

Liechtenstein Colloquium on European and International Affairs on Promoting Security in Afghanistan and the Region

Second Colloquium of the LISD Project on "State Building and Security in Afghanistan and the Region"

Organized by the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University in cooperation with the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn

In May 2003, Princeton University's Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination (LISD) convened a major international colloquium entitled, "State Building and Security in Afghanistan and the Region," held in Bonn and Petersberg, Germany, which brought together diplomats, government officials, academics, policy experts, and field practitioners to examine international and local best practices relevant for state and security building in Afghanistan.

Participants included Ambassador Reinhard Schlagintweit, former State Secretary, German Foreign Ministry, and Liechtenstein Ambassador Joseph Wolf; senior Afghan participants included Afghan Prince Mirwais Zaher; Afghan Ambassador Homayoun Tandar; Dr. Farouq Azam; and Professor Quadir Amiyar and Dr. Enayat Qasimi, advisers to Afghanistan's Judicial Reform Commission.

Other experts included Dirk Salomons, Columbia University, Nazif Shahrani, Indiana University, and Kent Eaton of the Woodrow Wilson School. In addition, WWS Ph.D. candidates Rani Mullen and Maya Tudor, Amy Paro ('M.P.A. '04), and department of Politics Ph.D. candidate Prerna Singh, participated in the Colloquium, along with WWS undergraduates Yana Lantsberg ('04), Steffen Simon ('05), and Yusufi Vali ('05). The ZEF was represented by Dr. Conrad Schetter, Prof. Tobias Debiel and Malte Kassner. Wolfgang Danspeckgruber chaired the Colloquium.

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The three-day colloquium focused on the current deteriorating security environment and the unacceptable pace of reconstruction in Afghanistan. Underscoring their reciprocal nature, colloquium participants urged a reassessment of the country's security and reconstruction policies. The experts focused on the particular need to generate additional financial and material resources, strengthen central authority, and renew international commitment to Afghanistan's physical and economic security. The Bonn sessions also stressed the indispensability of judicial reform and civilian disarmament to enhancing the country's stability

This colloquium was the second in a series of meetings as part of the LISD's project "Promoting Viability and Stability in Afghanistan and the Region," which runs through 2005. The LISD Project is sponsored by Carnegie Corporation in New



York, and the SiBiL Foundation in Vaduz. The participation of some Afghan policymakers at this and other meetings is enabled through the World Bank Institute's videoconferencing facilities and the LISD's working relationships with government officials, international organizations, and institutes in Kabul.

In Afghanistan and the region, the most pressing need for the country's future stability and viability is the creation of enduring state structures, which are accepted by the people. On the other hand, stability and security within Afghanistan and among its neighbors is the prerequisite for the state's viability. Through a series of analyses, the series will cull consensus advice of the best policy direction for strengthening Afghanistan and the region's future.

Key Findings

Findings presented in this brief represent the policy solutions expressed as a whole by participants, even where consensus on key issues was not reached. However, unanimous consensus on such issues as

Centralization versus Decentralisation

Participants' discussions focused on the relative merits of centralization versus decentralization, and federalism. Some experts argued that federalism is not popularly supported in Afghanistan, since it is seen as fragmenting the country and that there is a perceived need for a strong central authority. On the other hand, the current government's centralizing tendencies could exacerbate deterioration of Afghanistan's internal security and could be destabilizing in the long term.

Moreover, some participants stated that discussions of decentralization are premature since prerequisites for decentralization, such as support for state-formation and democracy, are still absent in Afghanistan. Discussions concluded that these need not be two mutually exclusive options, but that a mixed system might best suit the current situation in Afghanistan.

The Security Situation in Afghanistan--Internal Security

Today Afghanistan faces a grave internal security situation which requires immediate attention and action. Participants agreed that the three main threats to internal security in Afghanistan are:

- Factional rivalries and related fighting;
- Crimes associated with robbery, drug trafficking etc.;
- Continued terrorism in some parts of the country (especially in the south and southeast regions).

Experts unanimously agreed that Afghanistan's internal security situation is precarious and will deteriorate further unless immediate action is taken by the international community to address this serious problem. Given the current budgetary constraints facing the country and the urgent need to address this issue, participants recommended that resources for a national police force should be prioritised over the development of a large-scale national army.

