



# RESEARCH REPORT

The Scope and Impact  
of Official Development  
Assistance in Afghanistan

(2001-2021)

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## I. Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronym	German	English
AA	Auswärtiges Amt	Federal Foreign Office
ADB	Asiatische Entwicklungsbank	Asian Development Bank
AIA	Afghanische Übergangsverwaltung	Afghan Interim Authority
AFRITAC	Regionale Zentren für technische Hilfe in Afrika	African Regional Technical Assistance Centres
AITF	Treuhandfonds für die Infrastruktur Afghanistans	Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund
AKDN	Aga Khan Entwicklungsnetzwerk	Aga Khan Development Network
ALP	Lokale afghanische Polizei	Afghan Local Police
ANA	Afghanische Nationalarmee	Afghan National Army
ANCOP	Afghanische Nationale Polizei für Zivile Ordnung	Afghan National Civil Order Police
ANCOF	Afghanische Nationale Zivilordnungsmacht	Afghan National Civil Order Force
ANP	Afghanische Nationalpolizei	Afghan National Police
ANPDF	Rahmensetzung für Nationalen Frieden und Entwicklung Afghanistan	Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework
ANSF	Afghanische Nationale Sicherheitskräfte	Afghan National Security Forces
AREU	Forschungs- und Evaluierungseinheit Afghanistan	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ARTF	Treuhandfonds zum Wiederaufbau Afghanistans	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ASFF	Afghanistan Fonds für Sicherheitskräfte	Afghanistan Security Forces Fund
AWSD	Datenbank zur Sicherheit von Entwicklungshelfern	Aid Worker Security Database
BMI	Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat	German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community

<b>BMEL</b>	Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft	German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
<b>BMF</b>	Bundesministerium für Finanzen	German Federal Ministry for Finance
<b>BMVg</b>	Bundesministerium der Verteidigung	German Federal Ministry of Defense
<b>BMWi</b>	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft	German Federal Ministry of Economics
<b>BMZ</b>	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>BND</b>	Bundesnachrichtendienst	German Federal Intelligence Service
<b>BuPolG</b>	Bundespolizeigesetz	Act on the Federal Police
<b>CIA</b>	US-Nachrichtendienst	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>CIDA</b>	Kanadische Agentur für internationale Entwicklung	Canadian International Development Agency
<b>CIMIC</b>	Zivil-militärische Zusammenarbeit	Civil-Military Co-Operation
<b>CNPA</b>	Polizei für die Bekämpfung von Rauschgift Afghanistan	Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan
<b>COIN</b>	Aufstandsbekämpfung	Counterinsurgency
<b>CLJ</b>	Konstitutionelle Loya Dschirga	Constitutional Loya Jirga
<b>DAB</b> (Da Afghanistan Bank)	Die afghanische Zentralbank	The Central Bank of Afghanistan
<b>DAC</b>	Ausschuss für Entwicklungshilfe	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DAG</b>	Gruppe für Entwicklungshilfe	Development Assistance Group
<b>DAR</b>	Entwicklungshilfe für Flüchtlinge	Development Assistance for Refugees
<b>DC</b>	Entwicklungszusammenarbeit	Development Cooperation
<b>DDR</b>	Entwaffnung, Demobilisierung und Reintegration	Demobilisation, Disarmament, and Reintegration

<b>DEval</b>	Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit	German Institute for Development Evaluation
<b>DFAT</b>	Ministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten und Handel	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>DFAIT</b>	Ministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten und internationalen Handel	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
<b>DFATD</b>	Ministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Handel und Entwicklung	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
<b>DFID</b>	Ministerium für internationale Entwicklung	Department of International Development
<b>DLI</b>	Entwicklung durch lokale Integration	Development through Local Integration
<b>EH</b>	Entwicklungshelfer	Development Aid Worker
<b>EhfG</b>	Entwicklungshelfergesetz	German Development Aid Workers Act
<b>ELJ</b>	Außerordentliche Loya Dschirga	Emergency Loya Jirga
<b>EU</b>	Europäische Union	European Union
<b>EUPOL Afghanistan</b>	Polizeimission der Europäischen Union in Afghanistan	European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
<b>FAO</b>	Ernährungs- und Landwirtschaftsorganisation der Vereinten Nationen	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
<b>FCO</b>	Amt für Auswärtiges und Commonwealth	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<b>FDD</b>	Gezielte Distriktentwicklung	Focused District Development
<b>GAC</b>	Globale Angelegenheiten Kanada	Global Affairs Canada
<b>GAO</b>	Büro für Rechenschaftspflicht der Regierung	Government Accountability Office
<b>GIZ</b>	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH	German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH

<b>IBRD</b>	Internationale Bank für Wiederaufbau und Entwicklung	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>IEDs</b>	selbstgebaute Sprengkörper	Improvised Explosive Devices
<b>ICG</b>	Internationale Krisengruppe	International Crisis Group
<b>IDP</b>	Binnenflüchtling	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IOM</b>	Internationale Organisation für Migration	International Organization for Migration
<b>IMF</b>	Internationaler Währungsfonds	International Monetary Fund
<b>INSO</b>	Internationale NGO-Sicherheitsorganisation	International NGO Safety Organisation
<b>ISAF</b>	Internationale Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe	International Security Assistance Forces
<b>JCMB</b>	Gemeinsamer Koordinierungs- und Überwachungsausschuss	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board
<b>KfW</b>	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau	Credit Institute for Reconstruction
<b>KIS</b>	Informelle Siedlungen in Kabul	Kabul Informal Settlements
<b>LOTFA</b>	Treuhandfonds für den Polizeiaufbau in Afghanistan	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
<b>MP</b>	Mitglied des Parlaments/Abgeordnete	Member of Parliament
<b>MHPSS</b>	Psychische Gesundheit und psychosoziale Unterstützung	Mental health and psychosocial support
<b>MOI</b>	Innenministerium	Ministry of the Interior
<b>MORR</b>	Ministerium für Flüchtlinge und Repatriierung	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
<b>MOU</b>	Absichtserklärung	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MRRD</b>	Ministerium für Rehabilitation und ländliche Entwicklung	Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development
<b>NATO</b>	Nordatlantische Vertragsorganisation	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NDS</b>	Nationale Sicherheitsdirektion	National Directorate of Security

<b>NGO</b>	Nichtregierungsorganisation	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NPA</b>	Nationale Polizeiakademie	National Police Academy
<b>NSP</b>	Nationales Solidaritätsprogramm	National Solidarity Program
<b>ODA</b>	Offizielle Entwicklungszusammenarbeit	Official Development Assistance
<b>OEEC</b>	Organisation für europäische wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PAT</b>	Provinzielle Beratungsteams	Provincial Advisor Team
<b>PDF</b>	Entwicklungsfonds in den Provinzen	Provincial Development Funds
<b>PDPA</b>	Demokratische Volkspartei von Afghanistan	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
<b>PME</b>	Programm "Migration für Entwicklung"	"Migration for Development" Programme
<b>PRT</b>	Provinzielle Wiederaufbau Teams	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
<b>RC North</b>	Regionales Kommando Nord	Regional Command North
<b>RRF</b>	Schnelle Eingreiftruppe	Rapid Reaction Force
<b>RLS</b>	Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung	Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
<b>RMO</b>	Büro für Risikomanagement	Risk Management Office
<b>RSM</b>	Mission Resolute Support	Resolute Support Mission
<b>SDG16</b>	Nachhaltiges Entwicklungsziel 16	Sustainable Development Goal 16
<b>SOM</b>	Treffen hochrangiger Beamter	Senior Officials' Meeting
<b>SIGAR</b>	Sondergeneralinspektor für den Wiederaufbau Afghanistans	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
<b>SIV</b>	spezielles Einwanderungsvisums	Special Immigration Visa
<b>SRTRO</b>	Organisation für Ausbildung und Forschung auf der Seidenstraße	Silk Route Training and Research Organization

<b>TCPH</b>	Programm für Technische Zusammenarbeit zum Afghanischen Ministerium für Öffentliches Gesundheitswesen	Technical Cooperation Program to the Ministry of Public Health
<b>THW</b>	Technisches Hilfswerk	Federal Agency for Technical Relief
<b>TLSR</b>	Übertragung der Verantwortung für die Sicherheit	Transfer of Lead Security Responsibility
<b>TOR</b>	Aufgabenbeschreibung	Terms of Reference
<b>TTA</b>	Akademien zur Ausbildung von Fachlehrern	Technical Teacher Training Academies
<b>TVET</b>	Technische und berufliche Bildung und Ausbildung	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UAE</b>	Vereinigte Arabische Emirate	United Arab Emirates
<b>UN</b>	Vereinte Nationen	United Nations
<b>UNICEF</b>	Kinderhilfswerk der Vereinten Nationen	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UK</b>	Großbritannien	United Kingdom
<b>UNDP</b>	Entwicklungsprogramm der Vereinten Nationen	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNAMA</b>	Hilfsmission der Vereinten Nationen in Afghanistan	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
<b>USA</b>	Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika	United States of America
<b>USAID</b>	Behörde der Vereinigten Staaten für internationale Entwicklung	U.S. Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	US-amerikanische Dollar	US Dollar
<b>USIP</b>	Institut für Frieden der Vereinigten Staaten	United States Institute of Peace
<b>WBG</b>	Weltbankgruppe	World Bank Group
<b>WFP</b>	Welternährungsprogramm	World Food Programme
<b>WIDF</b>	Internationale Demokratische Frauenföderation	Women's International Democratic Federation



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## Executive summary

This research report focuses on the scope and impact of German Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Afghanistan in the period from autumn 2001 to autumn 2021, with a view to the continuation of German involvement post-2021. It is part of the work of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's (RLS) Geneva office in the Global Programme for Social Rights in relation to the human right to peace. The report investigates the German government's conceptualisation and implementation of "the networked approach" (German: *der vernetzte Ansatz*) during the operations of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Resolute Support Mission (RSM) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan. Based on qualitative interviews, discursive analysis and assessment of available quantitative data, it disentangles the often contradictory intra-systemic goals, frameworks and policies applied as part of the "state-building" project during the so-called War on Terror in Afghanistan. Framed as a "peace" and "stabilisation" mission of NATO, the report focuses on the intertwining of civil and military institutions and organisations during the NATO war. This study elaborates on the overlaps and comprehensive coordination of German development policy with foreign and defence policy measures, the effects on the political, economic and social developments in Afghanistan, and contrasts this with how the war was characterised to audiences in Germany and NATO member states. The establishment of the Enquete Commission, "Lessons from Afghanistan for Germany's Future Networked Engagement," and the 1st Committee of Inquiry on Afghanistan in summer 2022 indicated the necessity to assess German foreign, military, humanitarian and development policy and its interface with multilateralism. In the face of the human cost of the war and the responsibility of the German parliament for consecutively authorising the extension of Germany's participation in it this report queries the political underpinnings of suggesting to investigate the war for an improvement of "Germany's Future" involvement in multilateral military and developmental interventions.

Central to the report is the genealogy of ODA as a multilateral and bilateral tool of neoliberal development policy and its contributions to uneven development and engineering of dependencies. Drawing on the historical transformations of ODA in general, we contextualise how German ODA was administered in Afghanistan and trace Germany's role in institution-building and organisational practices, highlighting and interrogating the ways in which various actors in the German development sector, including ministries, federal implementing agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGO), interfaced with the Afghan government and Afghan institutions. As it explores the shifting funding priorities of German ODA in Afghanistan in the course of two decades of war, the report reveals how foreign policy and development priorities were often tied to domestic issues inside Germany, particularly how they related to refugee inflows and labour migration. The report analyses the militarisation of everyday life and environment in Afghanistan as a result of NATO operations, and how German ODA-funded projects geared to "economic development and reconstruction" were emplaced within that military infrastructure. The report further scrutinises a special area of Germany's involvement — focusing on the example of the putatively "civil" police projects — and shows how these were entangled with the paramilitarisation of parts of the Afghan police forces. Germany also took centre-stage in the so-called Civil-Military Co-Operation (CIMIC) components of NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan: an approach to development that blurred the line between civil and military work.

The report provides an overview and critique of the set-up and systemic limitations of the systems of data collection and assessment that were used to monitor and evaluate ODA-funded projects. It provides an examination of German financial involvement in the US-led "peace process," from the Bonn Agreement in 2001 to the funding of later negotiation initiatives with the Taliban. The report concludes with an assessment of the military withdrawal and the persistence of Germany's involvement in Afghanistan that continues post-2021 recast in the form of humanitarian assistance.

# I. Introduction

## A. Preliminary remarks

In October 2021, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Geneva invited tenders for a study on the scope and impact of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Afghanistan in the period from autumn 2001 to autumn 2021, and in particular German ODA. Afghanistan was one of the most important partner countries of German development cooperation (DC) in terms of financial volume during the period under study. The aim was to analyse Germany's development policy in Afghanistan particularly against the background of the parallel NATO deployment and the increasingly comprehensive "networked approach," i.e. the interlinking of German military and security policy with foreign, humanitarian and development policy with multilateral systems.

Even then, it was foreseeable that Germany's involvement in Afghanistan would be examined within the framework of the German federal parliament (hereafter: Bundestag). Subsequently, in the summer of 2022, the Enquete Commission "Lessons from Afghanistan for Germany's Future Networked Engagement" (in German: Enquete Kommission "Lehren aus Afghanistan für das künftige vernetzte Engagement Deutschlands")<sup>1</sup> and the institution of the 1st Committee of Inquiry of the 20th legislation period (in German: 1. Untersuchungsausschuss der 20. Wahlperiode)<sup>2</sup> on Afghanistan were established in the Bundestag. The research for this study began before the Enquete Commission and the Committee of Inquiry were set up in March 2022 and was completed after the first sessions began in December 2022.

The research report is part of the work of the RLS's Geneva office in the Global Programme for Social Rights in relation to the human right to peace. Against the background of the parallel military deployment, the study elaborates the overlaps and fusion of development policy with foreign and military policy measures and the effects of this on the developments in Afghanistan, especially with regard to institution-building. The research team used qualitative and discursive methods and available quantitative data to investigate the political, economic, social and epistemological ramifications that emerged from the implementation of German ODA, operating through institutions and organisations, in Afghanistan.

## B. Introduction to the thematic contexts

At the end of August 2021, NATO member states left Afghanistan after nearly two decades of military operations. The military-led evacuations officially ended the NATO military presence in Afghanistan that had been established on 4 October 2011 by the unanimous decision for the case of alliance (*casus foederis*) under Article 5 of the NATO Charter.<sup>3</sup> It was followed on 14 November 2001 by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1378,<sup>4</sup> which established

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<sup>1</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 20/2570. 05.07.2022.

<sup>2</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 20/2352. 21.06.2022.

<sup>3</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). 2022. "Collective Defence - Article 5." NATO. 2022. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_110496.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm) (last accessed 23.04.2022).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1378 (14 November 2001) UN Doc S/RES/1378.

the procedures for the so-called "peace process" in Afghanistan and led to the Afghanistan Conference at Petersberg in Königswinter, near Bonn, from 27 November to 5 December 2001.

On 16 November 2001, then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD, Social Democratic Party of Germany) asked the Bundestag for a vote of confidence in accordance with Article 68 of the German Constitution to assure himself of the Bundestag's support. He linked this to a request by the German federal government's (hereafter: Bundesregierung) request to deploy German armed forces (hereafter: Bundeswehr) for the US-led so-called War on Terror as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Of 662 members of parliament, 336 voted "yes" (two votes more than the required absolute majority) and 326 voted "no."<sup>5</sup>

On 22 December 2001, the Bundestag debated the Bundesregierung's motion on the "Participation of German armed forces in the deployment of an International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan on the basis of resolutions 1386 (2001), 1383 (2001) and 1378 (2001) of the United Nations Security Council"<sup>6</sup> and, above all, the troop strength, which would be adjusted repeatedly over the years.<sup>7</sup> Of 581 members of parliament, 538 were in favour of the deployment, supported by the then governing coalition of SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens) as well as by the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union) and the FDP (Free Democratic Party). The 35 votes against came mainly from the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, now the Left Party, hereafter: DIE LINKE), but also from some MPs from the FDP, the CDU/CSU and the SPD. Eight members abstained from voting.<sup>8</sup> The Bundestag initially agreed to send a maximum of 1,200 soldiers for a period of six months.

On 5 December 2001, the Bonn Agreement, officially "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions," was signed.<sup>9</sup> It established the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) and set a timeline for elections and the drafting of a constitution. The timetable included the election of an interim authority by an Emergency *Loya Jirga* (ELJ), Pashto for "grand assembly," a constitution-making process by a Constitutional *Loya Jirga* (CLJ), and finally the oversight of parliamentary and presidential elections.

The transfer of power to an interim administration took place on 22 December 2001 and Hamid Karzai became chairman of the interim administration. The UN Resolution 1386 of December 2001 approved the temporary deployment of a peacekeeping force, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), based on a request for assistance from Afghan political elites and a mandate from the UN Security Council.<sup>10</sup> The latter authorised the deployment of the force to assist the Afghan government in securing Kabul and the surrounding area. This allowed the new Afghan authorities and UN personnel to take up the work.

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<sup>5</sup> Deutscher Bundestag. 2023. "Deutscher Bundestag - Gerhard Schröders Vertrauensfrage (2001)." Deutscher Bundestag. 2023. [https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/32247430\\_misstrauensvotum06-203232](https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/32247430_misstrauensvotum06-203232) (last accessed 16.10.2022).

<sup>6</sup> In German: "Beteiligung bewaffneter deutscher Streitkräfte an dem Einsatz einer Internationalen Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe in Afghanistan auf der Grundlage der Resolutionen 1386 (2001), 1383 (2001) und 1378 (2001) des Sicherheitsrats der Vereinten Nationen." See: Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 14/7930. 21.12.2001.

<sup>7</sup> Deutscher Bundestag. Stenographischer Bericht, 210. Sitzung, 22. Dezember 2001, Plenarprotokoll 14/210.

<sup>8</sup> Deutscher Bundestag. Stenographischer Bericht, 210. Sitzung, 22. Dezember 2001, Plenarprotokoll 14/210, p. 20849-20852.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Security Council (5 December 2001) UN Doc S/2001/1154.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386 (20 December 2001) UN Doc S/RES/1386 (2001).

After 2001, ODA – loans, grants and other financial instruments – became pivotal as the G7 member states<sup>11</sup> started to regulate Afghanistan's "economic development and reconstruction" through bilateral agreements and multilateral organisations. The official approach to state-building deployed by liberal democracies also in Afghanistan assumes that good governance, private sector growth and sustainable development programming will engender political liberalisation. In other words, the rationale was that structural adjustment programming will integrate Afghanistan into capitalist markets and the "international community." Parallel to the deployment of ISAF, the Bundesregierung increased the volume of economic development funds in Afghanistan and was already the largest European donor in 2002.<sup>12</sup> The donor countries primarily set the agenda through ODA programmes and determined priorities and areas to be funded. Overall, the Afghan government remained dependent on foreign loans, grants, and investments to develop the private sector in the Afghan war economy until the end of the NATO mission and of accompanying development policies.

In February 2020, the USA and the Taliban signed an agreement on the withdrawal of NATO member states' militaries from Afghanistan. In April 2021, NATO foreign and defence ministers decided to pull all NATO forces out of Afghanistan within a few months. The capital, Kabul, was handed over to the Taliban on 15 August 2021. At the end of August 2021, NATO member states left Afghanistan after nearly two decades of war and "economic development and reconstruction." While intergovernmental organisations and NGOs – this included NGOs receiving funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, hereafter: BMZ) and Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt, hereafter: AA) – halted development work, organisations run by foreigners took up work within about a month (depending on the organisation) and adjusted to the new political, financial and economic situation. The respective bodies were limited to offer projects that fall into donors' category of humanitarian assistance.

In September 2022, at the request of the parliamentary parties SPD, CDU/CSU, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and FDP, the above-mentioned Enquete Commission was established. According to the motion, the commission's mandate is – independently of and in addition to current legislative procedures and parliamentary resolutions – to draw "lessons from Afghanistan for the networked approach in the future."<sup>13</sup> The aim is to assess German "foreign, security and development" policy as well as its role in the multilateral architecture between 2001 and 2021 in Afghanistan to integrate insights for the coordination of civil and military policy in the future.<sup>14</sup>

The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (in German: parlamentarischer Untersuchungsausschuss) for the 20th legislative period, which was appointed in response to a motion put forward by SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, FDP and CDU/CSU, deals since July 2022 with the events surrounding the withdrawal of the Bundeswehr from Afghanistan and the evacuation of German

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<sup>11</sup> The Group of Seven (G7) is an international political forum of its member states Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States and the European Union and with invited states and international organisations that are not members of the G7. See for instance: General Secretariat of the Council. 2022. "G7 Summit, Schloss Elmau, 26-28 June 2022." European Council. 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2022/06/26-28/> (last accessed 14.07.2022).

<sup>12</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. "Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan." German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 02.05.2022).

<sup>13</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 20/2570. 05.07.2022.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

personnel, Afghans who served Germany and other affected persons.<sup>15</sup> Although the Criminal Procedure Code allows the committee to investigate Germany's extensive involvement in the NATO war in Afghanistan,<sup>16</sup> it is limited to the period from 29 February 2020 – the conclusion of the so-called Doha Agreement between the US government under former President Donald Trump and representatives of the Taliban – to the end of the mandate for the military evacuation from Afghanistan on 30 September 2021.

In the vote on the motion to establish the committee in the Bundestag, the parliamentary group DIE LINKE abstained and rejected the motion to establish the commission. It called for an investigation into the overall duration of the deployment, noting that the Enquete Commission could not perform this task, "as [...] it would not have the means of the Code of Criminal Procedure at its disposal." DIE LINKE argued that the reappraisal of the war in Afghanistan could not be left to researchers alone and advocated for the "comprehensive appraisal of the German engagement in Afghanistan since 2001 with the legal means of a committee of inquiry."<sup>17</sup> The reappraisal would be necessary in the light of the human cost of the war that killed more than 200 000 Afghans and 59 German soldiers and the material cost of over 12 billion Euro that were borne by the parliament.<sup>18</sup>

The assessment of German ODA in Afghanistan in the period 2001 to 2021 is as such salient for multiple reasons. Despite consecutive German government claims over the course of 20 years that NATO troops and the parallel development policies were bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan, the human and material costs of the war consistently rose. The report undertakes a qualitative examination of the impact of Germany's civil and military intervention as a member of NATO and OECD, their underlying assumptions and structures over the period 2001 to 2021. The report shows that German ODA during the war and occupation of Afghanistan was geared towards the interests of occupying forces - not that of Afghans and Afghanistan. The report will not cover the question of reparations and repair for Afghans. But it calls to publicly debate it and envision how futures can look like do not serve expansive carceral states, but cater to the health and prosperity of Afghan life and environments.

## **C. Outline of the report**

**Part I** of the report begins in **Section A** with the overarching history of the financial and economic infrastructure under which ODA is administered internationally. **Section B** locates ODA in its historic genealogy as a crucial instrument of economic development and reconstruction along capitalist lines that maintains uneven development and dependency. By looking at these historical transformations, the sections contextualise Germany's involvement in Afghanistan in the 20th century – before and during the time of the Soviet occupation (1979 to 1989), the civil war (1989-1992 and from 1992-1996) and the Taliban government (1996-2001) – and enables a comparison of German involvement paralleled with the NATO mission after 2001.

**Section C** focuses on bilateral and multilateral instruments of Germany and other leading donor countries that structured the ways in which foreign and development policies manifested

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<sup>15</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 20/2352. 21.06.2022.

<sup>16</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 20/2553. 05.07.2022.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 5-6.



themselves during the war and in the construction of the Afghan state after 2001. The section also highlights the relationships between the various actors in the German development arena, such as ministries, federal implementing agencies and NGOs as well as the relationships that were established with the Afghan government. The section concludes with an analysis of changes of German ODA funding priorities for Afghanistan over time. To this end, it traces the changes in refugee and migration policies in Germany and examines how the arrival of Afghan refugees – as opposed to evacuees – in Germany affected German foreign policy and economic development involvement in Afghanistan.

**Section D** looks at the civil-military nexus of Germany's engagement in Afghanistan from three perspectives. First, it examines the militarisation of everyday life in Afghanistan as a result of the NATO military mission in which ODA-funded projects were managed, and analyses the working conditions for Afghan workers, the Afghan diaspora and non-Afghans. The analysis then expands its view to a particular area of Germany's main involvement, namely the putatively "civil" police projects, and shows that these were in fact part of a process of para-militarisation. The final part of the section looks at the civil-military cooperation of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), praised as a success story under the German networked approach, but in practice responsible for a dangerous blurring of the lines between civil and military spheres of life.

**Section E** provides an overview of the set up and systemic limitations of the monitoring and evaluation systems used to assess the long-term impact of German ODA-funded projects in Afghanistan.

**Part II** and the next sections analyse changing funding priorities. **Section F** examines German financial involvement in the US-led "peace process," from the Bonn Agreement to the funding of negotiation initiatives with the Taliban. **Section G** of the report addresses aspects of the military-led withdrawal and evacuation, as well as in **Section H** the post-2021 neoliberal infrastructure that prevails and through which humanitarian assistance continues.

## **D. Methods**

The methods used for this research report comprise qualitative and discursive methods as well as the analysis of available quantitative data. It started with a thorough desk review. Therein, publications on Afghanistan's economic development and reconstruction during the war are examined using scholarly sources and grey literature, including reports, evaluations, studies, agreements and other document formats. Literature that critically analyses the intertwining of civil and military spheres in which German ODA was administered is a growing but still limited field of inquiry. The majority of references that are therefore used as sources for this report are drawn from literature embedded within the liberal logics that justified the war. The analysis of the report draws on literature which investigates the political underpinnings of liberal concepts where present to pinpoint intra-systemic critiques and shows where they fall short. The review of goal setting documents such as government briefings, studies and reports provides an understanding of the rationale of ODA in Afghanistan by donor states, which is contrasted with documentation from NGOs working in Afghanistan. The desk-review was complemented by 26 semi-structured interviews with key informants conducted online in German and English. The length of the semi-structured interviews varied between 45 minutes and two hours. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then coded. The key informants for this research report were evacuated Afghan passport holders with residence permits in Germany or in other states, Afghans with dual citizenship as well as citizens of Germany and other European Union (EU) member states and the

United Kingdom (UK) who were employed in or contracted for projects that were funded by or intersected with German ODA.

Interviewees were contacted by the two researchers for this report through existing networks established through previous work in and about Afghanistan over the past decade. The interlocutors initially contacted were not always interviewed themselves, but the researchers were also referred to other potential interviewees through personal networks and chat groups of Afghans and foreigners working in projects that involved German ODA in some capacity. Interviewees were chosen according to their work experience with programmes and projects funded by German ODA. Interviewees came from a broad range of fields and included diplomats, civil servants, aid workers, contractors, police officers and soldiers in their jobs in the civil-military apparatus in Afghanistan. The age of interviewees covers the full range of people in their twenties to retirees in their sixties. Interviewees were offered the option of conducting the interviews in English, German or Dari, but most chose English or German. It is important to note that one interviewer was a white German woman and citizen, the other an Iranian woman and a former refugee who was naturalised in Germany which affected the interview dynamics.

The motivation of the interviewees, who worked or continue to work in institutions and organisations funded by or that intersected with German ODA, to talk to the researchers ranged from an interest in sharing work experiences, including at times grievances, anger and feelings of utter frustration, to the hope of being able to achieve something for the departure of relatives from Afghanistan. Staff and contractors involved with German ODA-funded institutions and organisations cannot speak freely and publicly: Afghans who have already been evacuated as well as Afghans who are waiting for a residence permit in Germany were apprehensive to speak freely or criticise the way German institutions and organisations work. This has meant that interviews could only be conducted on the understanding that they would be anonymised for publication.

The research was also hindered by the evasion tactics of the German ministries and implementing agencies (i.e. evasion by referring to chains of command or areas of responsibility). Our interview requests were not officially rejected directly, but it was said that the agencies were currently officially unable to answer questions for the research or reference was made to other organisations. There was therefore no official information or comment available from ministries and implementing agencies. Nevertheless, individual employees of ministries and implementing agencies agreed to give interviews for the research, and these statements have been included anonymously in the study.

