did not communicate with the Afghan envoys, with the exception of the Panj-Shir group, nor with other nations with regard to Afghanistan’s future. There was no plan and no idea for nation or state-building. The war against terrorism in Afghanistan was a purely military intervention and the U.S. government believed to win it without (or at low) cost. Manipulations at Petersberg were the start for more manipulations during the discussed timetable for the forthcoming four years: emergency *loya jirga*, constitution, election of a president and a parliament.

Instead of gaining more legitimization the Karzai government kept losing it gradually year by year. The notification that Afghanistan was at that time a sovereign country was one of the biggest lies of Western pol-

icy makers. The Western countries did not want to take on responsibility with the result that the Petersberg Declaration of 2001 did not survive more than five years. And there is war again – the Taliban are back.

In 2006 more than 3,000 people died, more than twice as many as in 2005. We can notice an increase in suicide bombers and insurgent combat groups with more than 100 members. More than 400 (some speak about more than 750) schools are closed, damaged or burned and in 29 of the 300 departments there is no access to schools at all. The reason is clear: There is no security without development and there is no development without security.

The Petersberg Declaration

Aims

- Roadmap for the reconstruction of Afghanistan;
- Division of power within the Afghan Transitional Authority;
- Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of warlords;
- Structure of the new Afghan state;
- Cooperation with regional powers to convince them to accept the new Afghan administration and to stop supporting Afghan militias militarily.

Roadmap

- Within 6 months: “Emergency Loya Jirga”;
- Within 18 months: election of an interim president;
- Within 18 months: “Constitutional Loya Jirga”;
- Within 24 months: presidential and parliamentary elections.

Reconstruction and Nation-Building

- Modernization and development of central executive institutions;
- DDR (demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants);
- Rebuilding the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

International Responsibility (Security Sector Reform)

- USA: Army;
- Germany: Police;
- Japan: DDR (until 30 June 2005);
- Italy: Justice;
- UK: Counter-Narcotics.

Results

- Spring 2002: “Emergency Loya Jirga”;
- Instead of being able to stand as a presidential candidate, king Zahir Shah was forced to retreat and to accept Hamid Karzai;
- No participation of the representatives in the political process;
- No discussion of the future constitution.

Constitution

- Drafting Commission (established Oct. 2002; 9 members);
- Constitutional Commission (May 2003, 33 members including the Drafting Commission; top-secret; consultation summer 2003);
- Constitutional Loya Jirga (Dec. 2003, 500 members, highly manipulated).

DDR-program

- Demobilized: 54,235 people;
- Disarmed: 62,901 (but only 500 of 1st Panj-Shir-Division);
- Defiance: 95,000 (rest of 100,000 is somewhere else);
- Reintegrated: 52,509;
- Collected light weapons: approximately 9,500;
- Collected heavy weapons: 9,085 (T54/55, T62, BMP-1, BMP-2, BMP1/ZU-23-2, ZSU 23-4, RPG).

Rebuilding of the Afghan National Army (ANA)

- Currently: 32,000;
- Aim for 2009: 70,000;

- Strategic and tactical deficits, unable to act without “embedded US-trainers”;
- Need of US\$ 5.4 billion to complete reform of the ANA and another US\$ 3 billion for air-lift capacities.

Rebuilding the Afghan National Police

- USA paid US\$ 277 million for the police force in 2004, the rest of the international community paid only US\$ 73 million;
- To finish the police reform about US\$ 800 million-1.8 billion are needed (US\$ 500 million for buildings, US\$ 100 million for lorries, busses, cars etc. and US\$ 85 million for weapons, ammunition, uniforms);
- Estimated US\$ 180 million for police operations, US\$ 100 million for salaries;
- Since 2002 more than 6,300 police officers (incl. 57 women) were educated at the Kabul Police Academy, established by Germany; 1,685 are currently being trained;
- Germany sent 40-50 police trainers to educate and rebuild the police forces for a country double the size of Germany;
- More than 54,000 police officers passed training courses (4-8 weeks) led by the USA