External Security

While addressing Afghanistan's internal security situation is the most pressing need at this time, external security, such as the roles played by Iran and Pakistan in Afghanistan's international relations, needs to be monitored. For example, in order to diminish illegal movement of people and goods and to lessen involvement of nearby countries in Afghanistan's internal affairs, experts noted that greater domestic and international attention and resources should be focused on securing Afghanistan's borders. There was, however, debate among the participants over whether the border issue was one that demanded immediate attention or could be tabled to be discussed at future LISD colloquia. There was concern voiced by a majority of experts that opening up the border issue under the present circumstances was beyond the scope of the current session.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and NATO in Afghanistan

As NATO assumes ISAF responsibility, experts recommended that force enlargement and geographical expansion should be exploited as the best and most appropriate option for improving Afghanistan's security. The parties should consider approaching the U.N. Security Council for longer ISAF mandates (on the order of six to twelve months) for the sake of continuity of operations.

Discussions on ISAF also focused on ISAF's short-term and longer-term role in Afghanistan. The ISAF was originally established by the United Nations to assist the Afghan Transitional Authority in maintaining security within the ISAF Area of Responsibility, so that the Transitional Authority, as well as the personnel of the U.N., can operate in a secure environment. Under its United Nations mandate, the security force is responsible only for the capital and its surrounding area. ISAF has

roughly 5,000 soldiers from 31 countries, but most of these troops already come from NATO member states.

Some participants argued that it is important to see ISAF as that of an assistant and not a substitute for the police. Moreover, more efforts could be made to build the trust of the local populations in ISAF and the newly formed Afghan Police by, for example, encouraging joint patrols by ISAF and the police. It was also pointed out that if the police took over the provision of security in Kabul, it would free up ISAF staff and enable their expansion to the provinces.

Relationship between Security and Decentralization

A critical question participants debated was whether decentralization strengthens or weakens internal security? The debate on whether political decentralization in Afghanistan would strengthen or weaken internal security centered on two opposing views: some experts felt that in Afghanistan, effective security and decentralization are generally incompatible, since the provision of security is predicated on a strong central structure capable of providing security.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

Discussions on DDR pointed to the wide range on opinions regarding the goals, scope and duration of the DDR process. Participants widely agreed that DDR will proceed effectively only when the central government has devised a clear vision of comprehensive local, regional and national governance and security structures. Without law and order and a sense that internal security is being provided by the government, regional armed groups and others will be unwilling to disarm. Colloquium experts agreed that security and governance are complementary: the discussions on DDR concluded that there is a need for a comprehensive rather than a narrow vision of security, one which includes development as well as governance.

Participants pointed out that security is linked to unemployment – for example, those who fought for the Taliban and warlords often did so for economic reasons. Thus, there is a need to recognise the importance of creating employment for securing peace. Colloquium experts asserted that in the near term, the reconstruction of destroyed and damaged infrastructure, and building of new infrastructure (roads, highways, railroads, dams, etc.), are the most viable ways to generate employment opportunities. However, this requires the credible and tangible long-term commitment of the international community.

Experts recommended that the DDR programs should be designed to ensure individual appropriate incentives in the context of a broader recovery program. Because DDR programming will be most effective if individual aspirations, socio-economic profiles, and skill sets of various target groups in Afghanistan are better understood, a survey of militia members is desirable. Reintegration, and in particular job creation, should receive as much attention as disarmament and demobilization components.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) set about creating PRTs in several cities in Afghanistan, each with a complement of 50 to 100 U.S. military personnel, plus civilian aid and political advisors. The

PRTs main objectives are security, reconstruction, strengthen-

Left: Colloquium participants met in Petersburg, Germany, to discuss nation-building and security in Afghanistan.



ing the influence of the central government, and monitoring and assessing the local/regional situations. In addition to the PRTs, military/civilian civil operations teams are operate around Afghanistan, performing some of the same functions as the PRTs on a reduced scale.

Colloquium experts recommended that the PRTs should broaden and integrate their current mandates. PRTs should be given sufficient resources and jurisdiction to cope with potential challenges to such a mandate. The PRT mandate should also include police training and support at the provincial level, training and support for the Afghan National Army, and support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

Some participants also voiced concern that the reconstruction element of the PRTs' mission was problematic, since it overlapped with work being done by the NGO community, noting that PRT staff are not trained in reconstruction work. Several experts recommended that those aspects of the PRTs' mandate which overlap with those of the assistance community should be eliminated, though some suggested this would not be possible in the near future. Importantly, in order to strengthen the central government's presence in the provinces and in order to foster civil service training programs, participants agreed that Afghanistan's central government should be encouraged to assign representatives to the PRTs.