In addition, access to documents of relevant German institutions and organisations was limited not only because websites have been taken down since August 2021, but also because interviewees provided insight from documents but asked interviewers not to quote them with details that might reveal their identity. While employees and contractors involved in institution-building and -strengthening agreed to be interviewed, most requested anonymity as they feared consequences from their employer if they spoke out or expressed critical opinions. Comments or information from the interviews had to be excluded for citation if the informants were identifiable, as the comments or the context of their comments could reveal when they were employed in an identifiable position. Some interviewees also withdrew from interviews altogether because they feared for their careers and future employment as a result of their critical assessments.

# PART I

## A. ODA: an institutional and organisational history

The following section of Part I of the analysis outlines the historical development of ODA as a key instrument of capitalist development and reconstruction and places it in the context of, on the one hand, "financialisation of production, exchange and social reproduction"<sup>19</sup> of neoliberalism and, on the other hand, the persistence of unequal development and dependency. This is particularly important because German foreign, military and development policy in Afghanistan – and worldwide – is based on this neoliberal financial and economic order deployed by the USA for the "reconstruction" of Europe after World War II.

### 1. Post-World War II financial and economic order

The institutional and organisational structures developed for post-World War II Europe and West Germany were crucial for the coordinated development of global financial and economic governance. In 1944, the US government invited representatives of 44 states to the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods. At Bretton Woods, the foundations were laid for a post-World War II international monetary system and the political order of liberal democracies. On the one hand, plans were presented for the development of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) drafted by Harry D. White, assistant to the US Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, which had the task of regulating and controlling exchange rates to the US Dollar (USD), and on the other, for the establishment of a International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Its mandate was to "assist" by providing loans for the "reconstruction and development" of member states' industries and infrastructures and to increase private foreign investment.<sup>20</sup>

The US-driven creation of supranational organisations to manage the liberalisation of capital flows under one umbrella was accompanied by a rhetorical shift in US foreign policy. In 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt promulgated the "armed defense of democratic existence" in his so-called Four Freedoms Speech.<sup>21</sup> He postulated that a "good society" would embrace the objectives of capitalist democracies, which include "freedom of speech and expression," "freedom of every person to worship God in his own way," "freedom from want," meaning "economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world," and "freedom from fear," meaning "a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to

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<sup>19</sup> Boffo, Marco, Alfredo Saad-Filho, and Ben Fine. 2019. 'Neoliberal Capitalism: The Authoritarian Turn.' *Socialist Register* 55.

<sup>20</sup> Department of State. 1944. *United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference. Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. July 1 to July 22, 1944. Final Act and Related Documents.* Conference Series 55. Washington, D.C: Government Printing Press. [https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/historical/eccles/036\\_17\\_0004.pdf](https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/historical/eccles/036_17_0004.pdf) (last accessed 18.06.2022), p. 68. See also: Toporowski, Jan. 2005. '“A Haven of Familiar Monetary Practice:” The Neoliberal Dream in International Money and Finance.' In *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader*, edited by Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston, 106–12. London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.

<sup>21</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt Annual Message to Congress, January 6, 1941; Records of the United States Senate; SEN 77A-H1; Record Group 46; National Archives.

commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour." Roosevelt's "four essential human freedoms" laid down liberal principles of alliance-building in war, which were enshrined in the UN charter in 1945. He states: "The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilised society." The Truman Doctrine, in turn, reiterated the necessity of "assisting" other states "to survive as a free nation."<sup>22</sup>

Several organisational arenas that were instrumental in this project of reconstruction in Europe after World War II also contributed to the development of ODA in its current form. The original 18 member states of the OEEC, which became the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961, managed US and Canadian funds and channelled them through the so-called Marshall Plan for the "reconstruction of Europe" in 1948.<sup>23</sup> The conceptual tailoring of ODA as a governmental instrument to coordinate foreign policy, financial integration and economic development can be traced back to January 1960, when the Development Assistance Group (DAG) was established during an OEEC Special Economic Committee meeting as "a forum for consultations among aid donors on assistance to less-developed countries."<sup>24</sup> The founding members of the DAG (later on reconstituted as Development Assistance Committee, DAC) comprised Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the UK, the USA and the Commission of the European Economic Community; the Netherlands joined in July of the same year and Japan was invited from the onset to participate.<sup>25</sup> With the constitution of the DAC the language around the allocation of loans and grants expanded outside of North America, Europe and Japan: states deemed "less-developed" because of their lack of integration into capitalist markets turned into subjects of "assistance."<sup>26</sup> The institutional and organisational bodies became the building blocks for the capitalist development of political economies and the export of liberal concepts of governance outside the OEEC.

## 2. *Germany's place in the post-World War II order*

After Germany lost its state sovereignty in 1945, it also lost its right to an independent German foreign policy. In the Federal Republic of Germany (hereinafter referred to as West Germany), Chancellor Konrad Adenauer relied on close cooperation with Washington. From 1950 to 1951, the West German Office of Foreign Affairs (in German: Dienststelle für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten) opened the first consulates general in London, New York and Paris, among other places, before it was transformed into the AA in 1951. In 1951, an amendment to the occupation statute (in German: Besatzungsstatut) gave West Germany the sovereignty to regulate its own internal affairs. In 1954, Adenauer signed the Bonn-Paris conventions (in German: Pariser Verträge), which sanctioned the military remobilisation of West Germany by making an alliance with the USA obligatory (West integration, in German: Westintegration). In the same year that Germany aligned itself officially in political, economic and military terms with "the West," it

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<sup>22</sup> President Truman's Message to Congress; March 12, 1947; Document 171; 80th Congress, 1st Session; Records of the United States House of Representatives; Record Group 233; National Archives.

<sup>23</sup> The Convention transforming the OEEC into the OECD was signed at the Chateau de la Muette in Paris on 14 December 1960 and entered into force on 30 September 1961.

<sup>24</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2006. "DAC in Dates. The History of OECD's Development Assistance Committee." OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/1896808.pdf> (last accessed 18.11.2022).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

established diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, which had previously been severed in 1945, by dispatching Franz Quiring as German ambassador to Kabul.<sup>27</sup>

Bilateral relations between Germany and Afghanistan formally began at the time of World War I, when the Foreign Office and military of the German Empire (1871-1918) sent a secret mission of German and Turkish-Ottoman diplomats (as well as British-Indian prisoners of war) to encourage the Afghan King Habibullah Khan to attack British colonial forces in India. The interest of the German Empire in becoming a major international power was linked to the decline of the British Empire in India, making Afghanistan – a direct geographical focal point to reach British India – an important part of German military strategy.<sup>28</sup> The German delegation was composed of 23 Germans who had previously served in military capacities in colonies in Africa or had been part of trading companies.<sup>29</sup> The Niedermayer-Hentig Expedition, as the mission was called, failed. King Habibullah judged it to be in the national interest to pursue a policy of non-alignment. These interactions ended in a first friendly trade agreement on 24 January 1916 between Germany and Afghanistan that included the promised delivery of 100,000 rifles and 300 cannons.<sup>30</sup>

Economic ties existed long before, especially with regard to the manufacturing of arms and ammunition. The German engineer Dr. Gottlieb Fleischer (d.1905), who worked for the German arms manufacturer Krupp Steelworks, was commissioned by King Abdur Rahman Khan in 1898 to direct the newly built Mashin Khanah (lit. "machine house").<sup>31</sup> The sprawling compound with the foundry, initially used for the manufacturing and trading of arms and ammunition, was repurposed to house the state printing press (Matba-ye Mashin Khanah) under King Amanullah Khan and as a coin mint under Nadir Shah.<sup>32</sup> Trade relations were increasingly institutionalised and streamlined through the establishment of the German-Afghan Compagnie (Deutsch-Afghanische Compagnie, A.G., DACOM) in the 1920s.<sup>33</sup> Following on from these earlier German connections, Kabul's downtown area, including the former Mashin Khanah, became an ODA-funded reconstruction project during the NATO operations. The German KfW Development Bank (KfW Entwicklungsbank) partnered with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) to restore and rehabilitate a number of significant historic buildings and public open spaces in the city of

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<sup>27</sup> Baraki, Matin. 1996. *Die Beziehungen zwischen Afghanistan und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1978*: dargestellt anhand der wichtigsten entwicklungspolitischen Projekte der Bundesrepublik in Afghanistan. Frankfurt am Main; New York: Lang, p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 15-16.

<sup>29</sup> Wardaki, Marjan Sarwar. 2019. "Knowledge-Migrants between South Asia and Europe: The Production of Technical and Scientific Ideas among Students and Scientists, 1919-1945." PhD Dissertation, University of California. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5x45h4fp>, p. 41-43 (accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>30</sup> Adamec, Ludwig W. 1974. *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century: Relations with the USSR, Germany, and Britain*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 24; Hughes, Thomas L. 2002. "The German Mission to Afghanistan, 1915-1916." *German Studies Review* 25 (3): 447-76.

<sup>31</sup> Adamec, Ludwig W. 1991. *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, p. 162.

<sup>32</sup> Hanifi, Shah Mahmoud. 2011. *Connecting Histories in Afghanistan: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press, p. 115-120.

<sup>33</sup> Founded in 1923 as the Deutsch-Orientalische-Handelsgesellschaft, A.G, a trading company, the firm was renamed Deutsch-Afghanische Compagnie, A.G (DACOM) or Shirkat-i Tijarat-i Alman Amra-yi Afghanistan in 1925. See: Baraki, Matin. 1996. *Die Beziehungen zwischen Afghanistan und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1978*: dargestellt anhand der wichtigsten entwicklungspolitischen Projekte der Bundesrepublik in Afghanistan. Frankfurt am Main; New York: Lang, p. 41.

Kabul.<sup>34</sup> This collaboration built on an earlier project of rebuilding Kabul's historic park, "Babur's Garden,"<sup>35</sup> in the early 2000s, which originally housed the Niedermayer-Hentig Expedition.

Bilateral relations, which included scholarships for Afghan students in Germany, continued in the 1930s and lasted during much of the era of Nazi Germany.<sup>36</sup> After a brief hiatus in bilateral relations during the last years of the Nazis, the post-World War II period saw a strengthening of Afghan-West German relations through technical assistance such as the construction of a dam and hydroelectric power station in Sorubi, between Kabul and Jalalabad. Relations also continued in the form of investments into educational infrastructure, such as the construction of the new Kabul University Campus by German contractors, and the influx of German teachers and trainers in the faculties of science and economics.<sup>37</sup>

With the re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 1954, Afghanistan became an integral part of West German development policy and started receiving ODA through AA as well as from the German Federal Ministry of Economics (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, BMWi). This continued until the establishment of the Ministry of Development and Cooperation in 1961. From the mid-1950s until 1978, the projects included the secondment of German police advisors to the Afghan government and as teachers to the Kabul police school, the training of Afghan police officers in West Germany by the German Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND), and intelligence cooperation and material assistance through the provision of equipment.<sup>38</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, Germany took on one of the largest technical DC projects in Paktia Province in eastern Afghanistan on the border with Pakistan, the "regional development of the province Paktia." After the Soviet invasion in 1979, all West German experts were expelled from Afghanistan and all official technical cooperation projects were discontinued. German NGOs such as Welthungerhilfe, which started its operations in Afghanistan in 1980, continued working in the country. Unlike other Western countries such as the USA, which directly funded the Mujahideen resistance groups against the Soviet-backed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's (PDPA) government, German development assistance to Afghanistan was indirect: in response to a request of the PDS in the Bundestag in 1996, the AA allocated 71 million Deutschmark for projects in Afghanistan and for Afghan refugees in Pakistan between 1986 and 1995,<sup>39</sup> knowing that humanitarian aid to the refugee camps in Pakistan also benefited the resistance groups.<sup>40</sup> It was in autumn 2001 that official direct bilateral development and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan resumed.

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<sup>34</sup> Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). 2022. "Restoration in Kabul." AKDN. <https://the.akdn/en/where-we-work/central-asia/afghanistan/cultural-development-overview-afghanistan/restoration-in-kabul-afghanistan> (last accessed 18.05.2022).

<sup>35</sup> Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). 2004. *Babur's Garden Rehabilitation Framework*. Kabul, Afghanistan. [https://akdn.imgix.net/53832/1641874025-2004\\_afghanistan\\_babur.pdf](https://akdn.imgix.net/53832/1641874025-2004_afghanistan_babur.pdf) (last accessed 18.05.2022).

<sup>36</sup> Adamec, Ludwig W. 1974. *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century: Relations with the USSR, Germany, and Britain*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 238-260.

<sup>37</sup> Adamec, Ludwig W. 1987. *A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Afghanistan*. Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, p. 133.

<sup>38</sup> Baraki, Matin. 1996. *Die Beziehungen zwischen Afghanistan und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1978*: dargestellt anhand der wichtigsten entwicklungspolitischen Projekte der Bundesrepublik in Afghanistan. Frankfurt am Main; New York: Lang, p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 13/4723. 23.05.1996, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Jahn, Thaddeus Caspar Boyd. 2020. 'Responding Responsibly: West Germany's Relations with the Mujahideen During the Soviet-Afghan War, 1979-1987.' *International History Review* 42 (4): 755-73, p. 4.

In the 1990s, for the first time since 1945, the Bundesregierung decided to deploy its military to a war zone: the UNSC-mandated deployment of the Bundeswehr to Somalia in 1993 and as part of NATO operations in the Balkan Wars led to the development of an increasingly coordinated approach that combined civil and military means and resulted in the so-called "NATO Civil-Military Co-Operation Doctrine." In Germany, the term "civil-military cooperation" had been used since the 1980s to specify the rules of engagement between German and allied armed forces in Germany. With Germany's military involvement in former Yugoslavia, this understanding of cooperation and intertwining of the civil and military apparatus was expanded. In April 2000, in a first attempt to find a political strategy corresponding to this approach, the German Bundesregierung published the concept "Civil Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peace Consolidation" (in German: Zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung).<sup>41</sup> This was a crucial step towards formulating the networked approach, which aimed to integrate civil and military instruments for "peacekeeping," security strategies and neoliberal development.

Germany's participation in the multilaterally aligned military intervention in Afghanistan developed against the background of its experience in the Balkan wars. Joschka Fischer, the then Federal Foreign Minister of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, expressed full confidence in German participation in military and state-building ventures abroad in his opening speech at the Bonn Conference in 2001:

*"Afghanistan has a great opportunity now to win peace and reconstruction in a united, independent Afghanistan. Now a future where terrorism and violence will have no place is at hand. Now is the time to make use of the combined efforts and strength of the international community for rebuilding your country."*<sup>42</sup>

Fischer spoke to an audience of UN representatives and hand-picked Afghans at the UN talks on Afghanistan convened at Hotel Petersberg, in Bonn, Germany.<sup>43</sup> Many of the Afghan participants, who were presented as "representatives of the Afghan people,"<sup>44</sup> belonged to the pre-1979 government, such as the so-called "Rome Group" associated with the former King Zahir Shah or were part of Afghan elites in the diaspora. The Northern Alliance, who were the military partners of the USA who had helped to overthrow the Taliban government,<sup>45</sup> were represented by Yunus Qanooni. Negotiations with leaders of the Northern Alliance were also led by

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<sup>41</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2014. "Deutschlands Beitrag zur Friedenssicherung." Die Bundesregierung. 2014.

<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/archiv/alt-inhalte/deutschlands-beitrag-zur-friedenssicherung-419224> (last accessed 19.07.2022).

<sup>42</sup> Fischer, Joschka. 2001. "Speech by Joschka Fischer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. Opening the UN-Talks on Afghanistan at Bonn (Petersberg) 27 November 2001." United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. [https://unric.org/de/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2001/11/fischer\\_speech.pdf](https://unric.org/de/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2001/11/fischer_speech.pdf) (last accessed 05.04.2022).

<sup>43</sup> For official archival material from the conference, see: Regionales Informationszentrum der Vereinten Nationen (UNRIC). 2022. "UN Talks on Afghanistan 2001." Regionales Informationszentrum der Vereinten Nationen (UNRIC). <https://unric.org/de/un-talks-on-afghanistan-2001/> (last accessed 05.04.2022).

<sup>44</sup> Fischer, Joschka. 2001. "Speech by Joschka Fischer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. Opening the UN-Talks on Afghanistan at Bonn (Petersberg) 27 November 2001." United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. [https://unric.org/de/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2001/11/fischer\\_speech.pdf](https://unric.org/de/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2001/11/fischer_speech.pdf) (last accessed 05.04.2022).

<sup>45</sup> Minor groups included in the talks were the Peshawar and Cyprus groups, see: Fields, Mark, and Ramsha Ahmed. 2011. *A Review of the 2001 Bonn Conference and Application to the Road Ahead in Afghanistan*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press. <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-8.pdf> (last accessed 01.07.2022).

Ambassador James Dobbins, US Special Representative to the Afghan Opposition. A leading figure in the National Security Council (NSC) in Washington,<sup>46</sup> Zalmay Khalilzad accompanied Dobbins and his interagency team representing the NSC in Bonn and talked directly with Mujahideen leaders including General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Burhanuddin Rabbani and Qasim Mohammed Fahim. These leaders, on the other hand, were working with liaison officers of the CIA in Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup> As such, participation at the conference in Bonn was not decided by popular vote, but by staking claims on behalf of Western interests in the fighting of previous decades and their outcome in the future.

On 22 December 2001, under the appearance of “Afghan ownership,” the Bonn Agreement resulted in the constitution of an Interim Authority, which then formally took over governmental power. The Bonn Agreement was drafted by the same states that were to send their militaries and determine Afghanistan’s reconstruction and economic development policies. This process can also be described as the attempt to synchronise Afghanistan with the multilateralism of the capitalist donor countries in coordination with a select, internationally entangled Afghan political task force. The agreement avoided wording that made it clear that it was a military occupation that would enable “the official transfer of power” from US-led NATO member states to the interim authority led by Hamid Karzai, who went on to become the President of Afghanistan (2002 -2014).

Even prior to the Interim Authority formally taking power on 22 December 2001, “the international community had organised a number of meetings on Afghanistan’s reconstruction, starting in the fall of 2001.”<sup>48</sup> A steering group – comprising representatives of the USA, Japan, Saudi Arabia and the EU in coordination with the World Bank Group (WBG), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – began “to produce a preliminary needs assessment for Afghanistan’s reconstruction.”<sup>49</sup> With the Bonn Agreement and its aftermath, Afghanistan was subjected to the (re)construction of its political economy as envisaged by liberal democracies and their allies: USD 1.8 billion was pledged for reconstruction at the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo in early 2002. The establishment of the Afghan Interim Authority chaired by Karzai and Karzai’s election as President at the Loya Jirga in 2002 continued to promulgate the narrative that the military invasion – with the support of the Northern Alliance – was liberating and that the ownership over governmental sovereignty would lie in the hands of Afghans.<sup>50</sup>

Afghanistan was the first large-scale state-building project of reunified Germany as part of NATO and the self-proclaimed “international community.” Since the Balkan Wars, collaboration between the civil military spheres had developed further in Germany. As early as 2003, the government of the SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen had used the term “civil-military engagement” for the first time in its motion to extend the mandate to continue and expand the

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<sup>46</sup> According to the White House, “the National Security Council is the President’s principal forum for national security and foreign policy decision making with his or her senior national security advisors and cabinet officials, and the President’s principal arm for coordinating these policies across federal agencies.” See: The White House. 2022. “National Security Council.” The White House. 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/> (last accessed 01.07.2022).

<sup>47</sup> Fields, Mark, and Ramsha Ahmed. 2011. *A Review of the 2001 Bonn Conference and Application to the Road Ahead in Afghanistan*. Washington, D.C: National Defense University Press. <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-8.pdf> (last accessed 01.07.2022).

<sup>48</sup> Rooden, Ron van. 2004. ‘Overview.’ In *Reconstructing Afghanistan*, edited by Adam Bennett, 1–5. Washington, D.C: International Monetary Fund, p. 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 2.



participation of the Bundeswehr in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan as it informed the Bundestag of Germany's take-over of the, hitherto US-led, PRTs in Kunduz province.<sup>51</sup> The government justified the deployment of the Bundeswehr in Kunduz arguing that "the military presence shall radiate into the region in a stabilising manner."<sup>52</sup> Initially, ISAF was operating in and around the capital Kabul. Since August 2003, ISAF was under the command of NATO and divided Afghanistan into military command areas.<sup>53</sup> Germany took over the north of Afghanistan. In 2010, there were "nearly 400 U.S. and coalition bases in Afghanistan, including camps, forward operating bases, and combat outposts in Afghanistan."<sup>54</sup> The Afghan National Army, financed by NATO's Afghan National Army Trust Fund, the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) and the United States Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), supported the mission of ISAF on "at least 300 Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) bases."<sup>55</sup>

Among the supranational organisations, international NGOs and foreign governmental development agencies that began work in Afghanistan following the invasion in 2001 was a team from the IMF. The team arrived in early 2002 with the mission to show "the Afghan authorities" how to "quickly establish a basic framework for economic management and policies, including rebuilding key institutions, notably the Ministry of Finance and the central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank."<sup>56</sup> This set the stage for how German ODA was administered in Afghanistan.

## **B. German ODA and Afghanistan**

This section investigates the bilateral and multilateral instruments of NATO member states that structured the ways in which foreign, development and military policies manifested during the war and in the construction of the Afghan state along neoliberal lines. Neoliberal ideas encompass "a complex construct of rhetorical (ideological), intellectual (scholarly) and policy elements" that engender intra-systemic contradictions.<sup>57</sup> One of these contradictions is that while capitalist democracies argue for the reduction of impediments to free global trade, the same states have politically constructed a heavily regulated system of financial and economic governance through multilateral and bilateral institutions and organisations. Simultaneously, intra-systemic contradictions manifest in the interplay between structure-producing governmental bodies and multilateral organisations and implementing actors within the

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<sup>51</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 15/1700. 15.10.2003.

<sup>52</sup> In German: "Die militärische Präsenz soll darüber hinaus stabilisierend in die Region ausstrahlen." See: Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 15/1700. 15.10.2003, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> The ISAF mission was extended on the multilateral level with UNSCR 1510. See: United Nations Security Council (13 October 2003) UN Doc S/RES/1510.

<sup>54</sup> Turse, Nick. 2010. "America's Shadowy Base World." TomDispatch.Com. 2010. <https://tomdispatch.com/nick-turse-america-s-shadowy-base-world/> (last accessed 22.05.2022).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Bennett, Adam. 2004. 'Preface.' In *Reconstructing Afghanistan*, edited by Adam Bennett, vii. Washington, D.C: International Monetary Fund, p. vii.

<sup>57</sup> Fine, Ben, and Alfredo Saad-Filho. 2014. 'Politics of Neo-Liberal Development. Washington Consensus and Post-Washington Consensus.' In *The Politics of Development: A Survey*, edited by Heloise Weber, First Edition, 154–66. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, p. 155.

structure, including NGOs and private firms, in the form of disagreements as well as cooperation and competition.

With the NATO invasion in 2001, Germany became also one of the leading states in the field of diplomacy of what culminated in the self-proclaimed "Alliance of Multilateralism."<sup>58</sup> The Alliance bore the hallmarks of NATO's civil counterpart for foreign policy. It was not geared towards institution-building, but rather intended to function as "a network that allows for the formation of flexible, issue-based coalitions that focus on specific projects and policy outcomes".<sup>59</sup> A critical review by scholars Anila Daulatzai and Sahar Ghumkhor dismantles the alleged altruism behind the humanitarian and "developmental aid industry" in Afghanistan promulgated by the USA and its allies. Referencing the anti-colonial political thinker Frantz Fanon, the authors explain that Afghan "survivors of imperialism" must appraise the ways in which "humanitarianism and liberalism" are central to the political and economic domination perpetuated by the USA and its allies, "that currently starves them."<sup>60</sup>

The first part of the section, based on OECD data,<sup>61</sup> details the total volume of bilateral funding and exemplifies the bilateral funding of technical cooperation grants in Afghanistan. It illustrates the funding logic, but also the impact of ODA on the creation of a rentier state and parallel governance structures. Examples of major funds to which German ODA has contributed, such as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) and the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), illustrate German involvement in the multilateral funding infrastructure. With USD 6561.54 million spent between 2001 and 2020, Germany had the second highest total funding volume in Afghanistan after the USA. German ODA must therefore be seen as significant, but also as embedded in multilateral structures which complement and strengthen bilateral funding streams. As a member of the EU and NATO, Germany was a donor with geopolitical interests reflected in both foreign policy and economic development policy.

The following sections also describe where the limitations of the data lie and which aspects are left out when focusing solely on total funding volumes: particularly, the intertwining of civilian and

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<sup>58</sup> German Federal Foreign Office and Ministère de L'Europe et Des Affaires Étrangères. 2022. "Alliance for Multilateralism." Multilateralism. 2022. <https://multilateralism.org/> (last accessed 17.11.2022).

<sup>59</sup> For the declaration, see: Alliance of Multilateralism. 2020. "Declaration of Principles." [multilateralism.org. https://multilateralism.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Alliance-for-Multilateralism-Declaration-of-principles.pdf](https://multilateralism.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Alliance-for-Multilateralism-Declaration-of-principles.pdf) (last accessed 17.11.2022).

<sup>60</sup> Daulatzai, Anila, and Sahar Ghumkhor. 2022. "It Is Hardly Surprising the US Stole Afghan Money." Al Jazeera. 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/3/14/it-is-not-surprising-empire-stole-afghan-money> (last accessed 20.04.2022).

<sup>61</sup> See: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). (2022). "OECD data." OECD. <http://data.oecd.org> (last accessed 10.06.2022).

The OECD/DAC defines "assistance" from the vantage point of its core members and measures development in relation to countries managing the organisation: according to the OECD's DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics, ODA is described as government funds that have the "promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective." The DAC list of ODA recipients shows all countries and territories eligible to receive ODA. These consist of all countries categorised as low and middle-income based on gross national income (GNI) per capita as published by the WB, with the exception of G8 members, EU members, and countries with a date for entry into the EU. The list also includes the category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as defined by the UN. According to OECD definition, ODA in its bilateral and multilateral packaging forms includes "grants, loans and other flows." Grants are defined as "transfers of cash or in kind for which no legal debt is incurred by the recipient," meaning that the recipient has no legal obligation to repay the funds. See: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). 2018. "DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics." OECD/DAC. [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT\(2018\)9/FINAL/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT(2018)9/FINAL/en/pdf) (last accessed 20.05.2022).

military spending can be only rendered intelligible by situating social interactions in institutions and organisations which had the task to implement neoliberal development policies during the NATO war. To shed light on the structures and functioning of German ODA in Afghanistan, the inner-German governmental and ministerial dynamics in the allocation and administration of ODA as well as the state implementing partners in Afghanistan are examined in more detail. The final part looks at changes in overall funding priorities, using the migration sector as an example.

## 1. German ODA funding logic and volume in Afghanistan

German ODA funding logic in Afghanistan engendered the incorporation of Afghanistan in the multilateral system of capitalist development. Organisational political arenas such as of the OECD, NATO and UN agencies, and forums including the G7 and G20, generate political, financial and economic instruments that impose state-building blueprints on political geographies in Asia, Africa and Latin America.<sup>62</sup> The goal of neoliberal policy reform and the coordinated institution-building was to introduce political liberalisation to integrate Afghanistan into these structures following the fall of the Taliban government in the 1990s. This section therefore discusses technical cooperation grants, LOTFA and ARTF and the political evaluation of these instruments, taking into account these regulatory measures of states that perpetuate political and social hierarchies.

In the German Federal Government's first report on Germany's coordination and cooperation with multilateral and regional organisations in promoting "security and stability" through the "prevention of crises" in 2006, Afghanistan is referred to as an "example of interagency post-conflict peace consolidation in the international grouping."<sup>63</sup> After German military intervention in the Balkan wars, the invasion of Afghanistan demanded a new level of coordinated foreign, development and military policy to humanise Germany's participation. The Bundesregierung characterised Germany as a "key partner nation" – instead of the previously deployed term "lead nation" – spearheading the reform of the security sector in Afghanistan by training and equipping the Afghan police. According to this report, the cooperation also appears to have led to the strengthening of political institutions, the reconstruction of the domestic economy,

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<sup>62</sup> The Group of Twenty (G20) is an international political forum for leading capitalist states as well as multilateral organisations. Since 1999 the G20 has given itself the task to coordinate capitalist governance and its regulation of economic development worldwide. International capitalist forums such as the G20 argue that they contributed to solving the financial crises in 2007/2008 and are invested in "preventing possible new crises, learning from experiences and making national economies more resilient." See for instance: Bundesministerium der Finanzen. 2022. "Gruppe der Zwanzig (G20)." Bundesministerium der Finanzen. 2022. [https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Internationales\\_Finanzmarkt/G7-G20/G20-7292.html](https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Internationales_Finanzmarkt/G7-G20/G20-7292.html) (last accessed 22.12.2022). Meanwhile, financialisation engenders "politics of permanent crisis that opens spaces for the far right" perpetuated "by the financial institutions themselves, with significant implications for (rising) inequality and (falling) investment and GDP growth rates." See: Saad-Filho, Alfredo. 2021. 'Endgame: From Crisis in Neoliberalism to Crises of Neoliberalism'. *Human Geography* 14 (1): 133–37, p. 132, 135. For academic discussions on the authoritarian character of developmentalism, see also: Arsel, Murat, Fikret Adaman, and Alfredo Saad-Filho. 2021. 'Authoritarian Developmentalism: The Latest Stage of Neoliberalism?' *Geoforum* 124: 261–66.