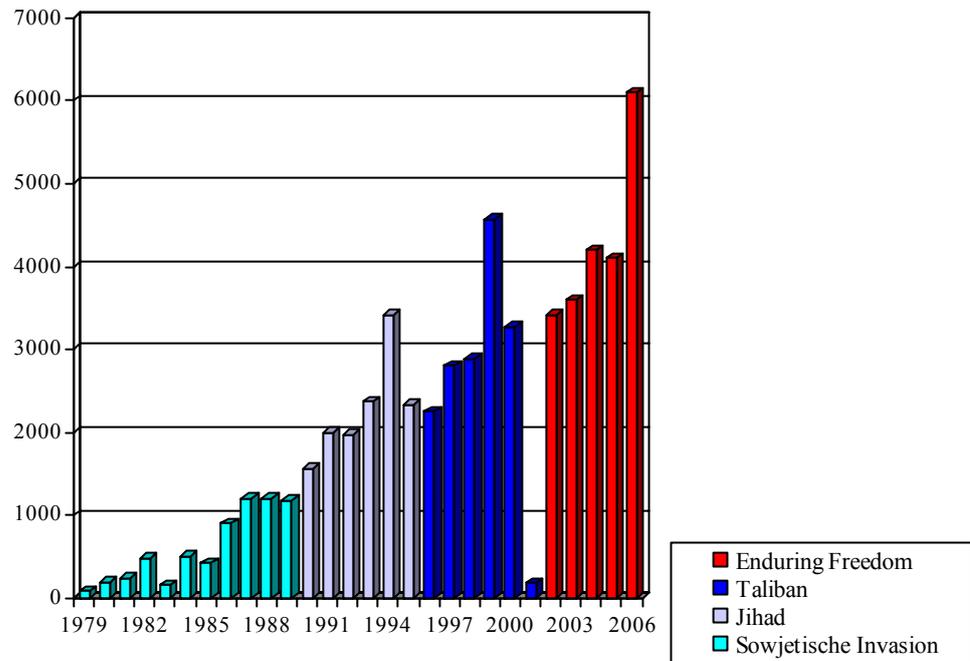
Reform of the Judiciary system

1. Developing and drafting legal codes;
 2. Training of judges and prosecutors;
 3. Rebuilding of physical infrastructure.
- Key partner nation Italy paid US\$ 10 million; USA spent US\$ 28 million
 - Program suffers from lack of money and people

Counternarcotics

The eradication program of poppy under the supervision of the British was an absolute failure. In 2006, the farmers produced approximately 2006t of opium, 92% of the poppy worldwide. 10% of the population

depends on poppy cultivation. The proceeds of the harvest in 2006 were US\$ 3.1 billion. That is 52% of the GNP and five times more than the Afghan national budget, which depends to approx. 60% on tax income. The main profit went to the traders who earned US\$ 2.14 billion, leaving US\$ 775 million for the peasants. This money opens the door for bribery and corruption. The expenditures for bribery are estimated to be about US\$ 1 billion. The main provinces for cultivation are Helmand, Kandahar, Balkh, Farah and Badakhshan.

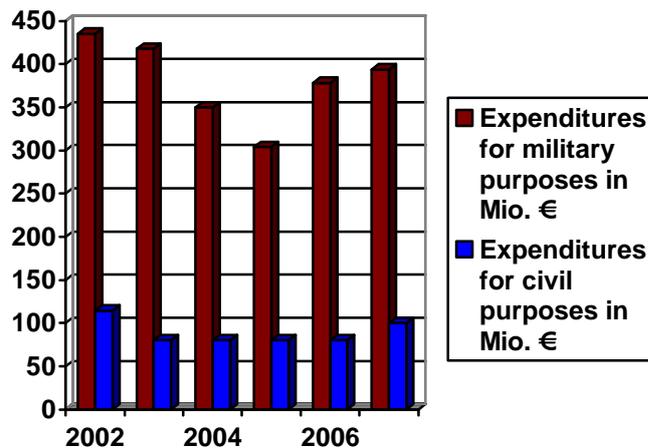


Opium Harvest in tons 1979-2006

Significance of military and civil expenditures

The international community spent a lot of money on Afghanistan. But there is a certain discrepancy between the military and the civil engagement. If we have a look at the German example, we can see the dilemma very well. German military expenses in Afghanistan are more than four times higher than the civil ones. In 2006, Germany spent about € 378.3 million on military tasks. Over the period 2002 to 2007, Germany spent

€ 80 million on civil purposes each year (the amount from € 34.38 million in 2002 was a remission).



Résumé

The Petersberg Process was a democratic farce. The Afghan government and the international community failed to rebuild the Afghan state and to establish the necessary institutions. The reintegration of the warlords opened the way for nepotism and corruption. There is one indication for the weakness of the Afghan government: The increase in poppy cultivation. The eradication program is not effective. The DDR process ended although Afghanistan is bristling with weapons, even in the northern part. The judicial system is not developed and in fact non-existent. Most public offices and jobs are in the hands of different clans, like the police, army and some UN institutions. Bribery is present on every level.

Finding a way out would require that the international community commits itself for a long period of time which would turn any discussion to leave Afghanistan counter-productive. The Afghan government needs to be forced into good governance. The government has to build security and establish a judiciary system, which deserves its name. Nowadays, justice is more in demand than security or social benefit.

State-Building

- Afghanistan is in need to fight corruption and bribery;
- Raise salaries, so that people can live on them;
- Sanction and dismissal of corrupt clerks and members of the government;
- Reform of the staff and the administration, establishment of a parliamentary administration;
- Increase of the tax revenue (fight against corruption and smuggling);
- Reform of the judiciary system (standardization, establishment of courts, administration- and penal system, education of lawyers);
- Creation of a legal basis for the regulation of ownership claims, establishment of a cadastre;
- Establishment of representative local institutions with participation of tribal elders and *ulema*.

Security

- No segregation between ISAF and OEF. All foreign soldiers must be able to fight Opposing Militant Forces;
- More Soldiers;
- Control of the borders between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan;
- Registration of the Afghan population (to differentiate between Afghans, Pakistani and others);
- Strengthened Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP) and the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP);
- Rising the salaries of police and armed forces;
- No acceptance of unofficial treaties between governors and Taliban;
- Program for disarmament and insurgents who want to join the government side;
- Restrictive operation of OEF air-raids; quick, fair and un-bureaucratic compensation of OEF victims;
- Abolishing of the 22 secret prisons under US control;
- Regular contact between tribal or village elders (for contact and appeal);

- More ISAF-Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams for ANA;
- Sensitization of foreign soldiers with regard to Afghan culture and habits;
- Drug control;
- Disarmament of all militias, irregular groups and warlords.