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Regional Commanders (a.k.a. "Warlords")

Colloquium participants debated the usage of the term "warlords," questioning whether this is the most appropriate term to use to describe Afghanistan's regional hegemony or commanders. Some experts stressed that calling certain regional leaders anything but warlords would be obfuscating issues like human rights abuses and the use of coercion by these regional commanders. Participants agreed, however, that varying degrees of "warlordism" exist, and distinctions should be made. This problem was seen as particularly urgent in the northern, central and western regions of Afghanistan.

One participant observed that "warlordism" should be seen in the context of an economy of violence – using income from illegal trade and other illegal activities. This economy of violence is based on economic as well as cultural pillars. Militias in Afghanistan operate upon a basis of kinship, with kinship serving as a kind of "social glue." Efforts to improve the security environment in Afghanistan thus need to take this into account, and particularly, changing the war economy into a peace economy should be combined with efforts to reduce the powers of regional commanders.



The participation of Afghan policymakers at the colloquium was enabled through the World Bank's videoconferencing facilities.

Strategy Towards "Warlords"

Colloquium participants agreed that Afghanistan's regional commanders must be brought to recognize their national obligations and responsibilities, thereby assuring loyalty to the central government. Grappling with the country's regional security challenges requires a more nuanced approach, and thus should account for differences in strategies toward various commanders, keeping in mind that it is critical that local populations have a voice in their security and governance. While some regional commanders may cooperate given appropriate incentives, most commanders will require some deterrent. Few, if any, will require military confrontation. However, any warlord directly challenging the authority of the central government should be dealt with firmly. Noting that this issue will require continued attention and discussion at future LISD colloquia, participants agreed that Afghanistan's peace process can not be successful if warlords do not honor their obligations towards the government.

Afghanistan's 2004 Elections

While the United Nations plans to proceed with June 2004 elections as outlined in the Bonn Agreement regardless of Afghanistan's security situation, some participants argued that it is wise to question that plan. The lack of an adequate security environment, together with the absence of other election prerequisites such as an accurate national census, active political organizations, eligible voter registration, and open deliberations of a draft constitution may preclude free and fair elections. Some experts observed that questioning the timeline might also create additional leverage for focusing the international community's attention on aiding with Afghanistan's internal security. Participants agreed that due consideration needs to be given to the ramifications of holding flawed national elections.

Though the US government considers the Bonn Agreement non-negotiable (renegotiating some aspects of elections entails the risk of opening up renegotiation of other aspects of the Agreement), colloquium participants from non-U.S. countries stressed the need for flexibility for interpreting Bonn Agreement clauses as necessary. One expert noted the successful example of Mozambique, where elections were postponed for one year due to inadequate security, thereby providing additional time to

improve security and provide more democratic elections. One alternative to nationwide elections in June 2004 proposed was sequential elections, with elections being held in urban areas concurrent with candidates being selected in rural areas - with an extension of elections to rural areas at a later, established date.

Judicial Reform

Some colloquium participants pointed to the difference between capacity of the police to imprison those in Afghanistan accused of various criminal charges, and the limited judicial capacity to deal with those accused and detained. In light of limited judicial capacity, police and court capacity should be harmonized and judicial reform expedited. Experts agreed the focus should be on a centralised, impartial and independent judiciary. Moreover, in order to support the efforts initiated by Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior, some participants suggested that the Judicial Reform Commission should create a Code of Criminal Procedure, clearly delineating the fundamental rules of due process.

Participants agreed that since judicial sector reform is an important element in maintaining the country's security and is exceedingly complex, the need for a second donor in the judicial sector, supplementing Italy's efforts, is needed. Discussions noted that while budgetary costs for training and jurists' salaries are crucial, such funding is not easily secured. Major donor support for these expenditures, including the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOFTA), is critical for judicial sector reform to occur.

Role of International Community

Debate on the need for continued international assistance for Afghanistan included whether there exists a credible commit-

ment from international donors, or whether "donor fatigue" was setting in. Some participants questioned the strength of the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan and whether the U.S. would continue to maintain a sustained presence in the region over the long term. Experts agreed on the importance of continued support for Afghanistan from international community for the ability of Afghanistan to transition to a peaceful and democratic country - and to help maintain the stability of the region.

Future LISD Project Colloquia

Future colloquia as part of this project will include meetings on security and state-building in Istanbul, and at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, 2003; a meeting on regional security at the Australian National University in Canberra, and an EU-sponsored meeting in Brussels in 2004. The concluding meeting is planned at Princeton University in 2005.

The website for the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs:

<http://www.wws.princeton.edu>

The website for the Liechtenstein Institute on Self Determination:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~lisd>

The policy brief from the first LISD Project meeting can be found at <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/policybriefs/LISDcolloquium.pdf>

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