<sup>63</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2006. "Sicherheit Und Stabilität Durch Krisenprävention Gemeinsam Stärken. 1. Bericht Der Bundesregierung Über Die Umsetzung Des Aktionsplanes 'Zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung Und Friedenskonsolidierung.'" Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/217532/544e310f5724dfe364875cf73c0ae6db/aktionsplan-bericht1-de-data.pdf> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

energy, water and health infrastructure, the growth of the private sector, humanitarian services and civil society.<sup>64</sup>

An important aspect for understanding the use of German ODA in Afghanistan is that “aid” from donors whose states were involved in the military deployment has been paramount in all aspects of Afghanistan’s political, financial and economic systems. Post-2001 Afghanistan became a state “reconstructed” through funds from the occupying states (Figure A). For the Afghan government, international aid has been one of the main sources of revenue over the two decades of NATO war, accounting for most of its GDP. The exact amount of aid the Afghan government has received from OECD member states over the years is disputed and depends also on what is defined as “aid” in a war zone: the OECD data suggests that the total ODA (gross) from all donor states amounts to more than USD 82 billion between 2001-2020.

The high level of aid dependency engendered particular relationships in an environment where the Afghan government was largely not in control of its own economy, but had to negotiate for funding and participation in decision-making. The latter is the continuation of previous colonial forms of exploitation in which European colonisers retained control over the economic levers of the colonised. This construction of Afghanistan as a rentier state had an impact at all levels, from the ministries that were more accountable to the donors than to the people they were supposed to serve, to the dual public sector and parallel government structures that were created.

Between 2001 and 2020, the USA reported the highest value of ODA (gross) for Afghanistan. OECD data shows that during the entire Afghanistan war, Germany’s total was about one-sixth of that of the USA, but ranked second, followed by Japan, the UK and Canada (see Figure A). The highest funding volumes also correspond to the position of these countries as originally so-called “lead nations.” At the onset of the military invasion, donor states designated individual “lead nations” to take responsibility for different areas.<sup>65</sup> The USA was assigned responsibility for the military sector, the UK was to focus on counter-narcotics, Germany on the police sector and Japan on demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR). From 2010 onwards, the Bundesregierung deployed in addition the term “partnering” to suggest that “capacity building” of the ANA, encompassing the “planning, preparation, execution and postprocessing” of military operations, was not imposed, but a “joint” process.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> The “concept of ‘lead nations’” emerged during the G8 donor conference on Afghanistan in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2002 and was then replaced by 2008, according to the AA: Die Bundesregierung. 2014. “Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan 2014 einschließlich einer Zwischenbilanz Afghanistan-Engagements verfasst vom Sonderbeauftragten der Bundesregierung für Afghanistan und Pakistan, Dr. Michael Koch, zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags, auch über den Abschluss der Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte am Einsatz der Internationalen Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe in Afghanistan (“ISAF-Abschlussbericht”).” Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/250822/7e778863db3c698185562904e87daea5/141119-fortschrittsbericht-afg-2014-data.pdf>, p. 54-55 (last accessed 21.04.2022).

<sup>66</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2010. “Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan Zur Unterrichtung Des Deutschen Bundestags.” Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/240050/7fac3ec5b0dddaaa12c932d5a0b44efc/fortschrittsbericht-2010-data.pdf>, p. 23-25 (last accessed 21.04.2022).

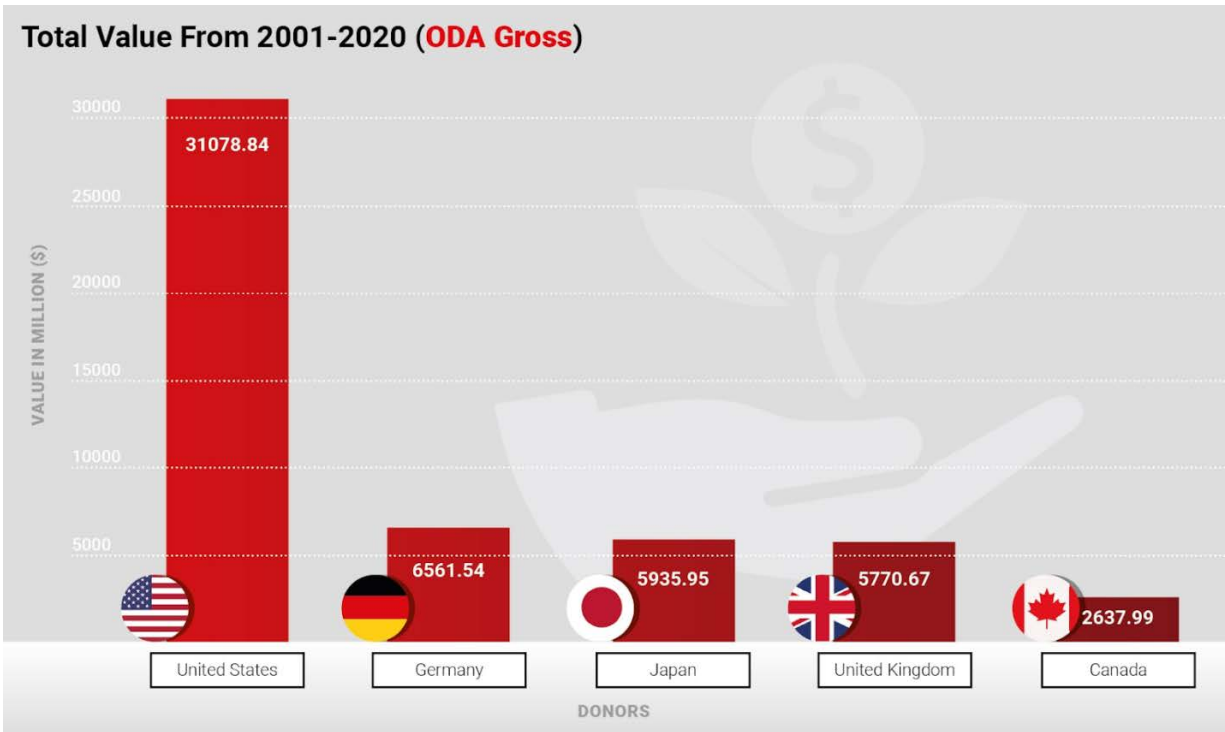


Figure A: Top five donor countries in total ODA (gross) to Afghanistan between 2001-2020, OECD.

Tracking total German ODA transactions (gross) to Afghanistan over the course of the NATO operation from 2001 to 2020 in the OECD data base reveals a sharp increase in transactions in the first decade.<sup>67</sup> While Germany's total ODA transactions (gross) to Afghanistan exceeded USD 100 million for the first time in 2002, the liberalisation of financial capital flows<sup>68</sup> from Germany to Afghanistan led to transactions annually increasing since 2005. While German ODA declined in 2003 and 2004, German ODA flows tripled from 2005 to 2008, and from 2011 to 2014, German ODA transactions to Afghanistan exceeded USD 500 million. The highest ODA transactions coincide with the last years of the ISAF mission. The OECD data also shows that immediately after the end of the ISAF mission, ODA flows decreased to below USD 400 million (Figure B). By 2016 and with the start of the RSM, ODA flows reached USD 500 million again, before gradually declining after 2016 to about USD 373 million in 2020.

<sup>67</sup> The data available from the OECD database on Afghanistan ended in 2020 at the time of data analysis.

<sup>68</sup> For the political and economic ramifications of financialisation on hegemonic notions of development, see: Saad-Filho, Alfredo. 2007. 'Monetary Policy in the Neo-Liberal Transition: A Political Economy Critique of Keynesianism, Monetarism and Inflation Targeting.' In *Political Economy and Global Capitalism: The 21st Century, Present and Future*, edited by Robert Albritton, Robert Jessop, and Richard Westra, 89-119. London; New York: Anthem Press.

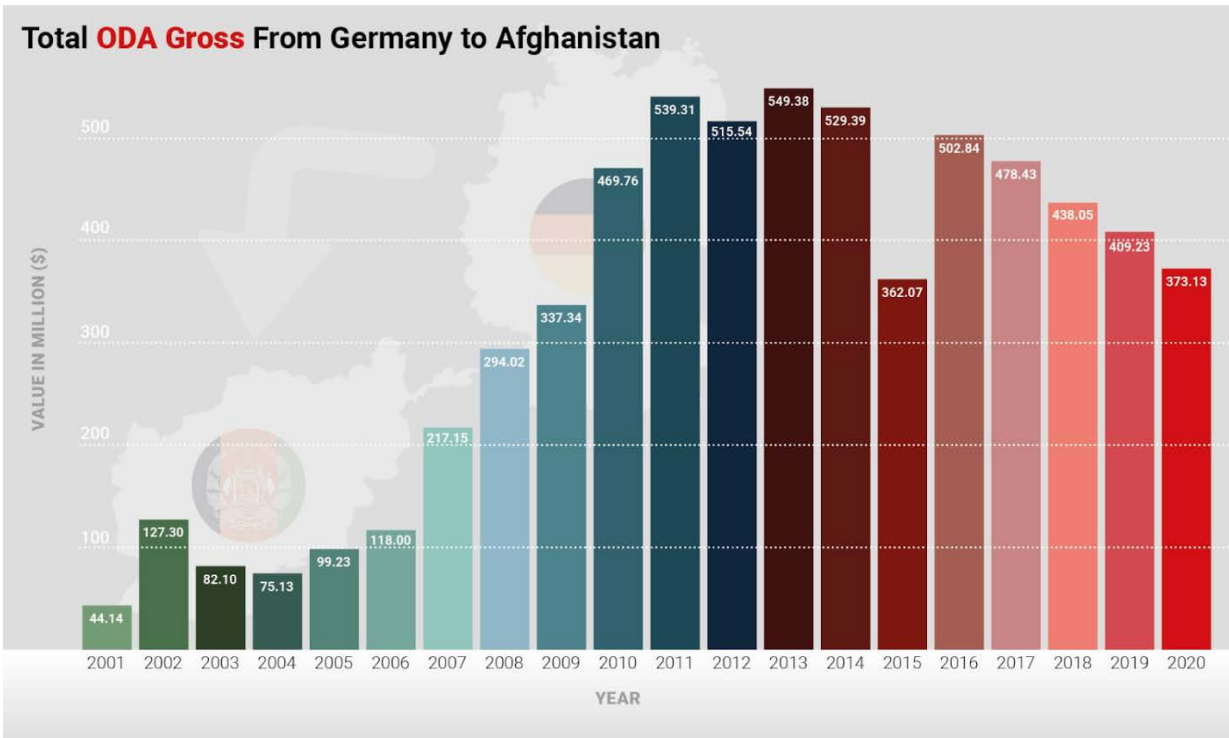


Figure B: Total ODA (gross) from Germany to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2020, OECD.

A crucial point is not only what the OECD data reveals about money flows, but also what it conceals. The OECD data does not disclose a breakdown of the volume of ODA that different institutions and organisations of the German state received. The OECD data does not offer an overview about the interplay between government development agencies, the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) and ministries, such as AA and BMZ. Furthermore, neither the OECD dataset nor a 2014 report by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, DEval)<sup>69</sup> provide a breakdown of how much taxpayer’s money and private sector funding was allocated to specific projects in Afghanistan in a given year. The official progress reports (in German: Fortschrittsberichte) of the German Federal Government to inform the Bundestag do not contain any data on this either. The narrative progress reports provide selective information on intended and actual expenditures and does not offer a breakdown of the funding volumes among different ministries nor the distribution of expenditures among the different sectors. On the one hand, this lack of transparency in the public presentation of German ODA in Afghanistan results from the intertwining of funding flows, such as the mixing of civil and military expenditure. On the other hand, it is due to the constantly shifting configuration of military, security and development policy priorities.

“Military aid” as such is not included in ODA reporting. However, the boundaries between ODA flows to civil and military sectors in regions where NATO member states intervene militarily are strongly blurred in several respects. In principle, this concerns development and humanitarian

<sup>69</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. “Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan.” German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 02.05.2022).

aid in all regions where NATO states are active militarily and through development and humanitarian aid in parallel. More than that, although ODA officially excludes aid to the military in recipient countries, there are circumstances in which support to military institutions is counted as ODA, particularly in the areas of liberal approaches to security reform and “peacebuilding.” Overlaps between civil and military peacebuilding activities are sanctioned provided they involve the “disclosure of military strategy” without benefiting “military staff or ministry of defence officials.”<sup>70</sup> So while “military aid” is not included in ODA reporting, reporting includes “the use of (usually donor) military personnel and equipment to deliver development services and humanitarian aid.”<sup>71</sup>

This ODA approach instrumentalises civilian arenas as places where military knowledge can be exchanged and normalised as civilian knowledge. Despite the exclusion of military means, the opaque wording of the document normalises the mutually constituting spheres of civilian and military work in practice. While any form of direct involvement of the ministry of defence in the recipient country is excluded from ODA flows, “assistance,” either in the form of loans, grants or other flows, “can indirectly be used by civilian organisations/authorities [...] for participation by defence ministry or armed forces staff” in activities.<sup>72</sup> Together, liberal language and law blur not only verbal but also legal and economic boundaries.

Funding towards objectives such as the development of the Afghan police forces, one of the flagships of German ODA funding, illustrates the blending of civilian and military funding. Police projects fall under the supposedly civilian ODA funding, which characterises Germany’s role in security sector reform as primarily a neutral supporter and advisor to the Afghan government in state-building. Examples of this are ODA flows for “financing for routine civil policing functions” and “non-lethal equipment, or training” as well as “training in the governance and management of police equipment.”<sup>73</sup> However, the Afghan police became inseparable from the national security forces as a whole, who also took on the fight against terrorism and functioned similarly to and in coordination with the military.

ODA is not supposed to reflect “military aid and promotion of donors’ security interests.”<sup>74</sup> Yet donor ODA poured into the recipient “country’s security sector,” to projects for peacebuilding and peacekeeping and for “preventing violent extremism.”<sup>75</sup> ODA flows for “security system management and reform” fall under the category of technical cooperation. The OECD data on German grants for technical cooperation in Afghanistan show that ODA flows peaked between

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<sup>70</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). 2018. “DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics. Converged Statistical Reporting Directives for the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the Annual DAC Questionnaire.” OECD/DAC. [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT\(2018\)9/FINAL/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT(2018)9/FINAL/en/pdf), p. 35 (last accessed 20.05.2022).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 31-33.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>74</sup> Development Co-Operation Directorate. 2021. “Official Development Assistance (ODA).” OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/What-is-ODA.pdf> (last accessed 20.05.2022).

<sup>75</sup> This is the vocabulary deployed by the organisations to describe political education and training that aligns with multilateral values, see: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). 2018. “DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics. Converged Statistical Reporting Directives for the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the Annual DAC Questionnaire.” OECD/DAC. [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT\(2018\)9/FINAL/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT(2018)9/FINAL/en/pdf), p. 34-37 (last accessed 20.05.2022).

2010 and 2013. However, it is unclear how much of the technical cooperation grants went to building an Afghan security sector.

## 2. Technical Cooperation Grants

The US government – throughout the Bush and Obama administrations – demonstrated to other NATO member states how to strengthen the military mission through “aid.” The USA did this by building capacity in national institutions, promoting economic development and mobilising “civil society,” including national NGOs “in order to create jobs and weaken popular support for the insurgency.”<sup>76</sup> Capacity building was carried out through German development projects in line with foreign policy and funded by ODA in the form of technical cooperation grants. During the two decades, the volume that NATO member states pledged for technical cooperation grants fluctuated also depending on national priorities.

German technical cooperation projects are implemented by the German government-owned GIZ, until 2011 the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ), on behalf of the BMZ and in cooperation with other federal ministries and in consultation with governments and supranational organisations.<sup>77</sup> GIZ works on the basis of bilateral agreements with the respective governments, but also coordinates with supranational financial institutions and works, for example, for and with the WB, the IMF partner countries of the OECD, UN organisations and in cooperation with the German KfW Development Bank. GIZ's project surpluses flow back into German economic development projects. This “systemic approach,” which has been practised in German development policy since the 1990s, instrumentalises ODA – in addition to foreign investments – for “donor harmonisation through knowledge management.”<sup>78</sup> It also aims to build the necessary administrative, political and financial infrastructure for good financial management through “technical assistance.”<sup>79</sup>

Afghanistan is one of numerous global sites where development aid and technical assistance are tools of neoliberal development policy. On the African continent the GIZ, in close cooperation with the IMF and the WBG, implements projects to allegedly improve “debt management in African low-income countries”<sup>80</sup> through technical assistance. The drafters of the Good Financial Governance Doctrine, which include the GIZ and the EU, adopted an action plan for the entire African continent in 2007 in complete disregard of anti-imperialist popular movements against the UN, financial institutions, and G8 member states (Russia was a member of the G8 until 2014). The doctrine describes bilateral and multilateral channels as key to improving governance capacities in “African states remaining in fragile situations.”<sup>81</sup> Although

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<sup>76</sup> Committee on Foreign Relations. 2011. “Evaluating US Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan. A Majority Staff Report Prepared for the Use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate.” United States Senate. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-112SPRT66591/pdf/CPRT-112SPRT66591.pdf> (last accessed 16.08.2022).

<sup>77</sup> In 2011, several development services such as the German Development Service (DED), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)) and Inwent (Capacity Building International Germany) merged to form the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ). GIZ is a federally owned enterprise.

<sup>78</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 2015. “Good Financial Governance in Africa. Developments 2007-2014.” GIZ. <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2015-en-good-financial-governance-report2007-2014-africa.pdf>, p.1 (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 2.



GIZ noted in 2007 that ODA data showed no improvement, the authors nevertheless claimed that “substantial progress has been made”<sup>82</sup> and pointed to the African Regional Technical Assistance Centres (AFRITACs), which emerged from the IMF’s Africa Capacity Building Initiative.

Technical cooperation grants in Afghanistan are an approach to train and utilise technical elites - in line with other aligned states in Africa, Asia and Latin America - in universalised neoliberal institution-building plans. The formal rationale of technical cooperation is to “transfer knowledge and skills” through “capacity building.” The neoliberal regulation of states of the Global South through institution-building enables the opening of new markets for interest-bearing capital: technical cooperation grants include methods such as “appraisal, technical planning, control and supervision of projects,” as well as the “recruitment, selection, briefing, and assignment of expert personnel.”<sup>83</sup> The deployment of technocrats as “experts” in state-building processes is intended to ensure that – for the case of Germany – German development and foreign policy is met. It circumvents addressing more difficult questions, such as how “underdevelopment” arose in the first place.

Among the donors with the highest value of technical cooperation grants in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2020, Germany is followed closely by the USA (Figure C). The provision of grants for technical cooperation by the USA increased from 2001 to 2005, skyrocketed in 2005, and then declined drastically — from over USD 800 million to about USD 200 million in 2008. After 2010, the grants provided by the USA for technical cooperation were less than USD 100 million. From 2010, when Germany began leading the police mission in Afghanistan, until 2013, Germany provided more than USD 300 million annually in grants for technical cooperation in Afghanistan. In 2015, the year after the end of the ISAF mission and the start of the RSM, German grants drastically dropped to less than USD 200 million. While 2016 saw an increase again to more than USD 200 million, Germany’s grants for technical cooperation in Afghanistan remained below USD 200 million from 2017 to 2020.

Technical cooperation grants were used in all areas of state-building. For example, in the area of public health, pooled EU funds were channelled into the Technical Cooperation to the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (TCPH) and implemented by GIZ in cooperation with the German consulting firm m4health Ltd and the Afghan NGO Silk Route Training and Research Organization (SRTRO).<sup>84</sup> While the USA pumped more than USD 1 billion into technical cooperation in the first years after the invasion, it drastically decreased its spending on technical cooperation subsequently (Figure C). Germany continued to use technical cooperation as a financial instrument for targeted non-military interventions, albeit in a reduced form with the beginning of the RSM.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> The World Bank Group. 2001. “Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation).” What Is Urban Upgrading? Reference for Administrators, Policy-Makers, and Decision-Makers. 2001. <https://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/upgrading/resources/organizations/gtz.html> (last accessed 15.04.2022).

<sup>84</sup> European Union (EU). 2018. “Terms of Reference: Technical Cooperation to the Ministry of Public Health.” Canadian Association of Midwives. [https://canadianmidwives.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NKE-NM1\\_NKE-NM2\\_MoPH\\_NursingMidwiferyUnit\\_Afghanistan\\_20180808.pdf](https://canadianmidwives.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NKE-NM1_NKE-NM2_MoPH_NursingMidwiferyUnit_Afghanistan_20180808.pdf) (last accessed 15.04.2022).

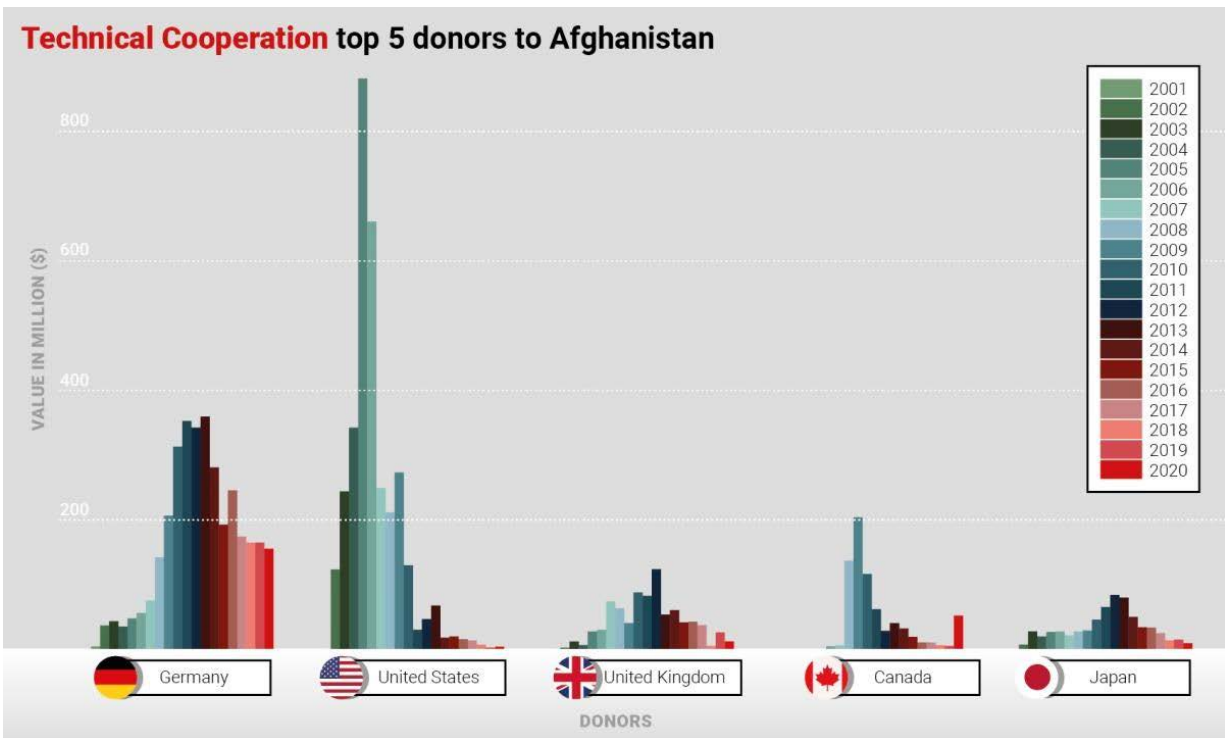


Figure C: Top five donor countries' Technical Cooperation between 2001 and 2020, OECD.

Technical cooperation funds were deployed in a state under liberal construction with nominal sovereignty. The void between foreign and national institutions and organisations and Afghanistan's population was capitalised on by donors, who had, in contrast to the Afghan government and citizens of Afghanistan, the liberty to fund areas that were relevant from their vantage point. As such, donor states' deployment of technical cooperation aimed at strengthening the Afghan state to own the implementation of neoliberal policies and manage Afghan labour. The political underpinnings of economic development and reconstruction objectives for Afghanistan were reiterated annually by G7 member states in the two decades since the Bonn Agreement and pinpointed in meetings and working sessions before and after these events. In Afghanistan, decisions were coordinated between embassy staff, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and in EU coordination rounds between EU Heads of Mission and Cooperation Councils.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, once in the country, donors communicated directly with each other through various forums, such as the 5+3+3 Group, the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), and the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), although – as a joint report by Oxfam and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan stated in 2018 – “alignment occurs on paper only.”<sup>86</sup>

Donors regularly referred to general national development plans such as the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), developed in consultation with the Afghan government, to argue that their funding would be used for the agreed objectives. At the same time, however, they specifically asked the Afghan government to fund certain areas in line with their own national interests. For example, a former German employee of a GIZ subsidiary involved

<sup>85</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 19/8031. 25.02.2019.

<sup>86</sup> ART Consulting. 2018. “Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan. Report for Oxfam and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan.” [https://sak.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/aid\\_effectiveness\\_in\\_afghanistan\\_march\\_2018.pdf](https://sak.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/aid_effectiveness_in_afghanistan_march_2018.pdf), p.19 (last accessed 15.06.2022).

in capacity building in the Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke about hiring practices at the ministry where they worked, describing how political donor preferences led to direct imbalances within ministerial structures through the funding of department heads who were seen as particularly important to German interests:

*"[The department head in my office] was not connected to Germany, but there was a political will to keep people happy and win them over for your side. She received money from CIM, from USAID and from European funding. Everyone knew about it. Everyone was enraged, why a head of department [Referatsleitung] would be funded from three sides. If you want to strengthen a ministry, then every department is important. Why would you support one, that is politically important, by three donors, while all other heads of department sit there dumbfounded, don't get anything, but still need to work as well as the other one."*<sup>87</sup>

Direct financial flows to individual ministries and ministerial posts were examples of blatant political interference in the Afghan government. Afghan government officials felt unable to speak out. A former ministry official who also worked closely with German ODA-funded projects described how attempts by Afghans to correct poorly designed development plans were entirely ignored by donors:

*"We had a lot of comments. Initially we developed our own plan, [and] submitted it to them. But when it was approved and signed and sent to us, we saw that nothing from us was integrated into the plan."*<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Interview No. 16.

<sup>88</sup> Interview No. 10.

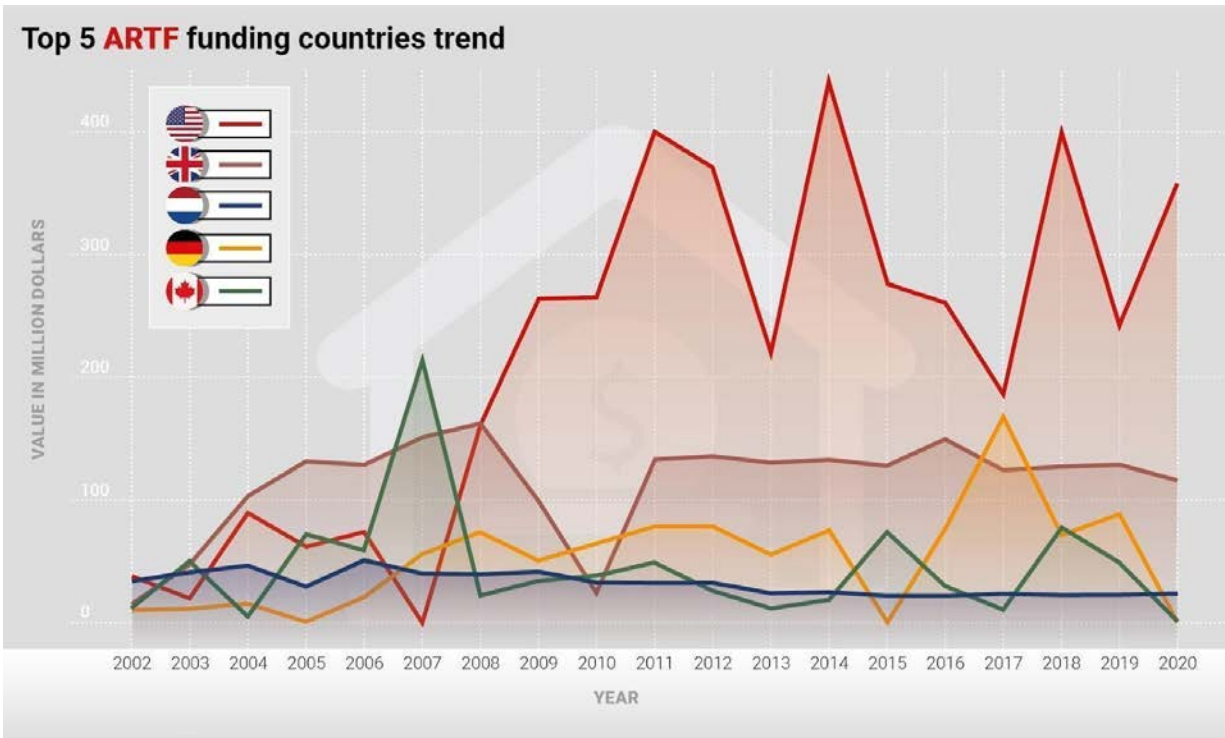


Figure D: Top five countries' ARTF funding trends between 2002 and 2020.

Apart from bilateral relations, Germany was also involved through multilateral spending tools, which funded the Afghan government, such as the LOTFA<sup>89</sup> and the ARTF.<sup>90</sup> LOTFA was focused on rule of law, national security and the police sector, while the ARTF funded development projects as well as non-security related Afghan government expenses for government employees, teacher salaries and government operations and maintenance costs. The ARTF fund was the largest contributor to the budget of Afghanistan's government with the US as a leading donor to the fund (Figure D). The German Federal Government contributed USD 5,424,715 to LOTFA and USD 1,110.69 million to the ARTF fund (Figure E).<sup>91</sup>

A 2018 Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) audit report criticised the trust fund. The report contended that a severe lack of transparency in monitoring and

<sup>89</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2022. "Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan. Strengthening Rule of Law, National Security, and Sustainable Development in Afghanistan." United Nations MPTF Office Partners Gateway. [https://mptf.undp.org/fund/ltf00?utm\\_source=EN&utm\\_medium=GSR&utm\\_content=US\\_UNDP\\_PaidSearch\\_Brand\\_English&utm\\_campaign=CENTRAL&c\\_src=CENTRAL&c\\_src2=GSR&gclid=CjwKCAjw6raYBhB7EiwABge5KuWoEhYcB0m1OJZcjRODj1eYpRwPrXezL4x3jgTDzqlCo\\_eVK\\_Y-jhoCkyUQAvD\\_BwE](https://mptf.undp.org/fund/ltf00?utm_source=EN&utm_medium=GSR&utm_content=US_UNDP_PaidSearch_Brand_English&utm_campaign=CENTRAL&c_src=CENTRAL&c_src2=GSR&gclid=CjwKCAjw6raYBhB7EiwABge5KuWoEhYcB0m1OJZcjRODj1eYpRwPrXezL4x3jgTDzqlCo_eVK_Y-jhoCkyUQAvD_BwE) (last accessed 02.06.2022).

<sup>90</sup> The World Bank Group. 2022. "Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF)." Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). <https://www.wb-artf.org> (last accessed 02.06.2022).

<sup>91</sup> Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). 2021. "Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). Administrator's Report on Financial Status." ARTF. [https://www.wb-artf.org/sites/default/files/ARTF2021/ARTF%20Financial%20Status%20Memo%20January%202019-2021\\_1.pdf](https://www.wb-artf.org/sites/default/files/ARTF2021/ARTF%20Financial%20Status%20Memo%20January%202019-2021_1.pdf) (last accessed 02.06.2022); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2021. "Consolidated Annual Financial Report. Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan for the period 1 January to 31 December 2021." United Nations MPTF Office Partners Gateway. [https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/Consolidated%20Financial%20Report%20LOTFA\\_2021.pdf](https://mptf.undp.org/sites/default/files/documents/Consolidated%20Financial%20Report%20LOTFA_2021.pdf) (last accessed 24.10.2022).

accounting of the ARTF funding put “billions of dollars at risk,” because “the World Bank limits donors’ access to information on how it monitors and accounts for ARTF funding, and does not follow its own policy to provide donors and the public with access to certain ARTF records.”<sup>92</sup>

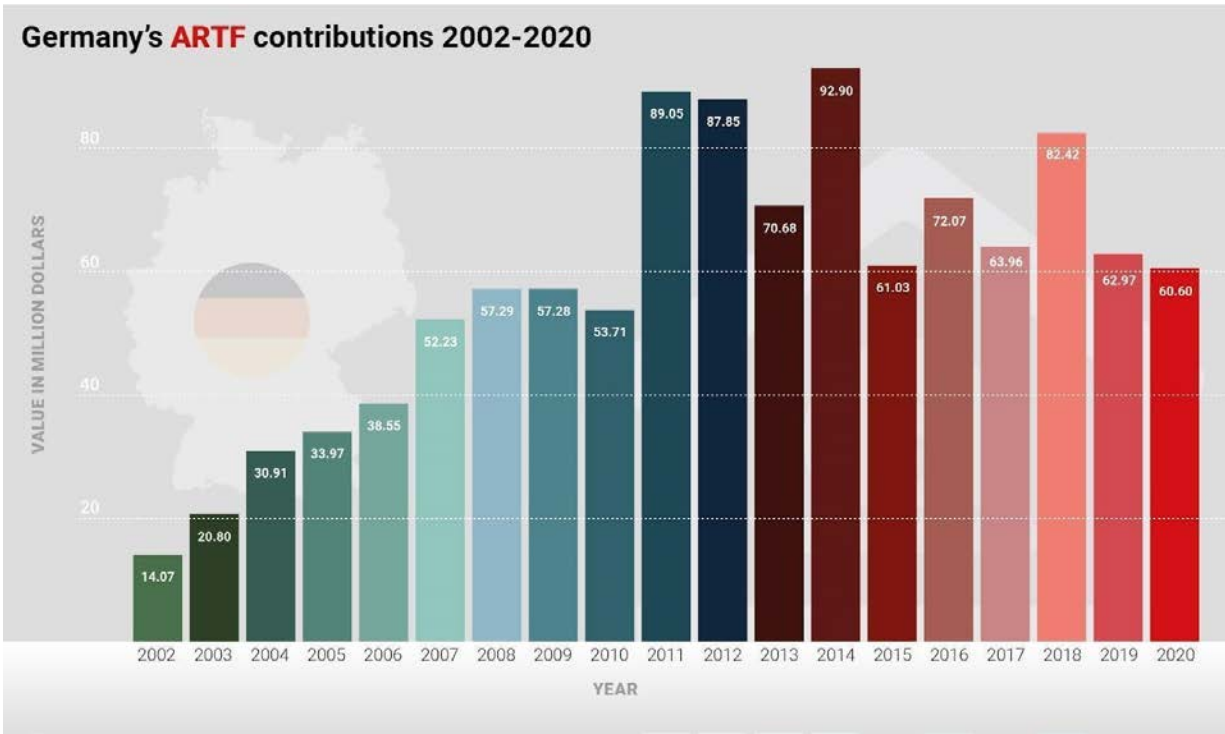


Figure E: Germany’s ARTF contributions between 2002 and 2020.

The Trust Fund was managed by a donor steering committee and was an “on-budget” programme. Thus, it was technically under the purview of the Afghan government, but the WBG made all programmatic decisions. Such a dynamic exacerbated unequal power relations between supposedly equally sovereign states. This political and economic unevenness also became visible in the conditionalisation of funding. In its 2014 progress report justifying Germany’s policies and methods, the Bundesregierung states that “(i)n response to the Afghan government’s unsatisfactory implementation of the objectives agreed as part of the Tokyo process, the German Bundesregierung halved its ARTF contribution in 2013 and only paid out 20 million euros.”<sup>93</sup> This was a deliberately formulated strategy that was also communicated to the

<sup>92</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2018. “Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund: The World Bank Needs to Improve How It Monitors Implementation, Shares Information, and Determines the Impact of Donor Contributions (SIGAR 18-42 Audit Report).” SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/sigar-18-42-ar.pdf> (last accessed 10.06.2022). A follow-up report after the Taliban take-over states that there have been improvements in some – but not all – areas of monitoring, transparency and access. See: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. “Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund: The World Bank Improved Its Monitoring, Performance Measurement, and Oversight, But Other Management Issues Persist (SIGAR 22-15 Evaluation Report).” SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/evaluations/SIGAR-22-15-IP.pdf> (last accessed 10.06.2022).

<sup>93</sup> In the German original: “Als Reaktion auf die unbefriedigende Umsetzung der im Rahmen des Tokio-Prozesses vereinbarten Ziele seitens der afghanischen Regierung hatte die Bundesregierung ihren ARTF-Beitrag in 2013 halbiert und lediglich 20 Mio. Euro ausgezahlt.” See: Die Bundesregierung. 2014. “Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan 2014 einschließlich einer Zwischenbilanz Afghanistan-Engagements verfasst vom Sonderbeauftragten der Bundesregierung für Afghanistan und Pakistan, Dr. Michael Koch, zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags, auch über den Abschluss der Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte am Einsatz der Internationalen Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe in Afghanistan

Afghan government. The progress report goes on to say: "The German government remains convinced that moderate conditionalisation of the funds pledged in Tokyo is the right way to maintain the necessary pressure on the Afghan government to reform."<sup>94</sup> This statement clearly shows how narrative and monetary control not only remained firmly in German (European) hands, but also how the rules for both had been designed by European powers.

In the coalition agreement of 2021, the current German Federal Government has stipulated, amongst other things, that it will align its actions with the 2030 SDG agenda<sup>95</sup> and a "value-based" (in German: wertorientiert) development policy.<sup>96</sup> Over the last two decades, these "values" have become an integral part of Germany's increasingly merging foreign, defence and development policies, which are oriented towards supranational organisations. A consultant who worked on the development of an SDG strategy for Afghanistan's Ministry of Economy under Ashraf Ghani described the merging of these fields:

*"The Ministry of Economy was supposed to be the lead ministry to not only provide the guidelines, indicators, the benchmarks to each and every ministry in the Afghan government, but it was also supposed to monitor the progress towards achieving those goals. This was supposed to be negotiated with each and every ministry within the Afghan government, within a vision that was inspired by system thinking. That was the catchphrase. To get rid of this way of thinking within a bureaucracy that each and every unit is independent of the other. They work to instil this way of thinking that all these units are connected to each other. Fighting narcotics is closely linked to taking care of the irrigation systems and it's closely connected to having a proper university education system. Building this way of thinking from top down among all the state functionaries that if you're doing something it is not independent of what the adjacent ministry or public agency is doing. Everything should be moving at the same time, obviously prioritising certain sectors of certain targets and indicators, but moving ahead comprehensively rather than in a siloed way and competing with each other for resources. There should*

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("ISAF-Abschlussbericht")." Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/250822/7e778863db3c698185562904e87daea5/141119-fortschrittsbericht-afg-2014-data.pdf>, p. 13 (last accessed 21.04.2022).

<sup>94</sup> In the German original: "Die Bundesregierung hält an der Überzeugung fest, dass eine maßvolle Konditionalisierung der in Tokio zugesagten Mittel der richtige Weg ist, um den notwendigen Reformdruck auf die afghanische Regierung aufrechtzuerhalten." See: Die Bundesregierung. 2014. "Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan 2014 einschließlich einer Zwischenbilanz Afghanistan-Engagements verfasst vom Sonderbeauftragten der Bundesregierung für Afghanistan und Pakistan, Dr. Michael Koch, zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags, auch über den Abschluss der Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte am Einsatz der Internationalen Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe in Afghanistan ("ISAF-Abschlussbericht")." Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/250822/7e778863db3c698185562904e87daea5/141119-fortschrittsbericht-afg-2014-data.pdf>, p. 27 (last accessed 21.04.2022).

<sup>95</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2022. "The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022." United Nations. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf> (last accessed 22.12.2022). For the German report on the SDG agenda in 2021, see: Die Bundesregierung. 2021. "Bericht über die Umsetzung der Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung. Freiwilliger Staatenbericht Deutschlands zu HLPF 2021." Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/86824/6631843da2eb297d849b03d883140fb7/staatenbericht-deutschlands-zum-hlpf-2021-data.pdf> (last accessed 22.12.2022).

<sup>96</sup> SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen und FDP. 2021. "Mehr Fortschritt Wagen. Bündnis Für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit Und Nachhaltigkeit. Koalitionsvertrag Zwischen SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Und FDP." Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. <https://cms.gruene.de/uploads/documents/Koalitionsvertrag-SPD-GRUENE-FDP-2021-2025.pdf>, p. 150 (last accessed 07.12.2022).

*be a culture of system thinking encouraged among all the Afghan government entities that was supposed to be the case and led by the Ministry of the Economy. Unfortunately, it didn't happen.”<sup>97</sup>*

When asked about the applicability of the SDGs for Afghanistan, the consultant said that the SDGs were only focused on if they were already in line with existing priorities:

*“Those were the priorities imposed on Afghanistan, like for instance, taking care of poverty, taking care of drought, taking care of insecurity, these kinds of things. You did not have the option of choosing which area you want to handle first. They were the ones that already were there. They were overwhelming and you had to do something about them. If they match that they were according to SDGs, then perfect. You would say at the end of the day that we are doing something that is according to the SDG, but at the same time you would not go out of your way. You didn't have the resources in a country like Afghanistan to really prime in your mentality to apply all the benchmarks of SDGs. I think that's the case in most poor countries.”<sup>98</sup>*

This stance was mirrored in interviews with other implementers of German ODA, who either did not focus on SDGs or only acknowledged them when they already matched prevalent foci. As SDGs addressed issues of poverty, climate change, epidemics and conflict, the blueprint fed into the construction of a Potemkin village of “sustainable development” that actors paid lip service to in proposals and reports.

### **3. Intra-German governmental and ministerial dynamics in the allocation and management of ODA**

The following section challenges the German Federal Government’s portrayal of harmonious interlocking relationships between actors in economic development and reconstruction by providing an overview of the different levels of interactions and the relationships and frictions that arose in the process of allocating and managing German ODA. For a comprehensive understanding of German ODA to Afghanistan and its logic, the interplay among donor states’ institutions and social dynamics within these in relation to ODA is crucial. Such an overview shows the tensions in-between involved German ministries and their implementing agencies.

For the analysis of German ODA, this means that different actors and their individual, partly overlapping, funding logics have to be analysed. Funding for reconstruction and economic development projects in Afghanistan was mainly provided by the BMZ<sup>99</sup> and the AA.<sup>100</sup> In addition, several other German ministries provided funding, including the Federal Ministry of Interior (Bundesministerium für Inneres, BMI, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture

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<sup>97</sup> Interview No. 9.

<sup>98</sup> Interview No. 9.

<sup>99</sup> Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). “Afghanistan.” BMZ. <https://www.bmz.de/en/countries/afghanistan> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>100</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA). “Afghanistan.” AA. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/afghanistan-node> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

(Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft, BMEL)<sup>101</sup> and the Federal Ministry of Defence (Bundesministerium für Verteidigung, BMVg).<sup>102</sup> Depending on the area of expertise, ministries were involved to varying degrees. BMVg and BMI focused mainly on security and good governance issues, including police projects. BMZ and AA focused on reconstruction, development and humanitarian aid, with priorities sometimes overlapping and shifting over time. Each ministry was responsible for its own ODA budget, policy and implementation, creating its own relationships and negotiations with partner countries outside the general intergovernmental negotiations on development.<sup>103</sup>

To date, Germany is the only national DAC member with its own Ministry for Development Cooperation.<sup>104</sup> Other than Germany, many countries have rethought the relationship between development and foreign policy, and government structures have changed accordingly over the past two decades. Areas that were once considered strictly separate – poverty reduction versus economic interests, military and diplomatic issues, for instance – have been merged into a single agency. The trend towards structural integration of humanitarian assistance into foreign policy began in Norway (2004) and also took root in Australia (2013) and Iceland (2016).<sup>105</sup> The merging of humanitarian assistance with foreign policy at an institutionalised political level occurred in Canada in 2013, when the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) have been merged under the new Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), later renamed Global Affairs Canada (GAC).<sup>106</sup> Similarly, in 2020 the UK merged its Department of International Development (DFID) with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).<sup>107</sup> In comparison, Germany's institutions have remained officially separate.

The BMZ defined five priority sectors for its funding in Afghanistan: energy, sustainable economic development, and water and sanitation from 2002, education from 2005 and good governance from 2012. The priorities have shifted over time: DEval reports that the focus of the BMZ portfolio in the first years of the involvement was on “emergency aid,” with a quarter of the budget allocated to humanitarian and emergency aid for urgent needs (refugee relief, winter survival,

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<sup>101</sup> The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture collaborated with FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to create the Bilateral Trust Fund, which has since expanded worldwide. See: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2017. “Germany and FAO Honor 15 Years of Strategic Partnership.” FAO. <https://www.fao.org/news/story/it/item/902569/icode/> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>102</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. “Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan.” German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan>, p. 2 (last accessed 02.05.2022).

<sup>103</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2021. “OECD Development Co-Operation Peer Reviews: Germany 2021.” OECD. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-germany-2021\\_bb32a97d-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-germany-2021_bb32a97d-en) (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

<sup>105</sup> George, Rachel. 2021. “Merging Aid and Diplomacy Is Trending – Will the US Follow?” *New Global Perspectives*. <https://newglobalperspectives.org/merging-aid-and-diplomacy-is-trending-will-the-us-follow/> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>106</sup> Brown, Stephen. 2016. ‘The Instrumentalization of Foreign Aid under the Harper Government’. *Studies in Political Economy* 97 (1): 18–36.

<sup>107</sup> Gulrajani, Nilima. 2018. “Merging Development Agencies: Making the Right Choice.” Policy File. Overseas Development Institute. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/11983.pdf>, p.4 (last accessed 15.09.2022).



basic social needs).<sup>108</sup> After 2010, the share of the humanitarian and emergency aid dropped to only 3.6% of the BMZ portfolio.<sup>109</sup> As rapid response to natural disasters, crises and conflicts was already a priority for the AA, humanitarian and emergency aid was added to the AA portfolio.<sup>110</sup> This shift signalled a stronger BMZ focus on medium- to longer-term projects. However, the ministry retained “structural transition aid” (in German: strukturbildende Übergangshilfe) as a bridge between humanitarian aid and development work with a focus on food security and social infrastructure.<sup>111</sup> Compared to those funded by the BMZ, the development projects financed by the AA were more short-term in nature and focused on foreign and security policy measures. Priorities included security sector reform, stabilisation projects, administrative and judicial capacity building, but also areas such as health, air transport, governance, higher education and preservation of cultural heritage.<sup>112</sup>

A 2017/2018 review by the Federal Ministry of Finance (Bundesministerium für Finanzen, BMF), which examined the use of funds, argued that the remits of the AA and BMZ clearly overlapped, but that the dual focus would be justified due to the different objectives in each case.<sup>113</sup> The overlap of responsibilities in one funding area nevertheless led to a grey area in which both ministries operated and tried to exert influence, justified by their different political rationales for pursuing the project. Both the AA and the BMZ could fund school buildings or sanitary infrastructure in a refugee camp and justify this as either humanitarian aid or stabilisation, depending on how the ministries characterise the objective of the proposed measure.

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<sup>108</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. “Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan.” German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan>, p. 5-9 (last accessed 02.05.2022).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 6 (last accessed 02.05.2022).

<sup>110</sup> This was anchored within the structures of AA as Humanitäre Hilfe (HuHi). See: Bundesministerium der Finanzen (BMF). 2018. “Abschlussbericht-Spending Review (Zyklus 2017/2018) zum Politikbereich ‘Humanitäre Hilfe und Übergangshilfe einschließlich der Schnittstellen Krisenprävention, Krisenreaktion, Stabilisierung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.’” BMF. [https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Oeffentliche\\_Finanzen/Spending\\_Review/Abschlussbericht-der-AG-zum-Politikbereich-Humanitaere-Hilfe.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=3](https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Oeffentliche_Finanzen/Spending_Review/Abschlussbericht-der-AG-zum-Politikbereich-Humanitaere-Hilfe.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3) (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>111</sup> Differentiated from AA’s Humanitarian Aid (Humanitären Hilfe (HuHi)) is “transitional assistance for the promotion of development and building of structure” (Entwicklungsfördernde und strukturbildenden Übergangshilfe (ESUH)) within the BMZ. A 2012 guideline differentiates both approaches, see: Auswärtiges Amt und Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ). 2012. “Leitfaden Zur Erläuterung Der Aufgaben Des Auswärtigen Amtes (AA) Und Des Bundesministeriums Für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit Und Entwicklung (BMZ) In Den Bereichen Der Humanitären Hilfe Und Der Entwicklungsfördernden Und Strukturbildenden Übergangshilfe.” AA and BMZ. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/205126/c49a80349fffb45b5e5ec5cf9dd80a03/130110-leitfaden-aa-bmz-data.pdf> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>112</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. “Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan.” German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan>, p. 9 (last accessed 02.05.2022).

<sup>113</sup> Bundesministerium der Finanzen (BMF). 2018. “Abschlussbericht-Spending Review (Zyklus 2017/2018) zum Politikbereich ‘Humanitäre Hilfe und Übergangshilfe einschließlich der Schnittstellen Krisenprävention, Krisenreaktion, Stabilisierung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.’” BMF. [https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Oeffentliche\\_Finanzen/Spending\\_Review/Abschlussbericht-der-AG-zum-Politikbereich-Humanitaere-Hilfe.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=3](https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Oeffentliche_Finanzen/Spending_Review/Abschlussbericht-der-AG-zum-Politikbereich-Humanitaere-Hilfe.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3), p. 6 (last accessed 15.09.2022).

In Germany, the BMZ and the AA are currently still two separate entities, although BMZ staff repeatedly spoke of fears that the two entities would be merged.<sup>114</sup> Both BMZ staff and non-German development practitioners evaluated the separate entities as a strength of the German approach that gave the development sector more independence. It also created at least the image of a “disinterested,” altruistic approach to development that stood out from that of other countries where foreign interests and development spending were more visibly aligned. While the two ministries remained institutionally separate, Germany’s “networked approach” is an integration of these different sectors with each other without looking like full institutional integration. Yet it blurs the lines between direct political self-interest and development, between foreign policy and foreign aid. The intention to integrate development and security more firmly therefore challenges the independence of the two ministries and the separation between foreign policy and foreign aid. Some areas of overlap on topics such as humanitarian aid or projects in the sectors of peace or economic development formed grey areas on which both institutions staked out their respective areas of influence: The relationship between the AA and the BMZ as donors in Afghanistan was described as amicable but also characterised by competition.<sup>115</sup> According to a former BMZ employee, there was a lack of clarity in the overlapping areas as to who exactly was in charge:

*“The political foundations are mainly funded with BMZ money but quite often if you look into the project, looking into political democratic consolidation or other aspects, electoral, this is very much also led by foreign affairs. So there is not a clear cut where you can say ‘one does this, one does that’. With development and humanitarian [aid] you could say there is a clear cut, but then there is ‘transitional aid’, which is in between the two, [and] which is with BMZ. It is not so fixed in some areas, who is responsible because there are GIZ programmes on peace, but there are also AA funded ones. There are grey zones.”<sup>116</sup>*

These ambiguities in responsibility are public knowledge and were also the subject of an inquiry by the German Ministry of Finance (see above).<sup>117</sup> However, this investigation was limited to financial overlaps and waste of tax funds. Whereas the BMZ employee pointed out that these grey areas could also lead to internal competition between the two organisations:

*“There is a question of competition and maybe also a little bit a question of relevance because foreign affairs is, of course, the leading entity for any German international action. But then, of course, there are certain development related areas where BMZ has the funding, competency and lead. There is also competition and for quite a long time also not only Afghanistan related, [...] foreign affairs was [...] maybe even a bit jealous of the amount of funding the BMZ had available in terms of who is the player with the*

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<sup>114</sup> Interviews No. 17 and 18.

<sup>115</sup> Interviews No. 18 and 20.

<sup>116</sup> Interview No. 20.

<sup>117</sup> Bundesministerium der Finanzen (BMF). 2018. “Abschlussbericht-Spending Review (Zyklus 2017/2018) zum Politikbereich ‘Humanitäre Hilfe und Übergangshilfe einschließlich der Schnittstellen Krisenprävention, Krisenreaktion, Stabilisierung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.’” BMF. [https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Oeffentliche\\_Finzen/Spending\\_Review/Abschlussbericht-der-AG-zum-Politikbereich-Humanitaere-Hilfe.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=3](https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Standardartikel/Themen/Oeffentliche_Finzen/Spending_Review/Abschlussbericht-der-AG-zum-Politikbereich-Humanitaere-Hilfe.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3), p. 6 (last accessed 15.09.2022)..

money [...] I would say this has evened out because humanitarian funds have increased so much.”<sup>118</sup>

Relations between the two ministries changed not only with the personnel but also with the overall situation that the two ministries faced. After the 2017 attack near Zambaq Square, in which parts of the German Embassy were destroyed and led to the withdrawal of staff, and with the subsequent return to Afghanistan of AA and BMZ staff, who were initially housed in the US embassy compound, a rotation system took hold with a smaller group of staff on the ground in Afghanistan. This also meant that AA and BMZ staff took over each other’s meetings when the responsible official from the other ministry was not in the country.

#### 4. Ministries and implementing partners in Afghanistan

The AA and BMZ retained overall responsibility for policy, while the GIZ, the KfW Development Bank, and NGOs were responsible for the implementation of projects in Afghanistan. German political foundations active in Afghanistan, such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, also received funding.<sup>119</sup>

The GIZ and KfW Development Bank are both state-owned entities: GIZ is a corporation in the legal form of a limited liability company (in German: GmbH), which is recognised as a non-profit organisation due to its corporate/statutory purpose.<sup>120</sup> KfW is a public law institution, 80 per cent of which is owned by the German Bundesregierung and 20 per cent by the federal states (in German: Länder) committed to the tasks laid down in the Law on the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW Law), which was enacted in 1948. It finances projects in so-called developing and emerging countries through KfW Development Bank and the German Investment Corporation (Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft, DEG).<sup>121</sup> While receiving the majority of their funding from the same ministries, both entities have different functions: the KfW Development Bank provides financial cooperation and mainly subcontracts work to organisations that implement the work on the ground. In Afghanistan, KfW Development Bank’s focus was in construction and infrastructure-building projects. The GIZ, meanwhile, offered direct technical cooperation and was particularly active in sectors such as education, economic development, vocational training, energy supply, and good governance.

In theory, the two organisations should complement each other in the areas in which they were both active. From the OECD’s internal perspective, the cooperation between the GIZ and KfW Development Bank could be “potentially leading to better decisions and better results,” because they were a “team effort.” Conversely, the same OECD peer review remarked that “having three German institutions at the table adds to the complexity of Germany’s system and

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<sup>118</sup> Interview No. 20.

<sup>119</sup> Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). “FES Afghanistan: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Afghanistan Office.” FES. <https://afghanistan.fes.de/about-us/fes-in-kenya> (last accessed 15.09.2022); Sabitzer, Barbara. 2019. “The Afghan Peace Process.” Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. <https://www.kas.de/en/web/newyork/veranstaltungsberichte/detail/-/content/the-afghan-peace-process> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>120</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. “Fragen und Antworten zur GIZ.” GIZ. <https://www.giz.de/de/presse/9785.html> (last accessed 22.01.2023).

<sup>121</sup> Entwicklungsbank (KfW). “Förderauftrag und Geschichte.” KfW. <https://www.kfw.de/%C3%9Cber-die-KfW/F%C3%B6rderauftrag-und-Geschichte/> (last accessed 22.01.2023).

coordination efforts.”<sup>122</sup> These coordination efforts could become critical if diametrically opposed approaches and organisational cultures came to the fore. Critics complained that the different approaches sometimes made it difficult to harmonise work. A former BMZ employee said that the difficulties were systemic:

*“GIZ and KfW, the entire German development cooperation and the BMZ, the three companies, are based on incentive systems that are not geared towards each other, so that you cannot cooperate well. Zero. It starts with what my colleagues get bonuses for, or promotions and good points for. That's zero attuned to the fact that three organisations [should be] thinking in the same direction and that's the problem.”*<sup>123</sup>

A closer look at one area in which both GIZ and KfW Development Bank have been active over the second decade of the war is instructive in assessing how these actors understood their different roles and how they interacted when tasked with working in the same sector. While KfW Development Bank and GIZ seem to have worked together amicably, or at least without interference in many sectors in Afghanistan a look at the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector is instructive on multiple levels. It highlights two different approaches to economic development and reconstruction within German neoliberal development policy. One was based on large-scale infrastructure interventions and pre-planned projects supported by rapid needs assessments designed centrally in Germany. The other was a rarer but more impactful approach based on local, grassroots structures. It was therefore able to flexibly adapt to a changing environment and lessons learned. And more importantly, it demonstrated how fraught the entire development sector is when it operates from the top down. The initial mistake in this case was to develop a blueprint for the TVET sector in Germany based on German parameters, with the aim of simply applying this blueprint in Afghanistan. Disagreement between the two organisations arose when they realised the obvious: in designing their projects, they had disregarded local realities on the ground as well as already existing traditions such as trade unions and informal education structures.

After the BMZ added education to its five priority areas in 2005, TVET became a key sector of German ODA in which KfW Development Bank and GIZ were active. Dual vocational education and training (in German: Duale Berufsausbildung) is a two-to-three-year pathway common in Germany that combines classroom and in-company learning to become a skilled worker. A status update from 2011 observed: “Afghanistan does not yet possess the effective vocational education system required to equip school leavers [e.g.: graduates] with the skills they need to integrate into social and economic life.”<sup>124</sup> The brochure states that Afghanistan has 1,700 vocational teachers for 44,300 students, but that the “country needs a training capacity for about 1.3 million young people” which would require an estimated 40,000 teachers.<sup>125</sup> To remedy this, the BMZ commissioned both KfW Development Bank and GIZ to develop the sector. KfW Development Bank was commissioned to build two Technical Teacher Training Academies (TTA) in Kabul and Mazar-e Sharif. GIZ was tasked with developing a national training system for vocational school teachers who would staff these schools. On the other hand, as an implementer

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<sup>122</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2021. “OECD Development Co-Operation Peer Reviews: Germany 2021.” OECD. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-germany-2021\\_bb32a97d-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-germany-2021_bb32a97d-en), p. 73 (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>123</sup> Interview No. 18.

<sup>124</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 2011. “Vocational Teachers for Kabul and Mazar.” GIZ. <https://d-nb.info/1097447391/34> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

of KfW Development Bank understood their own tasks: "GIZ is doing the software and we do the hardware."<sup>126</sup>

While the programme initially started with the construction of two training centres, the ultimate goal was clear: more training centres in other parts of the country. The 2011 brochure described this as a perpetual future in which "the experience gained with the new TTAs will be reviewed and evaluated, and the results and recommendations channelled into establishing more such academies at other locations."<sup>127</sup> From the vantage point of Western liberal development thinking, this seemed a logical approach: If formal education institutions are inadequate, teaching academies must be established. And at first, everything seemed to be going as planned: the KfW Development Bank had experience in vocational training initiatives, with successful projects from Cameroon to China and Sri Lanka to Zambia.<sup>128</sup> Afghanistan was to follow the German dual education model, linking classroom and workplace. The construction of the TTAs in Afghanistan was planned, implemented and supervised by a German company.<sup>129</sup> The work, which first began in Kabul and was then expanded to Mazar-e Sharif, was coordinated with the Afghan ministry of TVET and the Ministry of Education.<sup>130</sup> A former German employee who worked on the project recalled the infrastructure project:

*"We had a huge compound, I think twelve hectares with three schools. Agricultural school, engineering college and technical school with a garden, with a female dormitory with even 50 female participants in there, and with a big gymnasium with kindergarten - with everything."*<sup>131</sup>

Located on the outskirts of Mazar-e sharif in Takht-a Pul, the compound was designed as a comprehensive solution where future teachers can live in dormitories and learn and deepen their skills in the workshops and classrooms. The compound was also built independently of its surrounding:

*"We always had our own deep wells, electricity by generator. So the school could be operated without any support from outside – but only theoretically. I mean, if there was no electricity and the generators needed to be operated, there was no fuel. That was*

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<sup>126</sup> Interview No. 8.

<sup>127</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 2011. "Vocational Teachers for Kabul and Mazar." GIZ. <https://d-nb.info/1097447391/34> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>128</sup> Entwicklungsbank (KfW). 2017. "Vocational Training: Creating Opportunities." KfW. [https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Download-Center/PDF-Dokumente-Flyer/KfW\\_Flyer\\_Berufsausbildung\\_EN.pdf](https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Download-Center/PDF-Dokumente-Flyer/KfW_Flyer_Berufsausbildung_EN.pdf), p. 4 (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>129</sup> Pem Consult. "Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Program - Phase I." <https://www.pem-consult.de/projects/asia-pacific/afghanistan/tvet-program-construction-of-schools-and-procurement-of-training-equipment.html> (last accessed 15.09.2022); Pem Consult. "TVET Program Phase II." <https://www.pem-consult.de/projects/asia-pacific/afghanistan/tvet-program-phase-ii.html> (last accessed: 15.09.2022).

<sup>130</sup> Berlin Global. 2015. "Germany helps build Engineering College in Afghanistan/German Development Bank is funding a new college in the Balkh province." Berlin Global. <https://www.berlinglobal.org/index.php?germany-helps-build-engineering-college-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 15.09.2022); German Cooperation with Afghanistan. 2017. "Press Release: New Engineering College for 720 students in Balkh." [https://pajhwok.com/wp-content/uploads/old/170505\\_KfW\\_TVET\\_PR\\_EC\\_Inauguration\\_%D9%90English.pdf](https://pajhwok.com/wp-content/uploads/old/170505_KfW_TVET_PR_EC_Inauguration_%D9%90English.pdf) (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>131</sup> Interview No. 8.

*always a problem. Then we started providing photovoltaic modules (in 2018), generating our own electricity, and this was successful.”<sup>132</sup>*

Cracks began to appear, however, after GIZ employees arrived in Afghanistan. Initially, GIZ had agreed to become KfW Development Bank’s counterpart and to provide curricula and training components for the teachers who would be trained in the academies set up by KfW Development Bank. They had conducted an initial needs assessment of the TVET sector and its educational formats, but after arriving in the country, they realised they had neglected a crucial area of vocational training: the local informal sector and existing social networks. As one employee put it:

*“Our brief was to support school-based vocational training. And we did the first investigation in 2013. I wanted to know how the students are channelled through this system. We found that over 70% of the fathers of these vocational school students had graduated school, around 30% of them even had a university degree. And this in a country where the adult illiteracy rate is around 70%. So, it was clear that the target groups were not in the system at all [...] Then the next question was: where are the target groups? [...] Then we discovered, on the one hand, there were young people who are [working in] companies, where they learn. They receive informal vocational training, on average 3.2 or 3.6 years with very strong structural similarities to early forms of dual vocational training in Germany.”<sup>133</sup>*

The realisation that an informal sector already existed alongside the state route to vocational teacher qualification, which tended to address a segment of society that would otherwise have been excluded from vocational training courses, changed the GIZ’s approach. Vocational training was organised informally in apprenticeship relationships between master craftsmen and students (*ostad-shagerdi*) and apprentices were organised into guilds, which in turn were geographically grouped under the umbrella of the Federation of Afghan Craftsmen and Traders.<sup>134</sup> The new approach did not require large-scale training centres, but focused on adaptable classes that could complement the existing, informal apprenticeship model. A GIZ employee described the insight as “a complete reversal of the program approach.”<sup>135</sup>

GIZ employees criticised KfW Development Bank’s approach as narrow-minded and short-sighted. A former employee who had worked in the TVET sector also criticised the KfW Development Bank’s approach for lacking the contextual understanding of how such an institution is embedded in local communities:

*“For example, the school that’s about seven kilometres outside Mazar, it’s a huge complex, quite luxurious with kindergarten and all kinds of things. I don’t judge it as fitting to the living, working and financial conditions of the country. First, they have to drive there and transportation costs are a huge problem. If you have to pay 3,000, 4,000 Afghani for*

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<sup>132</sup> Interview No. 8.

<sup>133</sup> Interview No. 14.

<sup>134</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 2014. “A Study of Ostad-Shagerdi (Apprenticeship) Training in Afghanistan.” GIZ. <https://iif.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/binary/ee6e4cf8-6903-4f54-9a07-e38c5f35cd8a> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>135</sup> Interview No. 14.

*transportation costs at a monthly family income of 12,000 to 15,000 Afghani: that's not doable."*<sup>136</sup>

Both organisations were at an impasse. The KfW Development Bank's contractor explained his incomprehension of the GIZ: "It doesn't make sense if you invest a lot of money, in infrastructure, in good schools, in equipment, in furniture, and in deep wells and in electricity, and the training of the teachers is not matching later on with the needs [of the Afghan communities]." <sup>137</sup> Disagreements between the two organisations dragged on for years after the initial confrontation. A European colleague who also worked in the sector described the working environment at the time: "I can't even say it was a bad marriage: these were bad neighbours shooting at each other." <sup>138</sup>

A consultation process between both organisations and the donor BMZ was supposed to settle the dispute, but only resulted in both organisations implementing their own projects without interacting further. KfW Development Bank implemented its own apprenticeship programme and GIZ focused on the informal sector: "They did their job and we did our job and I think both of us have been somehow successful or not," <sup>139</sup> the consultant concluded. In the end, however, the KfW Development Bank's decontextualised thinking failed spectacularly. Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 2021, the training centre in Taloqan has been turned into a *madrassa* (a religious school), according to the KfW Development Bank consultant. The informal system of master-student relationships on which vocational training practices in Afghanistan was based, and which GIZ supported, continues.

This section discussed the intra-systemic competition among German actors in Afghanistan with the example of the diverging approaches of the KfW Development Bank and GIZ's TVET to development policy: while the first was invested in large-scale spending on infrastructure, the latter attempted to draw on informal community networks. In the absence of incentives to align their ways of working with each other, the approaches to development and reconstruction of the two German implementers clashed.

## 5. Changes in funding priorities in bilateral ODA

This section explores German DC in Afghanistan during the period of the military intervention through looking at the changing political priorities in Germany that had an impact on German foreign and development policy towards and in Afghanistan. The focus on various timeframes highlights the shift in policies of the German Bundesregierung toward regional returnees, forcibly returned, migrants and evacuees. For example, the perceived increased migration to Germany from 2014/15 onwards had an impact on the priorities of ODA funding of the AA and BMZ as well as on Germany's contributions to multilateral funds and its bilateral relations with the Afghan government.

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<sup>136</sup> Interview No. 14.

<sup>137</sup> Interview No. 8.

<sup>138</sup> Interview No. 6.

<sup>139</sup> Interview No. 8.

## 2001-2008

In September 2002, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported “the largest single refugee repatriation since 1972, with total returns to Afghanistan”<sup>140</sup> reaching more than 1.63 million people. In 2003, the UNHCR office in Geneva published a “Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern.” The “framework” emphasised three main priorities to share “burdens and responsibilities more equitably and building capacities” in the management of refugee populations: Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR), Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (4Rs) and Development through Local Integration (DLI).<sup>141</sup> UNHCR points out in the document that the implementation of the framework is a “collective task” that involves “the World Bank, bilateral development partners and the UN.”<sup>142</sup>

At the same time, Afghan-German citizens were mobilised from 2002 onwards by the state to participate in German institution-building in Afghanistan. In 2002, the BMZ, through the Centre for International Migration (Centrum für Internationale Migration, CIM), an organisation jointly run by GIZ and the German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA), targeted so-called “integrated skilled employees” (in German: integrierte Fachkräfte) to support capacity building in Afghan institutions and organisations based on their technical knowledge and work experience.<sup>143</sup> CIM was a mechanism through which, amongst others, citizens, who at some point migrated to Germany, were integrated into Afghan institutional structures through placement as “integrated skilled employees.”<sup>144</sup> Employees who worked as “integrated skilled employees” recalled that the GIZ, to whom they had to report back, and CIM repeatedly emphasised that they were not their employees:

*“So the structure was that the CIM always said, or the GIZ, ‘you are not hired by us, we only place you with Afghan ministries and you get a salary from the Afghan ministry. So, you are Afghan ministry employees. But since the salary of USD 200 [the average salary for an Afghan employee] isn’t enough for you, of course, we subsidise you.’ In other words, in the end we only had a grant agreement with GIZ.”<sup>145</sup>*

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<sup>140</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2002. “Afghanistan: Largest Single Refugee Repatriation since 1972.” UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2002/9/3d748f4b19/afghanistan-largest-single-refugee-repatriation-since-1972.html> (last accessed 10.03.2021).

<sup>141</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2003. “Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern.” UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/partners/partners/3f1408764/framework-durable-solutions-refugees-persons-concern.html> (last accessed 10.03.2021).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2010. “Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags.” Die Bundesregierung, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/240050/7fac3ec5b0dddaaa12c932d5a0b44efc/fortschrittsbericht-2010-data.pdf> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>144</sup> Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM). 2023. “Integrated Experts.” CIM. A Joint Operation of GIZ and the German Federal Employment Agency. <https://www.cimonline.de/en/html/integrated-experts.html> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>145</sup> Interview No. 20.



As employees of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they needed a Terms of Reference (TOR) issued by the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to outline contractual tasks, responsibilities and duties. However, former “integrated skilled employees” emphasised that they already had a “Wisch” (a piece of paper) and not a formal TOR from GIZ with the designation “political analyst,” – even though they did not have a political science background. This also meant that the “integrated” Afghan German staff formally received an Afghan salary and thus effectively embodied a two-tier salary system in the technocratic elite of German development policy staff. Although CIM employees in Afghanistan were contractually treated as second-class German staff, they enjoyed benefits such as increased security alerts and measures under the auspices of GIZ:

*“In the end, we were under the direction of GIZ. If there was a terrorist attack somewhere, then we were immediately taken out of the country and all the other ministry employees laughed and said, ‘aha, okay, you are ministry employees, so you have nothing to do with GIZ, but you will still be flown out of the country immediately if there is a small threat.”<sup>146</sup>*

The former employee pointed out that they had to navigate working with German state actors in Afghanistan while they were simultaneously confronted with demands for transparency about the disbursement of ODA funds, which mainly went to GIZ’s own employees, by their Afghan colleagues:

*“At that time there was talk about advisors who made a lot of money. I was confronted personally and asked how much I am making monthly. When I told them that this is private and none of their business, the answer was that it was their business because we were paid through German development money and in our reports it would state ‘we gave Afghanistan this and this much money’ while all of it would just go into our own pockets [...] that’s not only the way that they thought about the German development aid but about the whole sector, [...] that a considerable part of development aid just goes to the payment of one’s own employees.”<sup>147</sup>*

The German ministries pursued different strategies and rationales when financing programmes and projects in Afghanistan. Structurally, they always retained monetary control, even in the case of funding that was handled “on-budget” via the Afghan government. Programmes that strategically brought German nationals as technical experts to guide the construction of Afghan institutions as “integrated experts” created a parallel structure for payment and accountability that exacerbated competition among Afghan staff.

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<sup>146</sup> Interview No. 20.

<sup>147</sup> Interview No. 16.

## 2008-2015

The global financial “crisis within neoliberalism”<sup>148</sup> (2008-2009) by no means led to the dissolution of the neoliberal age. Nor did the “crisis” end investment in the liberalisation of financial flows to countries in the so-called Global South. In Afghanistan, 2008 ushered in a crucial transformation phase in terms of funding priorities, further intensifying the link between military and civilian work across all fields of German ODA during the NATO war in Afghanistan. The Bundeswehr became more directly involved in offensive missions: In May 2008, they became part of *Operation Karez*, the second offensive mission of German and Norwegian armed forces in the provinces Faryab and Badghis in Regional Command North (RC North). In July 2008, Germany took over the leadership of the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) in RC North in support of NATO’s counterinsurgency operations in the Northern provinces.<sup>149</sup> While Germany was involved in the ongoing counterinsurgency in the provinces, ISAF formally executed the Transfer of Lead Security Responsibility (TLSR) in Kabul to Afghan Security Forces.

At the same time, the fighting intensified and the then newly elected US President Barack Obama increased the troop strength by 21,000 (17,000 in February, 4,000 in March 2009). Additionally, the drone war intensified and the number of Special Operations Forces (SOFs) in Afghanistan tripled.<sup>150</sup> The military surge was accompanied by a “civilian surge” with the US State Department deploying nearly 900 additional civilians to the newly established PRTs. Germany led the PRTs in Kunduz and Feyzabad, as well as its Provincial Advisor Team (PAT) in Taloqan. The escalation of fighting also led to an increase in internal displacement from rural areas to urban centres. From 1 January 2012 to 1 August 2015, 671,497 people fled their homes due to the conflict — a number that increased more than six-fold until September 2022.<sup>151</sup> There were more than 50 recognised camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or “informal settlements,” known as Kabul Informal Settlements (KIS); more than 30,000 people were living in tents and emergency shelters in the KIS.<sup>152</sup> The informal settlements were constructed on a mixture of private and state land. The inhabitants of these informal settlements were, on the one hand, IDPs who had fled the fighting and were living in major urban areas, and on the other hand, people who had returned from places they had fled during earlier decades of conflict, such as Pakistan, Iran, or Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Afghan migrants coming from Pakistan and Iran became part of the urban IDP population.<sup>153</sup>

The KIS were not the only informally constructed housing in the capital. In fact, UNHCR estimated that approximately 70 per cent of Kabul city consisted of informal settlements that were not

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<sup>148</sup> Boffo, Marco, Alfredo Saad-Filho, and Ben Fine. 2019. ‘Neoliberal Capitalism: The Authoritarian Turn.’ *Socialist Register* 55.

<sup>149</sup> Deutsche Welle (DW). 2008. “Germans in Combat.” DW.COM. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-takes-over-quick-reaction-force-in-afghanistan/a-3451110> (last accessed 21.09.2022).

<sup>150</sup> Woodward, Bob. 2010. *Obama’s Wars*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 355.

<sup>151</sup> From 1 January 2012 to 13 September 2022, OCHA reports 4,139,404 individuals fled their homes due to conflict. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). “Conflict Induced Displacement Dashboard. From 1 January 2012 to 13 September 2022.” OCHA. <https://response.reliefweb.int/afghanistan/internal-displacement-due-conflict> (last accessed 03.11.2022).

<sup>152</sup> Fleming, Melissa. 2012. “UNHCR Begins New Winter Aid Drive across Afghanistan.” UNHCR US. <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/briefing-notes/unhcr-begins-new-winter-aid-drive-across-afghanistan> (last accessed 22.09.2022).

<sup>153</sup> Koser, Khalid, and Susan F. Martin. 2011. *The Migration-Displacement Nexus: Patterns, Processes, and Policies*. New York: Berghahn Books, p. 134-135.

included in the overall city plan.<sup>154</sup> While other informal settlements were built from a variety of construction materials that offered durability, better insulation or basic amenities, IDP inhabitants were not allowed to build permanent infrastructure. As a result, the camps were not officially connected to municipal infrastructure. This meant that the camps were kept in a perpetual state of “being temporary” for years. People living in the camps occasionally even faced forced evictions “on behalf of influential individuals for private land use or for the establishment of a market in a municipality.”<sup>155</sup>

While the total number of IDPs was much larger if one includes IDPs who were “resettled with friends or families” and therefore did not appear in the official counts, these camps were the most visible form of settlement of IDPs.<sup>156</sup> NGOs and UN bodies set up the so-called KIS task force to coordinate humanitarian assistance to these camps, which included so-called annual “winterisation” efforts with the distribution of blankets, clothing and firewood during the cold season. German ODA contributed to these structures through projects in areas of health, education, psychosocial support or skills development. However, funding for humanitarian aid to the camps was stopped in 2015: “The German Welthungerhilfe as a major implementing agency in Afghanistan, [...] considered the camp population no longer to be a humanitarian, but a ‘chronic’ case.”<sup>157</sup> Internal displacement and dependency on humanitarian aid were pathologised without addressing the underlying structures that kept IDPs in this perpetual state.

## 2015-2021

When the number of refugees arriving in the EU reached more than one million in 2015, there was less talk about the reasons for flight and the plight of refugees than about the resulting “European crisis.” For EU policymakers, this manifested itself in increased disruption of day-to-day border, immigration and asylum management.<sup>158</sup> The general public of the Schengen area was reminded, in the face of images like that of the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi lying face down dead on a Turkish beach, of the EU’s military and surveillance regime that controls and limits “informal” migration to the continent.

At the same time, right-wing popular movements across the EU have capitalised on European racism, especially against non-white Europeans and refugees. In autumn 2016, then-Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier announced that German “aid” to Afghanistan would be

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<sup>154</sup> Miszak, Nick, and Alessandro Monsutti. 2014. ‘Landscapes of Power: Local Struggles and National Stakes at the Rural-Urban Fringe of Kabul, Afghanistan’. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 41 (2): 183–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.886566>.

<sup>155</sup> Grawert, Elke and Katja Mielke. 2018. “Coping with protracted displacement: how Afghans secure their livelihood in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.” BICC Working Paper, 2/2018. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-61301-9> (last accessed 01.02.2023).

<sup>156</sup> Schmeding, Annika. 2014. “Who’s the real “nomad” in Afghanistan? Socio-political status, legal rights and the differences between peripatetic and pastoral nomads.” Leiden University.

<sup>157</sup> Grawert, Elke and Katja Mielke. 2018. “Coping with protracted displacement: how Afghans secure their livelihood in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.” BICC Working Paper, 2/2018. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-61301-9>, p. 12 (last accessed 01.02.2023).

<sup>158</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2015. “A Million Refugees and Migrants Flee to Europe in 2015.” UNHCR US. <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/news-releases/million-refugees-and-migrants-flee-europe-2015> (last accessed 08.11.2022).

“conditional.” Afghanistan would have to cooperate in the “reintegration” of deportees and “voluntary returnees” and create incentives for its citizens not to migrate to Germany.<sup>159</sup> These conditions were enforced even though in 2015 only 7.1 per cent of asylum applications were made by refugees from Afghanistan compared to 35.9 per cent of applications by refugees from Syria.<sup>160</sup>

To curb so-called irregular migration the EU and Germany took various measures. Part of these measures were incentives for countries at the EU's external borders to stop migration to the EU, the return of rejected asylum seekers to their country of origin and the increase of ODA for returnees. Another part of the measures was the EU's agreement with Turkey, a nodal point for migration from countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan to EU member states, to manage migration to the EU. The EU-Turkey "Declaration of Cooperation," also referred to as the "EU-Turkey Agreement," was signed in March 2016 and stated that Turkey would take measures to prevent people on the move from entering Turkey and take back anyone who made it to Greece as a refugee.<sup>161</sup> In return, the EU agreed to resettle the same number of asylum-seeking Syrians from camps in Turkey to its member countries. In addition, the Europeans would pay around six billion euros to support the nearly four million Syrian migrant communities already living in Turkey.<sup>162</sup>

The agreement introduced a hierarchisation of refugee groups.<sup>163</sup> The one for one exchange mechanism in the deal - for every refugee returned to Turkey by Greece, one would be resettled in Europe from Turkey - only applied to Syrians. Unlike Syrian refugees, who received temporary protection and financial support under Turkish law, Afghans could only register as "conditional refugees," which in turn meant that they could no longer choose their place of residence independently. As a result, many were forced to live in camps, not least to pressure them – according to some human rights organisations – to return to Afghanistan voluntarily. Many Afghans in Turkey therefore preferred not to register and lived in constant fear of being discovered and deported.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Reuters Staff. 2016. “Germany to Set Conditions for Future Aid to Afghanistan.” Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-afghanistan-idUSKCN1241PT> (last accessed 3.11.2022).

<sup>160</sup> Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). 2016. “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015. Asyl, Migration Und Integration.” BAMF. [https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Statistik/BundesamtinZahlen/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=16](https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Statistik/BundesamtinZahlen/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=16), p. 20 (last accessed 01.07.2022).

<sup>161</sup> International Rescue Committee (IRC). 2022. “What Is the EU-Turkey Deal?” IRC. <https://www.rescue.org/eu/article/what-eu-turkey-deal> (last accessed 03.11.2022).

<sup>162</sup> European Council. 2016. “EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016.” European Council. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/> (last accessed 03.11.2022); Terry, Kyilah. 2021. “The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial but Enduring Blueprint.” Migrationpolicy.Org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/eu-turkey-deal-five-years-on> (last accessed 03.11.2022).

<sup>163</sup> Vo, Lam Thuy. 2016. ‘Germany’s Second-Class Refugees’. *World Policy Journal* 33 (4): 61–67.

<sup>164</sup> Kuschminder, Katie. 2018. ‘Afghan Refugee Journeys: Onwards Migration Decision-Making in Greece and Turkey.’ *Journal of Refugee Studies* 31 (4): 566–87.

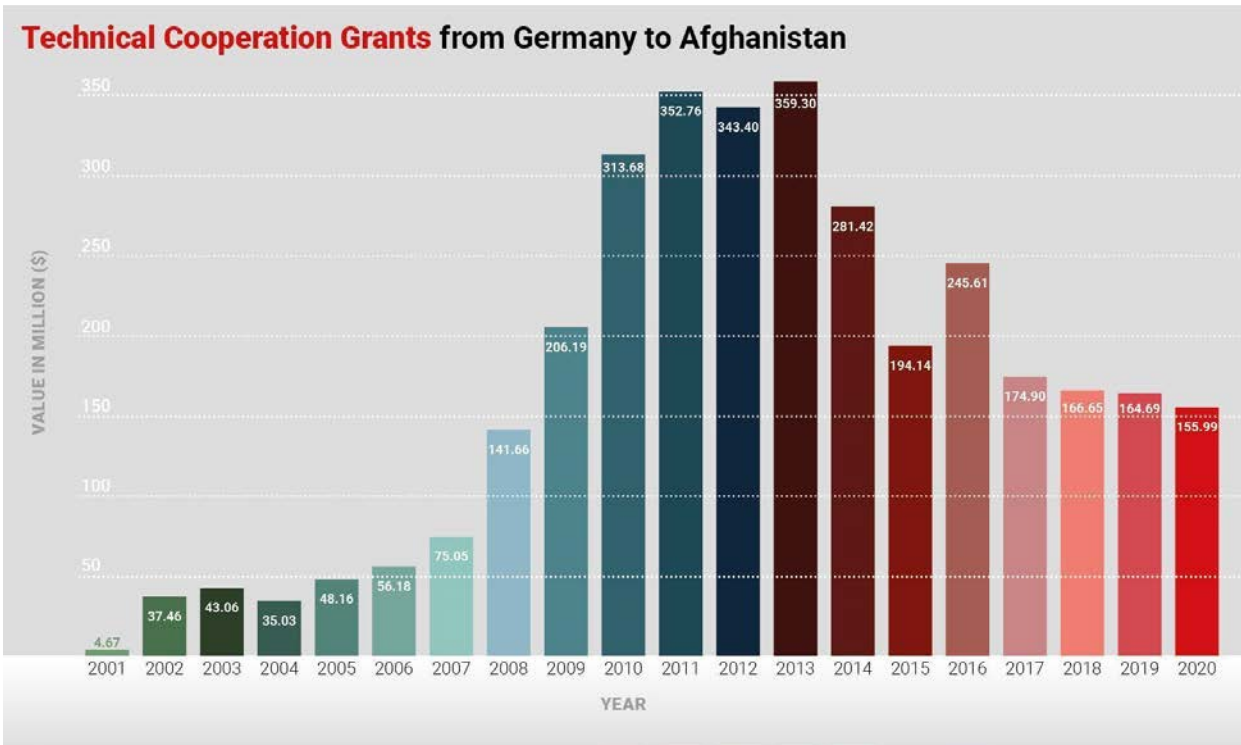


Figure F: Technical Cooperation Grants from Germany to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2020.

Part of Germany's strategy for dealing with Afghan refugees was the continued deportation of Afghans to Afghanistan. This was another reason why the number of German grants for technical cooperation with Afghanistan jumped in 2016, after the volume of grants had declined drastically from 2013 to 2015 (Figure F).

On 2 December 2015, during a visit to Berlin by Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani, German Chancellor Angela Merkel reiterated Germany's commitment to prioritising technical and vocational training and strengthening incentives for Afghans to stay in Afghanistan through economic development policies.<sup>165</sup> Afghan refugees who "come hoping for a better life" would be deported, Merkel announced during a press conference with Ghani.<sup>166</sup> She also recommended that Afghans move to "protected zones" in Afghanistan.<sup>167</sup>

The rhetoric of "protected zones" can at best be described as a highly distorted image of the security situation in Afghanistan. The 2017 attack at Zabaq Square in the heart of Kabul's securitised city centre, in which parts of the German Embassy were destroyed, made clear that

<sup>165</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2015. "Germany Will Remain a Partner in Afghanistan." Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/germany-will-remain-a-partner-in-afghanistan-438902> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>166</sup> Former chancellor Angela Merkel as cited in: Martin, Michelle. 2015. "Merkel Says Afghans Coming to Germany for Better Life Will Be Sent Back." Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-afghanistan-merkel/merkel-says-afghans-coming-to-germany-for-better-life-will-be-sent-back-idUSKBN0TL1D120151202> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>167</sup> Martin, Michelle. 2015. "Merkel Says Afghans Coming to Germany for Better Life Will Be Sent Back." Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-afghanistan-merkel/merkel-says-afghans-coming-to-germany-for-better-life-will-be-sent-back-idUSKBN0TL1D120151202> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

there were no safe zones — neither in Kabul nor in Afghanistan as a whole.<sup>168</sup> Any place, even the most fortified areas of the capital, could be attacked. The security scenario remained complex, with multiple insurgent groups staging attacks. In 2015, Daesh/ISIS-K,<sup>169</sup> which included former Taliban members, began its activities in Afghanistan in Achin district of Nangarhar province and Manogay district of Kunar province on the border with Pakistan.<sup>170</sup> Political violence in the capital and provinces targeted civil servants as well as staff of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) such as the Afghan National Police (ANP), and the National Directorate of Security (NDS).<sup>171</sup> In July 2016, UNAMA recorded the highest number of civilian deaths since the start of the NATO war in 2001.<sup>172</sup> The targeted killings among the population involved a wide array of civilians turning nearly all population groups into potential targets. Among the reported victims were Sunni clerics,<sup>173</sup> students,<sup>174</sup> women,<sup>175</sup> commuters in minivans

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<sup>168</sup> Nordland, Rod. 2017. "Death Toll in Kabul Bombing Has Hit 150, Afghan President Says." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/06/world/asia/kabul-bombing-death-toll-increases.html?> (last accessed 16.06.2022).

<sup>169</sup> Daesh is the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State commonly used across Asia and Africa as well as in Afghanistan. ISIS-Khorasan is an affiliate of the Islamic State militant group active in South Asia and Central Asia.

<sup>170</sup> See for instance on recorded Daesh activities in Nangarhar province: Afghanistan Journalists Center. 2015. "A New Islamic State Radio Station Spreads Panic in Eastern Nangarhar Province." Afghanistan Journalists Center. <https://afjc.af/english/news/eastern-province-news/nangerhar/a-new-islamic-state-radio-station-spreads-panic-in-eastern-nangarhar-province> (last accessed 20.06.2021); Omeri, Abdulhaq. 2020. "District Governor Led Op against Daesh Attackers in Nangarhar." TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/district-governor-led-op-against-daesh-attackers-nangarhar> (last accessed 20.06.2021); TOLONews. 2015. "130 Nangarhar Residents In Daesh Custody." TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/130-nangarhar-residents-daesh-custody> (last accessed 20.06.2021).

<sup>171</sup> While the majority of targeted killings would not make it into media outside of Afghanistan, TOLONews documented events involving one victim and more, see for instance: TOLONews. 2021. "Govt Employee Killed in Gunmen Attack in Kabul." TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-171695> (last accessed 23.03.2022); TOLONews. 2021. "One Security Force Member Killed, Four Wounded in Kabul Blast." TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-171243> (last accessed 23.03.2022). See also the Afghan War Casualty Report by the Kabul office of the New York Times that documented weekly deaths of reported Afghan "pro-government" armed forces, police officers, civilians and foreign members of armed forces across provinces from September 2018 to August 2021: *The New York Times*. 2022. "The Afghan War Casualty Report." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/afghan-war-casualty-reports> (last accessed 20.06.2022).

<sup>172</sup> United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2016. "Afghanistan. Midyear Report 2016. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict." UNAMA. <https://unama.unmissions.org/afghanistan-record-level-civilian-casualties-sustained-first-half-2016-un-report> (last accessed 23.03.2022).

<sup>173</sup> BBC News Farsi. 2020. "Hamleh dar Kabul: Ayaz Niazi, imam-e masjid-e Wazir Akbar Khan koshteh shod (Attack in Kabul: Ayaz Niazi, Imam of the Wazir Akbar Khan Mosque, killed)." BBC News Farsi. <https://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan-52890878> (last accessed 20.06.2022); Gibbons-Neff, Thomas, and Fahim Abed. 2019. "Bombing at Afghan Mosque Kills Popular Religious Scholar." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/24/world/asia/afghanistan-mosque-attack.html> (last accessed 23.03.2022); Ghubar, Gulabudin. 2020. "Kabul Mosque Attack: Who Was Imam Maulavi Mofleh?" TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/kabul-mosque-attack-who-was-imam-maulavi-mofleh> (last accessed 20.06.2022).

<sup>174</sup> Gibbons-Neff, Thomas, and Fatima Faizi. 2020. "Gunmen Attack Afghanistan's Kabul University, Killing at Least 19." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/02/world/asia/kabul-university-attack.html> (last accessed 23.03.2022); Nikzad, Khaled. 2020. "Kabul Bomber Missed Gate, But Targeted Students in Street." TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-167302> (last accessed 20.06.2022).

<sup>175</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). 2021. "Afghanistan: One Year after the Massacre in a Maternity Ward." MSF. <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/afghanistan-one-year-after-massacre-maternity-ward> (last accessed 23.03.2022).

and buses,<sup>176</sup> journalists and development workers.<sup>177</sup> At the same time, the armed forces of NATO member states and the Afghans they trained caused deaths among Afghan civilians: on 3 October 2015, several months before Merkel and Ghani's meeting in Berlin, a US airstrike killed 42 people in a trauma hospital of Médecins Sans Frontières in Kunduz province. Investigative journalistic work exposed the death of hundreds of Afghans killed by US trained Afghan special forces often joined by US special forces operating in coordination with the CIA in Afghanistan's borderland provinces.<sup>178</sup> This shows that there were no protected zones in the Afghanistan war.

In addition to the ongoing deportations of Afghans to Afghanistan, the post-2015 period also saw an increasing interweaving of migration and economic development policies with a security agenda. For a "new security policy debate" in Germany, the Federal Government presented a document in 2016 that propagated "a modern understanding of strategy development" and was a further development of the BMI of 2006.<sup>179</sup> Among other things, it justified an increase in the defence budget in 2016. The document also explained that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development establishes a link between "peace and security" and "sustainable development and respect for human rights."<sup>180</sup>

Parallel to this development, changes in the institutional set-up led to shifts in ODA funding. Following a review process in 2014, the AA established the Division S for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Aid (in German: Abteilung S für Krisenprävention, Stabilisierung, Friedensförderung und Humanitäre Hilfe).<sup>181</sup> Division S focussed on crises and

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<sup>176</sup> Shaheed, Anisa. 2021. "2 Female Employees of Afghan Film Killed in Kabul Blast." TOLONews.

<https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-172817> (last accessed 23.03.2022); Rahimi, Zahra. 2021. "Families of Slain Women Say Attacks on Civilians 'Systematic.'" TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-172862> (last accessed 23.03.2022); Associated Press. 2021. "Afghan Official: Bombs Hit 2 Minivans in Kabul, 7 Dead." AP NEWS. <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-kabul-religion-375481d8047e7eccd0a88747ce401f99b> (last accessed 23.03.2022); Rahimi, Zahra. 2021. "Majority of Victims in Bus Bombings Were Poor." TOLONews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-172564> (last accessed 23.03.2022).

<sup>177</sup> Mashal, Mujib, Fahim Abed, and Fatima Faizi. 2018. "'We Live Death:' A Chronicler of Afghan Loss Is Killed on Live TV." The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/06/world/asia/afghanistan-samim-faramarz-reporter-killed.html> (last accessed 16.09.2022); Qazi, Shereena. 2020. "'Alarming Pattern:' Second Afghan Journalist Killed in a Week." Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/12/a-great-loss-afghan-journalist-killed-in-a-blast-in-helmand> (last accessed 16.09.2022); Ingber, Sasha. 2018. "How Save The Children Is Coping After Attack That Killed 4 Staffers In Afghanistan." NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/01/25/580729749/how-save-the-children-is-coping-after-attack-that-killed-4-staffers-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 20.11.2022); Mashal, Mujib. 2020. "Another Young Leader Taken. Afghans Ask: How Many More?" The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/29/world/asia/afghanistan-women-human-rights.html> (last accessed 23.03.2022).

<sup>178</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). 2015. "Kunduz Hospital Attack. On 3 October 2015, US Airstrikes Destroyed Our Trauma Hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, Killing 42 People." MSF. <https://www.msf.org/kunduz-hospital-attack-depth> (last accessed 20.06.2021); Billing, Lynzy. 2022. "The Night Raids." ProPublica. <https://www.propublica.org/article/afghanistan-night-raids-zero-units-lynzy-billing> (last accessed 20.12.2022).

<sup>179</sup> Deutsches Bundesministerium der Verteidigung. 2006. "Weißbuch 2006 Zur Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands Und Zur Zukunft Der Bundeswehr." archives.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr. [http://archives.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/2008/IMG/pdf/weissbuch\\_2006.pdf](http://archives.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/2008/IMG/pdf/weissbuch_2006.pdf) (last accessed 02.12.2022).

<sup>180</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2016. "Weissbuch 2016 Zur Sicherheitspolitik Und Zur Zukunft Der Bundeswehr." Bundesministerium der Verteidigung. <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/13708/015be272f8c0098f1537a491676bfc31/weissbuch2016-barrierefrei-data.pdf>, p. 62 (last accessed 03.04.2022).

<sup>181</sup> Auswärtiges Amt. "Förderkonzept des Auswärtigen Amts." ifa.de. [https://www.ifa.de/fileadmin/Content/docs/foerderungen/zivik/Foerderprogramm\\_zivik\\_Foerderkonzept\\_AA\\_2021\\_Taziz-Partnerschaft\\_für\\_Demokratie.pdf](https://www.ifa.de/fileadmin/Content/docs/foerderungen/zivik/Foerderprogramm_zivik_Foerderkonzept_AA_2021_Taziz-Partnerschaft_für_Demokratie.pdf), p. 4 (last accessed 15.09.2022); Auswärtiges Amt. 2019. "Grundlagen der Krisenprävention." Auswärtiges Amt. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/themen/krisenpraevention/1->

conflicts that particularly affected German and European security interests.<sup>182</sup> The department funded projects of NGOs (e.g. Red Cross and Welthungerhilfe) and UN-programmes or foundations engaged in the so-called peace process, such as the Berghof Foundation.<sup>183</sup> The establishment of the additional division and its impact on the conceptualisation of projects was also noted by NGOs that received funding from the AA. A project manager working in the field of cultural preservation noted that the orientation of projects had to change in order to comply with the new funding guidelines:

*"I think it was perhaps a shift within Germany, within the strategy in Germany. I know that the Stabilisation Fund had significant resources, much more than what the cultural fund had, for example. And for us it became something which didn't necessarily change the practice or the way we worked but it also meant that we couldn't only focus on conservation. For example, on [our last] project, there's a very large economic dimension to it. There's retail space, there's the creation of a microclimate for the economy."*<sup>184</sup>

Increasing funding from sources such as the Stabilisation Fund is an example of neoliberal policy in which economic development and reconstruction programmes are designed to consolidate institutional and organisational structures with the goal to manage migration from countries such as Afghanistan to donor countries such as Germany.

In 2017, GIZ initiated the Programme "Migration for Development" (in German: Programm "Migration für Entwicklung", PME).<sup>185</sup> The GIZ's PME worked multilaterally on the basis of a trilateral agreement between Germany, Afghanistan and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The PME agenda was tailored by GIZ. A designated office in the GIZ headquarters in Eschborn drafted the programmes, which operated then in 13 countries. The GIZ staff and contractors in the respective countries could only implement the programme — they could not change the structure of the programme by making suggestions. The thematic focus of the programme was employment promotion through counselling services, coaching, access to psychosocial care and the establishment of small businesses. The aim was to build on the skills of Afghans who were deported or "voluntarily" returned from Germany. However, since the ones who had been deported or pushed to return, even those who spoke fluent German or had acquired a German university or training degree, had no start-up capital, they had little prospect of gaining a professional foothold.<sup>186</sup>

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[grundlagen](#) (last accessed 15.09.2022); Milosevic, Nik. 2018. *Politische Entscheidungsprozesse und multinationale Militäreinsätze □: Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich*. Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, p. 121.

<sup>182</sup> In German: "Im Fokus stehen Krisen und Konflikte, die deutsche und europäische Sicherheitsinteressen besonders betreffen." See: Auswärtiges Amt. 2019. "Grundlagen der Krisenprävention." Auswärtiges Amt. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/themen/krisenpraevention/1-grundlagen> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>183</sup> Auswärtiges Amt. 2019. "Grundlagen der Krisenprävention." Auswärtiges Amt. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/themen/krisenpraevention/1-grundlagen> (last accessed 15.09.2022).

<sup>184</sup> Interview No. 19.

<sup>185</sup> The BMZ commissioned programme implemented by the GIZ began in 2017. While it halted in Afghanistan with the Taliban take-over, it continues in Albania, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Iraq, Kosovo, Morocco, Pakistan, Senegal, Serbia and Tunisia. See: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 2022. "Making a Successful Fresh Start Possible in Countries of Origin." GIZ. <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/62318.html> (last accessed 10.10.2022).

<sup>186</sup> Musawi Natanzi, Paniz. 'German perversions of agency: male Afghan refugees, carceral states and mental health policies during NATO's war in Afghanistan.' In: *Intergenerational Trauma in Refugee Communities*, edited by Ajlina Karamelic-Muratovic and Laura Kromjác. Routledge, forthcoming.



The PME projects were implemented in Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar and other provinces, and not only in the provinces where the Bundeswehr was stationed, as was otherwise the case with most GIZ programmes. Complementary to GIZ's work on behalf of BMZ, the AA financed mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) projects in all provinces in Afghanistan in its Peace and Stability Division.<sup>187</sup> When the USA and the Taliban signed their "peace agreement" in early 2020, political relations between the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR), Germany and IOM deteriorated and the trilateral agreement expired. As a result, GIZ and MORR did not know the situation of people on the move: the GIZ-PME did not have access to IOM data on returns from and to Afghanistan, nor to data on displacement within the country.

As German institutions had no official information on where the deported or "voluntarily" returned were settling in Afghanistan, and also given the restricted movement of GIZ staff, implementing governmental development agencies such as GIZ had to rely on informal exchanges with relevant state and non-state actors in Afghanistan to adapt their programmes aimed at persuading Afghans to stay in Afghanistan. As a result of these discussions, GIZ built relationships with local implementing partners to collect empirical data.

ODA was strategically allocated and implemented to coordinate German foreign, military and economic development policy in the interface with migration policy. The networked approach exacerbated the policing of migration from Afghanistan. The aim of GIZ-PME was to tell audiences outside Afghanistan "success stories" of people who had supposedly been given a second chance in life through "return" by creating precarious employment opportunities and access to counselling in Afghanistan.<sup>188</sup> The Afghanistan section on the website "startfinder.com" – with an overview of counselling services for refugees as well as people considering fleeing to Germany – was deleted when the Taliban took over Kabul in mid-August 2021.

This overview highlights how ODA flows shifted within the 20-year time period. In the first decade, as Afghans moved to Afghanistan from abroad, German-Afghans returned to Afghanistan through German ODA-funded projects. The placement of externally funded experts within governmental structures and direct funding of particular ministerial positions led to the development of parallel structures for payment and accountability that exacerbated competition among Afghan staff. The intensifying warfare during "the surge" also led to the increase of internal displacement, which became a focal point for German ODA-funded projects. From 2015 onwards, German ODA foci changed again in this field – this time to focus on discouraging Afghans from migrating to Germany and on Afghans who were deported or coercively returned from Germany to Afghanistan.

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<sup>187</sup> See also for the International Psychosocial Organization (IPSO), a company with limited liability registered in Germany as well as in Afghanistan as an NGO: Ayoughi, Sarah, Inge Missmahl, Roland Weierstall, and Thomas Elbert. 2012. "Provision of Mental Health Services in Resource-Poor Settings: A Randomised Trial Comparing Counselling with Routine Medical Treatment in North Afghanistan (Mazar-e-Sharif)." *BMC Psychiatry* 12 (1): 14.

<sup>188</sup> Musawi Natanzi, Paniz, 'German perversions of agency: male Afghan refugees, carceral states and mental health policies during NATO's war in Afghanistan.' In: *Intergenerational Trauma in Refugee Communities*, edited by Ajlina Karamelic-Muratovic and Laura Kromják. Routledge, forthcoming.

## C. Civil-Military Co-Operation

The term “co-operation” that NATO uses to officially describe the coordination between policies implemented by civil and military actors captures that these are operations using different means to reach similar objectives. Germany’s long-term involvement in constructing and perpetuating the civil-military infrastructure in Afghanistan met with opposing voices in politics and society. A leaked special memorandum by a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) team tasked with pursuing a “pronounced ‘out-of-the-box’ approach” details how to discursively confront “German opponents of ISAF.” Dated March 2010, a CIA Red Cell<sup>189</sup> suggested on how to justify the necessity of the war. Three aspects were outlined as a strategy for a counter-narrative to oppositional voices in Germany: First, the CIA Red Cell suggested that highlighting “Afghan optimism” about the “mission’s progress” could trump “German pessimism” and the view that the ISAF mission was a “waste of resources.” Second, the memo proposed to point out that NATO’s defeat in Afghanistan could pose a threat to Germany’s security and lead to an increased influx of refugees in order to convince opponents in Germany of the war’s pivotal role for “German interests.” Last but not least, the authors of the document suggested that Germany’s “allergy to armed conflict” could be overcome by invoking Germany’s “desire to support multilateral efforts.”

The memo was leaked during a phase of the war in which Germany was actively participating in offensive missions and taking on the task of training the Afghan police force. Given Germany’s military past and opposition to Germany’s re-entry into warfare, the USA acknowledged that the German Federal Government was not as prepared as the UK and the USA to risk casualties.<sup>190</sup>

In an attempt to further humanise the war, NGOs were considered by US political and military elites as “a force multiplier” and “an important part of our combat team,” as US Military General Colin Powell stated in 2001.<sup>191</sup> In 2011, the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reiterated the decisive role of humanitarian and development actors, acknowledging that development complements the work of “defence and diplomacy” and thus supports military success.<sup>192</sup> In terms of foreign policy in Afghanistan, both the Bush and Obama administrations built on this systematic approach to the war in Afghanistan in their respective national security strategies. By 2016, the fusion of development, defence and diplomacy was publicly enshrined in the guiding policy of the BMVG and promulgated in the White Papers during Angela Merkel’s third cabinet (2013-2017).

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<sup>189</sup> CIA Red Cell. 2010. “CIA Red Cell Special Memorandum; Afghanistan: Sustaining West European Support for the NATO-Led Mission-Why Counting on Apathy Might Not Be Enough.” CIA. <https://file.wikileaks.org/file/cia-afghanistan.pdf> (last accessed 10.05.2022).

<sup>190</sup> Jones, Seth G. 2008. *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*. Santa Monica: RAND National Defense Research Institute, p. 107.

<sup>191</sup> Secretary Colin L. Powell, U.S. Department of State. 2001. “Remarks to the National Foreign Policy Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations.” Washington, DC. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/5762.htm> (last accessed 03.02.2023).

<sup>192</sup> Committee on Foreign Relations. 2011. “Evaluating US Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan. A Majority Staff Report Prepared for the Use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate.” United States Senate. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-112SPRT66591/pdf/CPRT-112SPRT66591.pdf> (last accessed 16.08.2022).

In Germany, parliamentary mandates emphasised that the military presence enabled and supported humanitarian and developmental work in the state-building process. A Taliban commander explained: “When we became convinced that our support for them [aid agencies] resulted in benefits for the current government and Americans, we started opposing them.”<sup>193</sup> With the resurgence of the Taliban by 2005, NATO PRTs “tended to be more successful when working closely with the local population to coordinate reconstruction projects and secure their area of operations.”<sup>194</sup> The supposedly neutral site of ODA-funded development and humanitarian work was thus a political arena of the war, both on paper and on the ground.

Based on this understanding of the situation, this chapter of this report looks at the intersection of the civilian and military sphere in Afghanistan. The first section argues that the development projects took place in a militarised environment — their set-up and organisational parameters were influenced by this fact, and they in turn contributed to the increasing bunkerisation of the development sector in an environment where the boundaries between the two spheres were heavily blurred. The second section looks at the German police projects that were promoted in Germany as civilian state-building projects. However, set within a conflict zone and in conjunction with the general paramilitarisation of the police sector, the civilian character of policing in Afghanistan was an illusion created to legitimise its own existence. The third section reviews the most blatant overlap between the civilian and military spheres in the PRTs that used development for military purposes. This affected the development sector in that the number of violent attacks on humanitarian aid workers increased as they were seen as an extension of the foreign military occupation.

## *1. The militarisation of living, work and public places*

For much of the period between 2001 and 2021, the ruling political parties in Germany did not call the war in Afghanistan a war. Germany’s own role in funding and devising the blueprint of institution-building, participating in the ISAF mission and promoting a neoliberal model for economic development in Afghanistan was labelled as a peace and stabilisation mission (in German: Friedens- und Stabilisierungseinsatz). The decades before 2001 were characterised as a “state of war and civil war,” whereas the mandate to legitimise the Bundeswehr mission in Afghanistan was described as a “peace mission” (in German: Friedensmission).<sup>195</sup> In December 2001, in its motion on the participation of the Bundeswehr in NATO’s ISAF mission, the German Federal Government justified its decision to make an “essential contribution to the implementation” of a “national reconciliation process” as agreed upon in the Bonn Agreement geared towards “reconstruction” (in German: Neuaufbau).<sup>196</sup> The 2004 and 2006 motions reiterated that “overcoming the consequences of 25 years of war and civil war” will be a “long-term” process.<sup>197</sup> In the 2009 motion, the government argued that continued German participation in the ISAF mission is necessary to prevent a “relapse” (in German: Rückfall) of

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<sup>193</sup> As quoted in: Jackson, Ashley and Antonio Giustozzi. 2012. “Talking to the other side. Humanitarian engagement with the Taliban in Afghanistan.” Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/7968.pdf>, p. 24 (last accessed 03.02.2023).

<sup>194</sup> Jackson, Ashley and Antonio Giustozzi. 2012. “Talking to the other side. Humanitarian engagement with the Taliban in Afghanistan.” Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/7968.pdf>, p. 107 (last accessed 03.02.2023).

<sup>195</sup> Deutscher Bundestag. Stenographischer Bericht, 210. Sitzung, 22. Dezember 2001, Plenarprotokoll 14/210.

<sup>196</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 14/7930. 21.12.2001.

<sup>197</sup> Die Bundesregierung-Drucksache 15/3710. 22.09.2004; Bundesregierung-Drucksache 16/2573. 13.09.2006.

Afghanistan “to the time of the civil war and terror rule of the Taliban” because a stable Afghanistan would be in the “vital interest of Germany.”<sup>198</sup> In another motion in 2011, the government argued that the “threat of a civil war with regional repercussions is by far not entirely averted,” which would also affect Germany.<sup>199</sup>

The word “war” was also avoided by politicians in their speeches about their own involvement in post-2001 Afghanistan to such an extent that they bent over backwards to find ways to downplay what was, by any definition, participation in a war without calling it a war. For instance, when then German Minister of Defence Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (CSU) declared in 2010 that the mission in Afghanistan “could colloquially be called war,”<sup>200</sup> he used linguistic chicanery to deflect attention from the growing concern of German voters and taxpayers that the country continued to be part of a lasting war of which they were not convinced. Among the earlier linguistic twists was the official terminology that referred to fallen German soldiers as “verunglückt,” a euphemism drawn from the word “unfortunate death,” which translates as “died” but has the connotation of an accident. This usage only changed in 2008 when then German Minister of Defence Franz Josef Jung (CDU), acknowledged the death of two German soldiers in Afghanistan as “fallen for our country in a mission for peace.”<sup>201</sup> Members of the government tentatively began to refer to the war as an “armed conflict,”<sup>202</sup> a term that is used in international law and international humanitarian law.<sup>203</sup>

While German politicians argued about semantics, the reality on the ground in Afghanistan was one of insecurity, violent conflict, the militarisation of everyday life and the introduction of a neoliberal war economy that resulted in growing inequality. Due to the foreign presence and the accompanying security measures on the ground, urban centres were restructured, with the introduction of t-walls (steel-reinforced, blast-proof concrete wall segments) that created “an archipelago of t-walled enclaves.”<sup>204</sup> The overwhelming majority of foreigners working in the development and reconstruction sector that was rapidly growing with the military invasion lived in fortified compounds behind T-walls and fences, often patrolled by armed guards. Due to the strict security requirements, they were forbidden to enter Afghan homes and to drive or walk without security guards. For most foreign workers who worked in a military or civil capacity in ODA funded projects, for example, “walking” was taboo. In the first decade of the NATO mission, security restrictions had been less strict and foreigners were allowed more leverage by their

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<sup>198</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 17/39. 18.11.2009.

<sup>199</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 17/8166. 14.12.2011.

<sup>200</sup> Agence France Press (AFP). 2010. “Umgangssprachlich herrscht Krieg.” taz.de. <https://taz.de/Guttenberg-zum-Afghanistan-Einsatz/!5144898/> (last accessed 03.02.2023).

<sup>201</sup> Hengst, Björn. 2008. “Gefallen in Afghanistan. Der Krieg, der nicht Krieg heißen darf.” Der Spiegel. <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/gefallen-in-afghanistan-der-krieg-der-nicht-krieg-heissen-darf-a-586423.htm> (last accessed 03.02.2023).

<sup>202</sup> Fischer, Sebastian and Matthias Gebauer. 2010. “Bundeswehreinsatz: Westerwelle wagt sich an die Wahrheit über Afghanistan.” Der Spiegel. <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/bundeswehreinsatz-westerwelle-wagt-sich-an-die-wahrheit-ueber-afghanistan-a-677063.html> (last accessed 03.02.2023).

<sup>203</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). 2008. “How is the Term ‘Armed Conflict’ Defined in International Humanitarian Law?” ICRC. <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/opinion-paper-armed-conflict.pdf> (last accessed 06.11.2022); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2011. “International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict.” UNHCR New York and Geneva. [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR\\_in\\_armed\\_conflict.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR_in_armed_conflict.pdf) (last accessed 06.11.2022).

<sup>204</sup> Rubaii, Kali. 2022. “‘Concrete Soldiers’: T-Walls and Coercive Landscaping in Iraq’. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 54 (2): 357–62, p. 360.

organisations, but over time the restrictions became more drastic, creating a more blatant spatial division between foreigners and Afghans.<sup>205</sup>

Security arrangements varied from organisation to organisation. Some organisations opted for a more community-embedded approach to security, while others built up securitized compounds to ensure the safety of their staff. Among German organisations receiving ODA, security arrangements varied widely, but they responded to the militarised environment of which they were a part. For instance, while GIZ was initially housed in independent facilities, after the attack on the German consulate, German staff in Mazar-e Sharif were housed inside the NATO base, which was connected to the Kabul International Airport. After the attack on the Green Zone in Kabul in 2017, official GIZ workplaces for foreign employees were based in Camp Baron and the “Italian House.”<sup>206</sup> These places were usually run jointly with private security contractors. The owner of “Camp Baron,” for instance, was the President and CEO of the Dreshak Group specialising in hospitality, aviation and logistics, home maintenance and security providing securitised lodging for foreign nationals and upper class Afghans in Kabul.<sup>207</sup>

The workplace of Afghan GIZ employees was located in a mid-range, securitised hotel in Kabul. Afghan nationals working directly for GIZ had to live within the premises of the hotel unless given permission to leave the hotel for family visits and holidays. The trend toward securitised compounds is not limited to Afghanistan, but part of a larger trend of building fortified aid compounds in urban areas in the global South. The military occupation proliferated the construction of cities within cities, which made the city in large parts inaccessible to its own residents. Characteristic of working in compounds - such as locations in the green zone - is that the workplace, living place, areas for leisure and shopping are integrated. Foreign employees cannot leave the premises unless for sanctioned work trips or formal events (in places with security clearance). The situation was different for national NGOs employing Afghan nationals. Nevertheless, the security aspect also played a major role here: local NGOs with foreign funding tended to rent buildings as offices that were set back from the street and therefore offered a certain distance and security from potential threats.<sup>208</sup> While some national NGOs – also depending on whether they were located in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, Kandahar, Jalalabad or provincial towns – had a caretaker to open the gate, others with funds for a private security service hired armed guards to monitor people and vehicles coming in and out. A report from ten years into the NATO intervention summarises the outcome of the enmeshing of civilian and military sites in Afghanistan’s urban landscapes:

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<sup>205</sup> Fluri, Jennifer. 2009. “‘Foreign Passports Only:’ Geographies of (Post)Conflict Work in Kabul, Afghanistan.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 5, p. 990.

<sup>206</sup> The Baron. 2022. “About The Baron.” The Baron. <https://kabul.thebaronhotels.com/index.html> (last accessed 01.08.2022); The Dreshak Group. 2022. Hospitality. The Dreshak Group. <https://www.dreshakgroup.ae/portfolio/hospitality/> (last accessed 01.08.2022); The Dreshak Group. 2022. Dreshak Security Solutions. The Dreshak Group. <https://www.dreshakgroup.ae/portfolio/security-solutions/> (last accessed 01.08.2022).

<sup>207</sup> Dreshak Security Solutions is a private security contractor that has accompanied the US-led NATO military deployment in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Until the formal US military withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, the corporation was the “largest service provider of Third Country Nationals” to private US security companies. “Third Country Nationals” deployed to Iraq included men from Uganda, Macedonia and Bosnia. The company does not disclose how many private security forces from third states it hired and deployed in support of NATO member states in Afghanistan. The Dreshak Group had been given a governmental contract to build another hotel in Nathia Gali in the district of Abbottabad in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province).

<sup>208</sup> Similarly, buildings housing private firms entangled with international stakeholders are often not identifiable as such from the outside if not known prior.

*"In the fraught urban geography of Kabul and other major cities, there is little to distinguish the blast walls of UN compounds from those of the Coalition or of private security companies. That so much prime real estate and so many blocked-off roads have been taken over by foreign military (and para-military) establishments in Kabul is not only a source of continuous traffic jams and increasing aggravation for the population of the city but also a violation of international humanitarian law (and one that the UN has failed to raise forcefully)." <sup>209</sup>*

The violation of international humanitarian law raised here refers to Article 58 of the 1977 Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, which states that the "Parties to the Conflict shall, to the maximum extent feasible [...] avoid locating military objectives within or near densely populated civilian areas."<sup>210</sup> This goal seems futile, considering the extent to which military, diplomatic and NGO compounds were intermingled in urban spaces in Afghanistan, particularly in Kabul. Foreign military and Afghan armed and security forces not only patrolled streets and compounds, but also entered civilian organisations and facilities that were considered neutral under the Law of Armed Conflict, as the head of the MSF's mission, Michiel Hofman, explained in an interview conducted in 2010:

*"I was quite shocked to see that in most health structures, the normal rules for the neutrality of health systems did not apply. International forces and police would regularly go into hospitals to harass patients. Hospitals would be attacked. There is a dire record of respecting the neutrality of health structures."<sup>211</sup>*

Organisations financed by German ODA funds operated in an environment where NGO workers, Afghan and foreign, were also seen as taking sides in the war. Although they claimed independence, neutrality or impartiality, they were seen as an extension of the donors involved in the NATO war and the Afghan government.<sup>212</sup> Managing risks and threats was therefore an integral part of the development and reconstruction projects in Afghanistan, which is clearly reflected in the organisational set-up of risk management structures such as GIZ's Risk Management Office (RMO). Established in 2008, the RMO made "situation assessments from information from the regional and provincial offices," analysing "security incidents, information from national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, public sources, media reports and scientific analyses."<sup>213</sup> German organisations such as GIZ, KfW Development Bank as well as the political foundations (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Konrad-

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<sup>209</sup> Donini, Antonio. 2010. "Afghanistan: Humanitarianism Unravelling?" Tufts University Feinstein International Center. <https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/Afghan-briefing-paper.pdf>, p.3 (last accessed 06.12.2022).

<sup>210</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)." 8 June 1977, 1125 UNTS 609. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b37f40.html> (last accessed 06.12.2022).

<sup>211</sup> Alas, Joel. 2009. "Doctors without Borders Returns to Afghanistan." Spiegel International. <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/five-years-after-slayings-doctors-without-borders-returns-to-afghanistan-a-654702.html> (last accessed 06.12.2022).

<sup>212</sup> Jackson, Ashley and Antonio Giustozzi. 2012. "Talking to the other side. Humanitarian engagement with the Taliban in Afghanistan." Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/7968.pdf>, p. 3 (last accessed 03.02.2023).

<sup>213</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 19/8031. 25.02.2019.

Adenauer-Stiftung) were part of the security system.<sup>214</sup> Organisations such as the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) funded by foreign offices and development agencies of key NATO member states such as the German AA, USAID, the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, continued to provide extensive risk assessments with analyses of the security situation in various provinces and districts, as well as alert systems for attacks and security incidents to the NGOs they supported.<sup>215</sup>

While organisational safeguards to manage the risks were geared towards supporting both foreign and local Afghan staff, insecurity was experienced differently depending on an employee's positioning in terms of race, national affiliation, gender and class. The risks were especially palpable for Afghans who implemented ODA-funded projects and programmes, not only in the obvious sense that they were the ones who took the risks of working in the field in unstable environments, but also in less obvious ways. As locals with local kinship networks, the ripple effects of their cooperation with international professionals could also spill over into their families. One Afghan who worked with GIZ put it this way:

*"Also, my family, we always faced challenges and problems because of these issues [...] Many of our neighbours or relatives of other families were talking negatively about this: why is he working with an international organisation like that? They were blaming [me]."*<sup>216</sup>

This negative association was more than a question of reputation – in an environment where the murder of translators and cultural advisors for the Bundeswehr was well known, association with "kharejis" (foreigners) serving international organisations with headquarters in NATO member states was dangerous.<sup>217</sup> While most assassinations, ambushes and suicide attacks were focused on Afghan armed and security forces and civilians, Afghan development workers as well as journalists were also kidnapped and killed.<sup>218</sup>

Despite the negative response from Afghan peers and the risks associated with working with foreign actors, and despite facing the fear of being killed while working on projects in volatile provinces such as Kunduz for German organisations, the Afghan GIZ employee said he had no choice but to continue with the job because of the economic insecurity his family faced:

*"I needed to work. If I left work, there was nothing to support me. Just among 10 persons in a family, was one worker. I want to talk directly about these issues. Many times I faced*

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<sup>214</sup> The Risk Management Office was financed with EUR 18,398,997 (4,28% of the overall EUR 430 Mio) in 2018 and EUR 16,022,891 (3,73% of the overall EUR 430 Mio) in the previous year through the "Stabilitätspakt Afghanistan," see: Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 19/8031. 25.02.2019.

<sup>215</sup> The International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) also received funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands and Norway; Luxemburg's aid and development agency; currently acceding states such as Sweden; partnering states of the NATO including Switzerland. International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO). "Our funding." INSO.- <https://ngosafety.org/our-funding/> (last accessed 08.12.2022).

<sup>216</sup> Interview No.15.

<sup>217</sup> Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ). 2013. "Bundeswehr-Übersetzer in Kundus ermordet." SZ. <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/afghanistan-bundeswehr-uebersetzer-in-kundus-ermordet-1.1826600> (last accessed 08.12.2022); Der Tagesspiegel. 2009. "Tod beim Heimatbesuch." Der Tagesspiegel. <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/afghanistan-tod-beim-heimatbesuch/1597062.html> (last accessed 08.12.2022).

<sup>218</sup> In military and civil sites of labour foreigners were throughout the two decades of war also targets of lethal and injuring attacks and kidnappings.

*challenges on the way with the Taliban, [who] were many times on the way. It was on the highways. I faced threats many times. I changed my clothes, I changed my uniforms. But it was a really tough situation for me.”<sup>219</sup>*

Despite having access to resources like the RMO, the employee pointed out that it was still Afghans who faced the danger of encountering members of the insurgency, and that the insurgents were actively seeking Afghans affiliated with the international presence.

The moral quandary, justified by the different treatment of differing groups of staff, was not lost on the former BMZ staff. Questions such as whether the life of a person of colour was worth less than that of a white person because the KfW Entwicklungsbank tended to give particularly risky jobs to Turkish or Afghan contractors were raised again and again in the course of the anonymised interviews with German officials against the background that this could not be addressed in the workplace itself. It was also questioned why employees who were directly linked to German institutions were given special privileges even though the threat situation was "in the red zone", as one BMZ staff member put it.<sup>220</sup> The employee added:

*“It is also a moral question: who do the risk rules apply to? [...] Who is protected and who is not and why is risk management outsourced by KfW while their own staff is repatriated to Dubai? So yes, even when we were there, KfW staff was working from Dubai, for instance, and had their longer arm for implementation fully outsourced to companies that had in the tender process been chosen for the projects.”<sup>221</sup>*

As scholars have pointed out, outsourcing and subcontracting shifts the risk of injury and death in the war zone to Afghans and contractors from the Global South and Eastern Europe, keeping the death toll from German and NATO member states comparatively low.<sup>222</sup> Many incidents with consequences for Afghans went unreported, in part deliberately, e.g. kidnappings for ransom negotiations. Most deaths and injuries of Afghans were reported only in national news platforms. The New York Times Kabul bureau’s Afghan staff began documenting deaths of Afghan “pro-government” armed forces, police officers, civilians and foreign military personnel across provinces from September 2018 to August 2021.<sup>223</sup>

The military occupation forced Afghans into a neo-colonial dilemma: it offered them economic opportunity to provide for their families, but at the potential cost of their own lives or the lives of the very families they were trying to support. In the absence of alternatives, this perpetuated a thoroughly exploitative environment that capitalised on the precarious situation of Afghans in Afghanistan. Even though German ODA institutions tried to “manage” the risks, a disproportionate

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<sup>219</sup> Interview No. 15.

<sup>220</sup> Interview No. 20.

<sup>221</sup> Interview No. 20.

<sup>222</sup> Fluri, Jennifer. 2011. ‘Bodies, Bombs and Barricades: Geographies of Conflict and Civilian (in)Security’. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (2): 280–96; Fluri, Jennifer. 2009. ‘“Foreign Passports Only”: Geographies of (Post)Conflict Work in Kabul, Afghanistan’. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99 (5): 986–94; Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. 2022. “Human Costs of U.S. Post-9/11 Wars: Direct War Deaths in Major War Zones.” *The Costs of War*. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/WarDeathToll> (last accessed 09.12.2022); Coburn, Noah. 2018. *Under Contract: The Invisible Workers of America’s Global War*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p.12.

<sup>223</sup> The New York Times. “The Afghan War Casualty Report.” The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/afghan-war-casualty-reports> (last accessed 10.03.2022).



burden for ensuring the safety of personnel fell on the Afghans themselves, with all too often fatal consequences.

## 2. German involvement in security sector reform and police projects

The portrayal of Germany's participation in the war in Afghanistan as a "peace and stabilisation mission" was also reflected in the German approach to the economic development and reconstruction of the Afghan security sector. In the Bundestag debate on the establishment of an Enquete Commission on 8 July 2022, Member of Parliament (MP) Philip Krämer of the parliamentary group Bündnis 90/Die Grünen suggests in his speech: "Regular evaluations and self-criticism already during the war [...] could have perhaps led the effort to a more positive effort."<sup>224</sup> However, it is precisely this logic of examining "successes" and "failures" in purely internal assessments and evaluations that promotes a self-fulfilling prophecy that does not aim to stop or avoid military interventions in the future but on the contrary, to further perfect the "networked approach" to future wars.

Germany was assigned as "lead nation" and then "key partner nation" to lead Afghanistan's security sector, which included the build-up, training and equipment of the Afghan police.<sup>225</sup> In line with its general approach to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, the German Federal Government portrayed the task of police sector reform as a civilian mission geared toward stabilisation and state-building. From a purely institutional, formalistic perspective, this framing made sense: the police were not supposed to be involved in war, and German law distinguishes between sending military abroad (for which parliamentary approval is necessary) and sending police officers in advisory capacity (which requires only that Parliament be informed, without a parliamentary right of appeal).<sup>226</sup>

The German Bundesregierung portrayed Germany's role in the Afghan security sector reform as neutral and advisory to the Afghan government in its state-building process. The increasing militarisation of the police as well as the involvement of the German police mission in this development was downplayed by the presentation that German police officers were "supporting" the Afghan government in an advisory capacity and that their involvement was civilian in nature. In fact, Germany directly funded the institutionalisation and capacity building of Afghan defence, security and foreign policy in a country at war. German institutions and organisations were keen to give the appearance of apolitical support by providing technical expertise, while the Afghans were supposedly "in charge" of building the police as a state

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<sup>224</sup> Krämer, Philip. 2022. "Einsetzung Enquete-Kommission Afghanistan." Bundestagsfraktion Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. <https://www.gruene-bundestag.de/parlament/bundestagsreden/einsetzung-enquete-kommission-afghanistan-1> (last accessed 09.07.2022).

<sup>225</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2006. "Sicherheit und Stabilität durch Krisenprävention gemeinsam stärken. 1. Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Umsetzung des Aktionsplanes 'zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung.'" Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/217532/544e310f5724dfe364875cf73c0ae6db/aktionsplan-bericht1-de-data.pdf> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>226</sup> Eckard, Steffen. 2016. *International assistance to Police Reform. Managing Peacebuilding*. Palgrave Macmillan London, p. 125. The participation of German police in the EUPOL mission is regulated through §8 BuPolG, while the participation of German police in bilateral international projects such as the GPPT in Afghanistan is based on §65 BuPolG. The party of DIE LINKE has repeatedly argued for a revision of these laws, see for example: Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 16/3421. 08.11.2006; Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 17/8381. 18.01.2012.

institution. Germany's trivialisation of the geopolitical and national gravity of funding and building the police of a country under military occupation failed to recognise that the ongoing war created an environment in which police forces could become paramilitarised and assume roles, characteristics and functions similar to those of militias or the military.<sup>227</sup>

This militarisation of functions, in which the police also took on counterinsurgency and high-risk tasks alongside the Afghan National Army (ANA), was glossed over by a misleading narrative of the civil nature of police projects, that claimed that the environment forced a blending of civilian and military.<sup>228</sup> This allowed actors to continue supporting these projects despite evidence to the contrary. Police projects were often characterised as merely requiring resources and perseverance for success. However, this approach instrumentalised a political ideology that denied that the ANP operated in an environment shaped by decades of war and were expected to participate in military and counterinsurgency operations. Due to the deaths in their ranks in the ongoing war, they were subsumed under the category of ANSF. This also included the ANA and militias such as the Afghan Local Police (ALP). This semantic conflation turned the police force into a less-trained, poorly-equipped subcategory of the army.

West Germany has been involved in police projects in Afghanistan since the 1950s. This started as part of the containment policy of the Cold War to curb the influence of the Soviet Union, which was building up the Afghan army. German police projects at the time were comprised of a mixture of development projects and intelligence relations.<sup>229</sup> By the time Germany took over the leadership of the police mission after 2001, the police force was a highly politicised institution, underpaid and facing manifold work-related hazards, and working in communities dominated by a legal pluralism from various governments since the 1960s.<sup>230</sup>

It is difficult to judge in retrospect who did what in the police reform after 2001 and what impact this had. This is partly due to the German organisational environment in which the projects were conducted and the prescribed responsibilities and duties often overlapped. The German Police Project Office (GPPO) collaborated with the German Embassy, GIZ and, in the initial phase of infrastructure development, with the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (Technisches Hilfswerk, THW). However, both the BMI and the AA were entrusted with coordination and implementation tasks. "The organisational separation between actual police assistance on the ground (Ministry of the Interior and Police Project Office) and the task of coordination (Foreign Office and Embassy) resulted in neither ministry being fully responsible," one analyst remarked.<sup>231</sup>

Beyond that Germany was only one of many countries active in police capacity building and institutional development. Even more significantly, the impact of German projects has been miniscule in comparison to the US contribution. For instance, Germany spent 70 million euros on police reform between 2002 and 2006. The USA spent USD 2.1 billion in the same period adopting

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<sup>227</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius and Jörg Krempel. 2010. "Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei." Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK-Report, 9/2010). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-292532>, p. 16 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>228</sup> Ostermeier, Lars. 2017. *Imaginationen rechtsstaatlicher und demokratischer Polizei: Deutsche Polizeiprojekte in Afghanistan von 1957 bis 2010*. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Giustozzi, Antonio and Mohammad Isaqzadeh. 2013. *Policing Afghanistan: the Politics of the Lame Leviathan*. London: Hurst & Company.

<sup>231</sup> Eckard, Steffen. 2016. *International assistance to Police Reform. Managing Peacebuilding*. Palgrave Macmillan London, p. 128.

a markedly different, more militarised approach to policing. This affected the overall state of policing in Afghanistan.<sup>232</sup>

## 1. The German strategy in relation to police development and results

At the beginning of the military intervention, the involved donor countries decided against a comprehensive, integrated security sector reform for Afghanistan. Instead, designated individual “lead nations” took charge of various security sector areas.<sup>233</sup> The conditions for institution building and the approach to political, economic and financial governance in Afghanistan were defined at the Bonn conference, as was the division of tasks between NATO countries and their Afghan allies. Due to its historical experience, Germany was assigned to focus on the police, while other lead nations, such as Italy, took over the justice sector. The USA focused on the military, the UK on counter narcotics, and Japan on demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR).

Although one of the strengths of actors in the multilateral system is the ability to set priorities and share responsibilities, this system also has its limitations. NATO countries' approach of multi-agency management of police forces and ensuring that all donors involved also have access to intelligence and information on what is happening on the ground led to overarching structural problems.<sup>234</sup> These were compounded by the strategy of the first years of NATO's deployment not to make the war and military occupation appear as such. This strategy was proposed by UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi who took a pivotal role in laying the multilateral foundations for “reconstruction” in Afghanistan at the UN talks on Afghanistan on the Petersberg in Bonn in 2001.<sup>235</sup> Although this was presented as an attempt to avoid overstaying their welcome in Afghanistan and to quickly return “responsibility” for the formal political arenas to the Afghans, there were equally insufficient funds available to build up the police sector in Afghanistan probably also because the Bush administration's attention shifted from Afghanistan to its real target, Iraq.<sup>236</sup> One consequence of this was that not enough attention was paid to strengthening Afghan institutions, such as the Afghan Ministry of the Interior (MOI), which was responsible for supporting the Afghan police. Moreover, in 2003, the GPPT had initially only assigned one advisor to the MOI, which also indicates insufficient funding.<sup>237</sup>

Germany was initially involved in bilateral police project teams and later in the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan).<sup>238</sup> The 2002 Headquarters and Status

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<sup>232</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG). 2007. “Reforming Afghanistan's Police.” ICG Report 138. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/reforming-afghanistan-s-police>, p. 7 (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>233</sup> Perito, Robert M. 2009. “Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform.” United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan\\_police.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan_police.pdf), p. 2 (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.; Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2011. ‘Paramilitarization and Security Sector Reform: The Afghan National Police.’ *International Peacekeeping* 18 (1): 79–95.

<sup>235</sup> Regionales Informationszentrum der Vereinten Nationen (UNRIC). 2001. “UN Talks on Afghanistan 2001.” UNRIC. <https://unric.org/de/un-talks-on-afghanistan-2001/> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>236</sup> Klein, Naomi. 2008. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Picador.

<sup>237</sup> Perito, Robert M. 2009. “Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform.” United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan\\_police.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan_police.pdf), p. 3 (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>238</sup> On Germany's involvement in the European police mission: International Crisis Group (ICG). 2007. “Reforming Afghanistan's Police.” ICG (Asia Report No 138).

Agreement outlined the GPPO's tasks in Kabul. These included advising the Afghan security authorities on the development of an Afghan police force, training police recruits and setting up a police academy, bilateral funding for the police and coordinating international support for the development of the Afghan police.<sup>239</sup> German police advisors arrived in Afghanistan in March 2002 and opened the German coordination office (in German: Koordinationsbüro). Initial work focused on infrastructure, training and equipment needs. Weapons and ammunition were excluded from the equipment provisions — though this reportedly did not stop the police projects from supplying in addition to heaters and jackets, also batons and tear gas in 2008.<sup>240</sup> Examples of reconstruction and equipment include several local and district-level police facilities (mostly in and around Kabul), the MOI complex, the provincial office of the Criminal Investigation Department, the headquarters of the Afghan Border and Highway Police, the border police facilities at Kabul International Airport, and the anti-narcotics and anti-terrorism agencies.<sup>241</sup> In August 2005, German police advisors set up an emergency call dispatch centre at the Kabul City Police — though only functioning for service in Kabul.<sup>242</sup> The German focus of engagement for the police in Afghanistan was on training officers as police leaders. The German-Afghan Seat and Status Agreement signed by the BMI and the Transitional Government of the MOI confirmed the intention to provide training and equipment assistance to the Afghan police.<sup>243</sup>

To implement the training programme, one focus of German involvement was the reconstruction of the police academy building in Kabul. THW rebuilt the academy within six months and reopened it on 24 August 2002.<sup>244</sup> The Police Academy was geared towards training police officers (saran), a rank comparable to higher intermediate service, and non-commissioned officers (satanman), comparable to intermediate service.<sup>245</sup> The Police Academy initially enrolled 1,500 officer cadets for a five-year programme and 500 non-commissioned officers for a three-month recruit training course.<sup>246</sup> Focusing on the leadership levels of the police in the expectation that the elite's notions of discipline, loyalty and obedience towards superior

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[https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38619/138\\_reforming\\_afghanistan\\_s\\_police.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38619/138_reforming_afghanistan_s_police.pdf), p. 8 (last accessed 12.12.2022);

Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2011. 'Paramilitarization and Security Sector Reform: The Afghan National Police.' *International Peacekeeping* 18 (1): 79–95; Gross, Eva. 2009. "Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan: the EU's Contribution." Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies. <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/security-sector-reform-afghanistan-eu-s-contribution> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>239</sup> Wilder, Andrew. 2009. "Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police." Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), p. 19.

<sup>240</sup> Ostermeier, Lars. 2017. *Imaginationen rechtsstaatlicher und demokratischer Polizei: Deutsche Polizeiprojekte in Afghanistan von 1957 bis 2010*. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, p. 187.

<sup>241</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 46 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>242</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA) and Bundesministerium des Innern (BMI). 2005. "Assistance for rebuilding the police force in Afghanistan." AA and BMI. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/14231fd9-ef6d-39be-85d6-1c96296f9b4f/E5BEE4FA0D292275C125736300318ED0-Full\\_Report.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/14231fd9-ef6d-39be-85d6-1c96296f9b4f/E5BEE4FA0D292275C125736300318ED0-Full_Report.pdf) (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.; Interview No. 8.

<sup>245</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA) and Bundesministerium des Innern (BMI). 2005. "Assistance for rebuilding the police force in Afghanistan." AA and BMI. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/14231fd9-ef6d-39be-85d6-1c96296f9b4f/E5BEE4FA0D292275C125736300318ED0-Full\\_Report.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/14231fd9-ef6d-39be-85d6-1c96296f9b4f/E5BEE4FA0D292275C125736300318ED0-Full_Report.pdf) (last accessed 10.12.2022); Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2011. 'Paramilitarization and Security Sector Reform: The Afghan National Police.' *International Peacekeeping* 18 (1): 79–95.

<sup>246</sup> Perito, Robert M. 2009. "Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform." United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan\\_police.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan_police.pdf), p. 3 (last accessed 10.12.2022).

authorities would trickle down to all ranks. Officers were trained to lead groups of untrained and underpaid police officers who often entered the police service not out of conviction but out of extreme insecurity and the need for a salary.<sup>247</sup>

The police mission set up by Germany focused on de-escalation and conflict resolution in line with multilateral notions of security that were far removed from the reality of police forces on the ground. In a review of the experience of German police officers in Afghanistan, Lars Ostermeier, who researched German police and security projects in historical and contemporary missions, points out that the officer training, which was based on a European police academy model that provided university-level education and shorter academic programmes, privileged Afghans from wealthy families who benefited from upward educational mobility: for only wealthy families could afford to educate their children over such a prolonged period.<sup>248</sup> Whether intended or not, the project thus exacerbated existing class differences.

The German approach was subsequently criticised and questioned internally, i.e. within the NATO alliance. When the USA introduced its own programme in the police and security sector, the character of policing in Afghanistan was fundamentally changed, also because the NATO allies, in particular the USA, judged the German approach as too slow. By 2005, the academy had trained 251 police officers, 2,299 non-commissioned officers and 752 border police officers. 3,302 graduates (57 of them women) completed their degree during this period.<sup>249</sup> Before Germany handed over operations of the police academy to the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan in mid-2007, about 4,500 police officers had graduated.<sup>250</sup> A special report by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) on Afghanistan's police references Afghan Interior Minister Mohammed Qanooni as stating that the Interim Authority's goal was to build a police force of 70,000 officers. To train a police force of that size based on the German approach "would have taken decades."<sup>251</sup> More than that, SIGAR stated that the German approach had not led to fair ethnic representation within the ANP, which had been a primary goal of the Afghan government and its international donors.<sup>252</sup> While the Bonn Agreement stipulated the importance of a multi-ethnic police force, a 2005 report by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) pointed out that neither the Afghan government, Germany nor the USA considered ethnicity as a variable in their

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<sup>247</sup> Daulatzai, Anila. 2015. "Not Their War to Fight: The Afghan Police, Families of their Dead, And an American War." Watson Institute Costs of War. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2015/not-their-war-fight-afghan-police-families-their-dead-and-american-war> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>248</sup> Ostermeier, Lars. 2017. *Imaginationen rechtsstaatlicher und demokratischer Polizei: Deutsche Polizeiprojekte in Afghanistan von 1957 bis 2010*. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, p. 171.

<sup>249</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA) and Bundesministerium des Innern (BMI). 2005. "Assistance for rebuilding the police force in Afghanistan." AA and BMI. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/14231fd9-ef6d-39be-85d6-1c96296f9b4f/E5BEE4FA0D292275C125736300318ED0-Full\\_Report.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/14231fd9-ef6d-39be-85d6-1c96296f9b4f/E5BEE4FA0D292275C125736300318ED0-Full_Report.pdf) (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>250</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 46 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>251</sup> Perito, Robert M. 2009. "Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform." United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan\\_police.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan_police.pdf), p. 3 (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>252</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 47 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

training.<sup>253</sup> A 2007 report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) estimated that Tajiks were consistently overrepresented in the academy.<sup>254</sup>

The internal divergences between NATO states in regard to the German approach to building up the police forces further intensified, as Germany was not the only actor training the police in Afghanistan. While Germany took the lead in the police sector, many countries and international organisations directly implemented projects or provided funding through the LOTFA between 2002 and 2005. The Netherlands and Norway sent experts to assist with training at the National Police Academy (NPA). The UK trained the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), and the USA provided additional police training through the private contractor DynCorp International.<sup>255</sup> The AA attempted to improve its coordination by appointing a special envoy for police reform coordination with the rank of ambassador.<sup>256</sup> Nevertheless, the police coordination was judged by SIGAR to be “to little more than information sharing.”<sup>257</sup>

## 2. The militarisation of the police force

Within a few years, the US took the lead in building the Afghan police sector. An Afghan staff member at ministerial level who was involved with German ODA projects in the security sector assessed the German contribution as significant but also limited: “The problem was again, it was US-centric when it comes to the decision making. Regardless of what Western countries were telling, at the end of the day it was the US that made the last decision.”<sup>258</sup> This is important for assessing the impact of German DC in Afghanistan during the NATO mission in terms of German strategy, cooperation and coordination with other NATO member states.

The US approach to police forces in Afghanistan — in line with its overall approach to defence, security and development policy in Afghanistan — was characterised by the use of contractors and a militarised approach to policing. The outsourcing of military sites of operation to private contracting companies is a cross-cutting feature of US warfare, not only in Afghanistan but worldwide.<sup>259</sup> In a study of war contractors in Afghanistan, anthropologist Noah Coburn argues that their use was a carefully tailored strategy to minimise outcry from the American public. The outsourcing of jobs to private contracting companies, many of whom were not American-owned and often employed non-Americans, meant that “deaths did not generate the same outcry among voters as when a young American soldier was killed.”<sup>260</sup> This strategy, Coburn

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<sup>253</sup> United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). 2005. “Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, but Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined.” GAO. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-05-575.pdf>, p. 21 (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>254</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG). 2007. “Reforming Afghanistan’s Police.” ICG (Asia Report No 138). [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38619/138\\_reforming\\_afghanistan\\_s\\_police.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/38619/138_reforming_afghanistan_s_police.pdf) (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>255</sup> Eckard, Steffen. 2016. *International assistance to Police Reform. Managing Peacebuilding*. Palgrave Macmillan London, p. 141.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>257</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. “Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan.” SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 46 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>258</sup> Interview No. 11.

<sup>259</sup> Klein, Naomi. 2008. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Picador.

<sup>260</sup> Coburn, Noah. 2018. *Under Contract. The Invisible Workers of America’s Global War*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p. 12.

argues, was part of a broader push to avoid US casualties and thus avoid public scrutiny of its extensive foreign military interventions. It did not, however, reduce the human cost of war. Drone strikes, for instance, operate according to a similar racist logic.<sup>261</sup> While they reduced American casualties, they caused a massive spike in civilian death and suffering in Afghanistan and in the border areas.

The USA also took the approach of outsourcing training and recruitment for police training in Afghanistan. When the USA began to support the ANP through its own training programmes in 2003, it focused on training the lower ranks. The US approach was premised on a neoliberal idea of institution-building, where it is more efficient and profitable to subcontract security companies. This led to the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) contracting DynCorp International to train recruits.<sup>262</sup> The courses that were offered through the contractor suffered from several shortcomings. Firstly, they were shorter than the German officer training. The training included eight-week courses in basic police skills for literate, non-commissioned officers; five-week courses for illiterate patrol officers, and a 15-day Transitional Integration Program for on-duty police officers.<sup>263</sup> Secondly, the quality of training was consistently described as questionable. For example, the lessons were given in English, facilitated by Afghan translators who had to familiarise themselves with police terminology. The participants were often dependent on the job as breadwinners for their family. However, with a literacy rate of less than 30 per cent, they were often unable to absorb information and learn skills such as report writing and record maintenance.<sup>264</sup>

The US police training focused on quantity, not quality — at the onset of the NATO mission primarily to provide police officers for the Afghan presidential elections in 2004. In 2005, the programme was expanded, with the Pentagon taking over the lead from the State Department. Under the leadership of the Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan (re-named Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, or CSTC-A, in 2006) the Pentagon became the driving force and decision-maker. In 2007, it took over all funding.<sup>265</sup>

At the end of 2007, a new eight-week programme for police training was instituted by the US, the so-called the Focused District Development (FDD) Programme. Under the FDD programme, an entire Afghan police station was to be trained as a group. For the training, a group of police officers was completely withdrawn from an area and replaced by an elite unit of the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP, later renamed Afghan National Civil Order Force, ANCOF).<sup>266</sup> At the end of the training, the police officers were equipped with new weapons and

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<sup>261</sup> Daulatzai, Anila and Sahar Ghumkhor. 2021. "Damage Control: The Unbearable Whiteness of Drone Work." *Jadaliyya*. <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/42483> (last accessed 12.12.2022); Feroz, Emran. 2022. 'Drone Memorial.' *Drone Memorial* (blog). <https://www.dronememorial.com/> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>262</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 50 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>263</sup> Perito, Robert M. 2009. "Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform." United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan\\_police.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan_police.pdf), p. 4 (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius and Jörg Krempel. 2010. "Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei." *Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK-Report, 9/2010)*. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-292532>, p. 14 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>266</sup> Ostermeier, Lars. 2017. *Imaginationen rechtsstaatlicher und demokratischer Polizei: Deutsche Polizeiprojekte in Afghanistan von 1957 bis 2010*. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, p. 120.

supplies and re-deployed as a group. They were accompanied by mentor teams<sup>267</sup> and supported by 14 NATO member states, including teams from Germany, Poland and the Netherlands.<sup>268</sup>

In this way, the training of regular police officers was considerably expanded, and more officers were trained with the help of US funds.<sup>269</sup> This did not, however, alleviate the problems within the police force. The training periods were too short to address underlying issues within the ANP, such as drug use among officers, extortion of citizens and use of force.<sup>270</sup> They also raised new problems. According to research by Cornelius Friesendorf, FDD curricula and other comparable training emphasised military skills such as handling weapons, setting up roadblocks and recognising improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Within the eight-week training segments, only one week focused on the Afghan constitution, criminal procedures or human rights.<sup>271</sup> The legal set up in Afghanistan – in which competing legal systems prevailed – the economic precariousness of police forces and the immediate and omnipresent violence of war and political violence exhausted the NATO states' police project.<sup>272</sup>

A report by the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) lays out: "Whereas the German vision focused on the police as a civilian law and order force, the US regarded police as a security force that also could play a counterinsurgency role."<sup>273</sup> The trainers were retired US police officers and current or former military staff.<sup>274</sup> According to Friesendorf, the ANP was militarised on various levels: Materially, the USA delivered military-grade weapons such as AK-47 machine guns and grenade launchers. Organisationally, the USA streamlined and integrated the command and logistics structures of the ANP and the ANA. ANP units consequently participated

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<sup>267</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 104 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>268</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf> (last accessed 09.12.2022), p. 104.

<sup>269</sup> Perito, Robert M. 2009. "Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform." United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan\\_police.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/resources/afghanistan_police.pdf) (last accessed 10.12.2022), p. 4.

<sup>270</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius. 2011. 'Paramilitarization and Security Sector Reform: The Afghan National Police.' *International Peacekeeping* 18 (1): 79–95, p. 87.

<sup>271</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius and Jörg Krempel. 2010. "Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei." Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK-Report, 9/2010). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-292532>, p. 16 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>272</sup> Daulatzai, Anila. 2015. "Not Their War To Fight: The Afghan Police, Families of their Dead, And an American War." Watson Institute Costs of War. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2015/not-their-war-fight-afghan-police-families-their-dead-and-american-war> (last accessed 10.12.2022).

<sup>273</sup> Gross, Eva. 2009. "Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan: the EU's Contribution." Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies. <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/security-sector-reform-afghanistan-eu's-contribution>, p. 28 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>274</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius and Jörg Krempel. 2010. "Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei." Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK-Report, 9/2010). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-292532>, p. 12 (last accessed 12.12.2022); Gross, Eva. 2009. "Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan: the EU's Contribution." Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies. <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/security-sector-reform-afghanistan-eu's-contribution>, p. 28 (last accessed 12.12.2022).



in higher-risk missions, sometimes even in fights against the Taliban.<sup>275</sup> A German soldier stationed in Kunduz, who had witnessed the training of police officers by DynCorp summarised colloquially: "I saw DynCorp in Kunduz in the camp next to us. I don't agree with the way they worked. I had the impression that they were rather a paramilitary mercenary group."<sup>276</sup>

### 3. Implications for the German police mission

Most public accounts of the different approaches of the US and Germany to the police sector in Afghanistan emphasise the greater influence of US policy on the sector. However, they overlook the impact of the blurring of categories between police and military as well as the paramilitarisation on the German programs. As of 2009, Germany participated in FDD programmes in Regional Command North (RC North) areas.<sup>277</sup> Friesendorf assumes that police training has led to the closest military-police cooperation in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany: The Feldjäger (German military police officers) worked side by side with German police officers.<sup>278</sup>

The Feldjäger are a corps that serves as a component force of the Bundeswehr. Their task is to maintain military discipline and order, military traffic control, as well as carrying out security operations and investigations. The Feldjäger's task was to train Afghan police in the use of weapons, hand-to-hand combat, vehicle searches and securing operations. Officially, it was assured that the Feldjäger and police officers were overseeing different areas of expertise and training. However, during their operations, police officers were equipped with military-grade weapons, bulletproof vests and helmets. They could only be distinguished from the military by their blue uniforms.<sup>279</sup> Clearly, German actors struggled to maintain a formal distinction between police and military in an environment where the US set the tone for security sector reform. Overall, however, it is difficult to separate the German contribution and its impact on police sector reform from US programmes.

It was not until 2008 that the Committee on Internal Affairs (in German: Innenausschuss) of the Bundestag initiated a hearing on the police projects in Afghanistan. The committee was convened because of motions by the FDP, DIE LINKE and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. The motions of the FDP on the training of police forces in Afghanistan<sup>280</sup> and the motion by Bündnis 90/Die Grünen<sup>281</sup> aimed at accelerating and expanding the police force build-up in Afghanistan. DIE

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<sup>275</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius and Jörg Krempel. 2010. "Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei." Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK-Report, 9/2010). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-292532>, p. 16 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>276</sup> Interview No. 25.

<sup>277</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 104 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>278</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius and Jörg Krempel. 2010. "Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei." Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK-Report, 9/2010). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-292532>, p. 16 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>279</sup> Friesendorf, Cornelius and Jörg Krempel. 2010. "Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der afghanischen Polizei." Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK-Report, 9/2010). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-292532>, p. 16 (last accessed 12.12.2022); Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 16/3648. 29.11.2006.

<sup>280</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 16/3648. 29.11.2006.

<sup>281</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 16/124. 09.11.2007.

LINKE, on the other hand, filed a motion to amend the Act on the Federal Police (in German: Bundespolizeigesetz, BuPolG) for foreign deployments of the Federal Police.<sup>282</sup> The motion called for the introduction of parliamentary control over the deployment of police abroad. DIE LINKE's approach aimed at abolishing the distinction between deployment of military abroad, which requires parliamentary approval, and the deployment of police officers in advisory capacity, which only requires parliament to be informed. For the latter, the party wanted to introduce parliamentary scrutiny.

Former Federal Criminal Police Office (in German: Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) official Dieter Schenk supported the motion of the parliamentary group DIE LINKE. He argued that "the complexity, risk and political impact of police missions or bilateral police operations are often in no way inferior to operations by the army [Bundeswehr] and should therefore be subject to parliamentary approval."<sup>283</sup> Kurt Graulich, then Judge at the Federal Administrative Court, refuted this by solely focusing on the mission mandate. He argued the EUPOL mission mandate and the GPPT bilateral agreement have a civilian character making the actual practice of the projects irrelevant for their characterisation.<sup>284</sup> When asked whether the police projects should be classified as civilian in the highly militarised environment in Afghanistan, a German soldier who was stationed in Kunduz responded:

*"That's just wishful thinking because a police officer standing on a traffic island in the roundabout in Afghanistan can't act like a policeman here at home. That doesn't work that way. He has to expect that at any time he might get attacked by the insurgents or that a suicide bomber will drive his vehicle across the intersection. It is therefore utopian to assume that he could do totally normal police work."*<sup>285</sup>

The character and challenges of this setting of police work was no secret: Even a cursory look at Afghanistan's recent history shows that the police sector did not suddenly emerge with the US-led NATO invasion of Afghanistan. The existing structures were the legacy of decades of Soviet occupation, civil war and Taliban rule. The environment in which police projects were located after 2001 was not a peaceful civilian space, but an increasingly militarised social sphere.

Even though Germany led the police projects and portrayed the building of the Afghan police system as a civil mission, the USA and other allies viewed policing in line with military and counterinsurgency objectives. The US financial contribution and political impetus paramilitarised the ANP to a degree that rendered the German stance of a civil police force distinct from the military untenable.

Intrasystemic evaluations of "success" and "failure" by the coalition forces suggest that the ultimate impact of the failure to set up a comprehensive, non-militarised police force in Afghanistan was that "neither Germany nor the United States – the official and de facto leading nations for police assistance – fully appreciated the destabilising role of these two factors: a

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<sup>282</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 16/3421. 08.11.2006.

<sup>283</sup> Internal Committee Minutes No. 16/81, p. 20 quoted in: Ostermeier, Lars. 2017. *Imaginationen rechtsstaatlicher und demokratischer Polizei: Deutsche Polizeiprojekte in Afghanistan von 1957 bis 2010*. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, p. 182.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid, p. 182.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, p. 182.

corrupt, predatory police and the opportunity it offered the Taliban."<sup>286</sup> Furthermore, the militarisation of the police force placed the police alongside the Afghan military in the fight against an insurgency. The Taliban's opportunity, paired with the militarisation of the police, put the police on the front lines of a war for which they were neither equipped nor appreciated.<sup>287</sup>

### 3. CIMIC and the PRTs

Development, reconstruction and police missions in Afghanistan took place in a militarised environment, although they were labelled as part of a "civilian peace and stabilisation mission." Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) became an important aspect of the military mission. It exemplifies how economic development activities have been used in the toolkit of militaries to bargain for civilian acceptance of the military, as well as for information access and intelligence gathering.

CIMIC operations – such as the provision of stationary for educational purposes or the construction of schools or wells – may look on the surface like developmental measures, but in a warzone like Afghanistan they also aimed to promote a positive attitude towards the military among the local population. CIMIC therefore had three objectives: (1) To establish relations between civilian and military actors, (2) to increase the acceptance of the military in the region where it is stationed, and (3) to support military decision-making by gathering information and intelligence on the local civilian situation.<sup>288</sup> CIMIC operations have been used as a kind of "force multiplier so that the military operation can be conducted more effectively."<sup>289</sup>

CIMIC was not invented in Afghanistan, but it became more institutionalised in the PRTs. Many new military tools and tactics were tested in Afghanistan. These included: the COIN doctrine, the dropping of the biggest non-nuclear bomb on Nangarhar/Eastern Afghanistan, and the stronger linking of development policy with military objectives. Afghanistan was therefore called a "laboratory for nation-building."<sup>290</sup> CIMIC, i.e. co-opting development activities as a strategy of the military, was part of this experimentation. This had far-reaching and sometimes deadly consequences for development actors as well. The following section gives an overview of how German PRTs were established in Afghanistan and what role CIMIC operations played in this process.

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<sup>286</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p. 39 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>287</sup> Police casualties were folded into the category of Afghan security forces. This means that no disaggregated data exists on the casualties among the police forces. See: The New York Times. "The Afghan War Casualty Report." The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/afghan-war-casualty-reports> (last accessed 10.03.2022).

<sup>288</sup> Paul, Michael. 2005. "CIMIC in the ISAF mission: Conception, implementation and development of civil-military cooperation in the Bundeswehr abroad." Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), No. RP 5/2009. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/253090/1/2009RP05.pdf>, p. 5 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>289</sup> Paul, Michael. 2005. "CIMIC in the ISAF mission: Conception, implementation and development of civil-military cooperation in the Bundeswehr abroad." Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), No. RP 5/2009. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/253090/1/2009RP05.pdf>, p. 9 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>290</sup> Schmunk, Michael. 2005. "Die deutschen Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Ein neues Instrument zum Nation-Building." Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). [https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2005\\_S33\\_suk\\_ks.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2005_S33_suk_ks.pdf), p. 33 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

#### 4. CIMIC the German way

In recent German history, the term “civil-military interaction” or “civil-military cooperation” described the interaction between national military and civil-administrative structures with the Allied forces stationed in Germany.<sup>291</sup> It designated the way in which armies could use civilian resources.<sup>292</sup> The use of the term “civil-military cooperation” began to change with the German mission in Somalia (1993/1994), where the Bundeswehr provided medical care and infrastructure improvements and established schools.<sup>293</sup> The concept of “civil-military cooperation” was further developed in the context of the Implementation Force (IFOR) mission in Kosovo (1995) and resulted in the “NATO Civil-Military Co-operation Doctrine.”<sup>294</sup>

The development of the NATO counterinsurgency doctrine and military education for the training of armed forces in CIMIC was accompanied by the comprehensive alignment of German defence, foreign and development policy within the framework of the “networked approach.”<sup>295</sup> In April 2000, the German Federal Government presented the concept of “Civil Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding” (in German: Zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung), which represented a first attempt at a combined political strategy.<sup>296</sup> The concept was followed by an action plan in 2004, which represented a first interdepartmental stocktaking of peacebuilding measures. It stressed the need for a nationally and internationally coordinated overall strategy for crisis and conflict management that coordinated the various civilian and military instruments.<sup>297</sup> Based on this approach, the BMI introduced the term “networked security” in its 2006 White Book — the same year NATO proposed a “comprehensive approach.” This entails a merger of foreign, security, defence and development policy.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Ehrhart, Hans-Georg. 2011. “Zivil-militärisches Zusammenwirken und vernetzte Sicherheit als Herausforderung deutscher Sicherheitspolitik: Der Fall Afghanistan.” In: K. Brummer, S. Fröhlich. *Zehn Jahre Deutschland in Afghanistan*. Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik (ZFA), 4:65-85, p. 67.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, p. 67. For an example of military scholars conceptualisation of US counterinsurgency doctrines describing the instrumental role of “indigenous” actors in governmental, non-governmental and military political arenas, see for instance: Jones, Seth G. 2008. *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*. Santa Monica: RAND National Defense Research Institute; Kilcullen, David. 2010. *Counterinsurgency*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. For a critical analysis of militaries between policy and scholarship, see: Daulatzai, Anila, and Sahar Ghumkhor. 2021. ‘Damage Control: The Unbearable Whiteness of Drone Work’. *Jadaliyya*. 2021. <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/42483> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>293</sup> Paul, Michael. 2005. “CIMIC in the ISAF mission: Conception, implementation and development of civil-military cooperation in the Bundeswehr abroad.” *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*, No. RP 5/2009. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/253090/1/2009RP05.pdf>, p. 7 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>294</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). 2003. “AJP-9 NATO Civil-Military Co-Operation (CIMIC) Doctrine,” NATO. <https://www.nato.int/jms/docu/ajp-9.pdf>, p. 7 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>295</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). 2017. “Counterinsurgency / A Generic Reference Curriculum.” NATO. [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_09/20170904\\_1709-counterinsurgency-rc.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_09/20170904_1709-counterinsurgency-rc.pdf) (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>296</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2014. “Deutschlands Beitrag Zur Friedenssicherung. Aktionsplan Zivile Krisenprävention.” Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/archiv/alt-inhalte/deutschlands-beitrag-zur-friedenssicherung-41924> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>297</sup> Ehrhart, Hans-Georg. 2011. “Zivil-militärisches Zusammenwirken und vernetzte Sicherheit als Herausforderung deutscher Sicherheitspolitik: Der Fall Afghanistan.” In: K. Brummer, S. Fröhlich. *Zehn Jahre Deutschland in Afghanistan*. Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik (ZFA), 4:65-85, p. 68.

<sup>298</sup> Deutsches Bundesministerium der Verteidigung. 2006. ‘Weißbuch 2006 Zur Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands Und Zur Zukunft Der Bundeswehr’. archives.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr. [http://archives.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/2008/IMG/pdf/weissbuch\\_2006.pdf](http://archives.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/2008/IMG/pdf/weissbuch_2006.pdf) (last accessed 02.12.2022).

While the comprehensive (or networked) approach is evident in several areas of German engagement in Afghanistan, one of the most prominent and contested roles in the civil-military stabilisation and reconstruction projects was taken by the PRTs. The establishment of the PRTs was justified as part of the “winning hearts and minds” approach, which used any available military and civilian tools to sway Afghanistan’s population in favour of the international presence. This approach therefore directly subsumes development assistance under military priorities. In practice, the establishment of the PRTs was connected to the geographical expansion of the ISAF mission. While the ISAF mission was initially restricted to Kabul and its surroundings, the ISAF mandate was geographically expanded by the UN Security Council Resolution 1510 in October 2003.<sup>299</sup> The Bundestag decided to extend the geographical scope of the German ISAF contingent from Kabul to include Kunduz. As a result, Germany took over the first PRT in Kunduz in 2003. Ultimately, however, the PRTs were under the operational command of the ISAF mission.

The ISAF mission commanded 26 PRTs with 14 different lead nations.<sup>300</sup> The German PRTs in Kunduz and Feyzabad as well as its Provincial Advisor Team (PAT) in Taloqan were led and coordinated by an inter-ministerial group that included the AA, the BMI, the BMVg, and the BMZ. The PRTs were officially called a “civilian reconstruction team with military security component.”<sup>301</sup> The military-civilian integration was institutionalised by a dual leadership consisting of the BMVg in a military and the AA in a civilian leadership function.<sup>302</sup> In contrast to the US PRTs, Germany did not engage in “counterinsurgency” strategies.<sup>303</sup> Germany tried to position the PRTs as more civilian-oriented and to move away from the US counterinsurgency approach. Nonetheless, commentators remarked that the actual leadership within the PRTs clearly rested with the military.<sup>304</sup>

Despite being part of the ISAF mission, funding for each PRT was provided by the individual nations leading the team. The financial streams with which German PRT projects were funded varied. These included funds from the BMVg, the AA or private funds.<sup>305</sup> A German soldier who had been stationed in Kunduz pointed out that on German military bases German firms were hired particularly for power generation and water treatment. Examples of CIMIC co-financed by BMVg and BMZ were the Provincial Development Funds (PDF), which have been used for infrastructure, education and economic development since 2006. A PDF was composed of

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<sup>299</sup> United Nations Security Council (13 October 2003) UN Doc S/RES/1510.

<sup>300</sup> Mitchell, David F. 2015. “Blurred Lines? Provincial Reconstruction Teams and NGO Insecurity in Afghanistan, 2010–2011.” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4 (1): Art. 9, p. 3.

<sup>301</sup> In the German original: “Ziviles Wiederaufbauteam mit militärischer Schutzkomponente.” Joschka Fischer quoted in Schmunk, Michael. 2005. “Die deutschen Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Ein neues Instrument zum Nation-Building.” Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). [https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2005\\_S33\\_suk\\_ks.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2005_S33_suk_ks.pdf), p. 346 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>302</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2010. “3. Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Umsetzung des Aktionsplans ‘zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung.’” Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/217528/298e42ef13563f1b5b3a4e3355925f70/aktionsplan-bericht3-de-data.pdf> (last accessed 12.11.2022).

<sup>303</sup> Weiland, Gesche. 2011. “Eckdaten der politischen Entwicklung in Afghanistan seit 2001 und des deutschen Bundeswehreinsetzes (ISAF). Afghanistan Chronologie.” Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). [https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/sonstiges/DECKBLATT\\_Chronologie.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/sonstiges/DECKBLATT_Chronologie.pdf) (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>304</sup> Wagner, Jürgen. 2008. “Lackmüstest Afghanistan: Der Hindukusch als Experimentierfeld für Zivil-militärische Aufstandsbekämpfung und Neoliberalen Kolonialismus.” Informationsstelle Militarisierung (IM), No. 11. <https://www.imi-online.de/download/IMI-Studie-2008-11.pdf>, p. 28 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>305</sup> Sadat Hadjer, Tahmina. 2009. *Die Bundeswehr in Afghanistan: zivil-militärische Zusammenarbeit*. Bonn, Bouvier, p. 26.

representatives of the AA, the BMI, the BMVg and the BMZ, as well as four Afghan representatives from the Ministry of Rural Development, the Provincial Council, the Governor's Office and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.<sup>306</sup> The confusing mix of funding and the non-inclusion of military expenditure in OECD data make it difficult to track how much Germany actually spent on CIMIC projects.

An Afghan translator who worked for a German PRT describes the lack of transparency of funding sources and the process of cooperation between CIMIC teams and the local population and Afghan governmental departments, such as the National Solidarity Program (NSP), which was administered by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD):

*"They [the PRT team] talk with twelve to twenty families, households, about ten priority projects. First of all, the first priority project was electricity, for bridges, schools, mosque, kindergarten, like that [...] Also pumping water for drinking or animal ponds. After the priority was set up, they narrowed it down and selected one. Each project has 30,000 to €50,000 in one cluster. But the budget was not clear, it was made by another organisation, which made a decision on how much budget we have for the projects. The projects were implemented directly through NSP, the National Solidarity Program from the government."*<sup>307</sup>

The funding and decision-making side that was opaque to the Afghan translator who worked on the CIMIC projects, was a back-and-forth between German ministerial directives and localised adaptation processes. The German soldier describes the PRTs way of working in their integration of directives from Germany and interaction with their environment:

*"The team uses the funds that are made available in the military for civilian projects. To a certain degree they have a free hand within the framing of the prescribed or stipulated projects. Those are measures that were laid down by a committee with the Foreign Ministry and the Federal Ministry of Defence, which set the parameters for planning and the actual practical implementation takes place on-site [...] there was also a great deal of input from NGOs and by local people, who told us where there was need and who gave us many important tips about areas where there was infrastructural deficiencies which could then be included in the planning and passed on to the committee... So on the one hand, there is a funding pot within the budget of the Ministry of Defence, which is then responsible for these areas, which is utilised for this. Of course, there was also money from the BMZ, as well as from the Foreign Office [AA]. Both are used."*<sup>308</sup>

While the projects witnessed by the Afghan translator were administered by local NGOs and the Community Development Councils (CDCs) of the NSP, projects could either be implemented directly by the military in a particular location or in cooperation with a civilian NGO:

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<sup>306</sup> Hett, Julia. 2005. "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. Das amerikanische, britische und deutsche Modell." Center for International Peace Operations. [https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download\\_de/weltweit/PRT\\_20\\_04\\_05.pdf](https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download_de/weltweit/PRT_20_04_05.pdf) (last accessed 12.12.2022); Schmunk, Michael. 2005. "Die deutschen Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Ein neues Instrument zum Nation-Building." Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). [https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2005\\_S33\\_suk\\_ks.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2005_S33_suk_ks.pdf) (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>307</sup> Interview No. 15.

<sup>308</sup> Interview No. 25.

*“There were also projects that were done bilaterally with the respective locations at the military location level. For example, it was about setting up a small village school, because the village elder said it’s too dangerous to drive our youngsters or let them go to this town. This can then go [get incorporated] with a catalogue of measures, was also partially housed and was then set up in its own beret. Then again, in larger places, such as Mazar or Kunduz, there were as well projects that took place together with NGOs, be it the Red Cross or the Red Crescent, where the central hospital was then brought back into shape with the equipment and production of the entire infrastructure.”<sup>309</sup>*

Seen in this light, one might be inclined to interpret the CIMIC projects in terms of donor-implementing organisations working with partners in the field. However, as Afghan former employees of CIMIC projects describe, the fact that these projects were enabled and implemented by the military changed the nature of the relationship between the partners. Some Afghan interviewees described this as a strength:

*“The PRT support was very good. They could implement the projects, because they had the military power. When you have the military power and there are some military patrols and support so then, yes, projects were implemented.”<sup>310</sup>*

The military power and ever-present threat potential were clear advantages in the implementation of projects from the point of view of the German soldier who participated in CIMIC projects:

*“In terms of perception, I would almost say that the CIMIC forces have it a bit easier than the civilian forces that are run by the NGOs. Because with us they didn’t try to haggle [...] in Afghanistan, a beard and a uniform inspire a lot of respect from village elders. And when there’s a civilian, there’s a little less respect. There’s an attempt to get a higher price than initially agreed upon. We had less of that. Sure, they might try, but when the CIMIC forces then said, no, this will not be implemented now, then it was accepted, even with gnashing of teeth.”<sup>311</sup>*

The aspect portrayed here by a German soldier as an operational advantage of the military is experienced by Afghans who interact with the military as a constant potential threat. An Afghan interpreter linked the success of CIMIC projects to an environment of fear in which the military is the strongest actor and has far-reaching decision-making powers and lethal force:

*“But as you know when the army is involved in the projects, the people are scared. In the project, for example, national NGOs were scared for their projects to go directly onto the blacklist. So if they did something wrong, they made problems, they were scared to go on a blacklist for that.”<sup>312</sup>*

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<sup>309</sup> Interview No. 25.

<sup>310</sup> Interview No. 13.

<sup>311</sup> Interview No. 25.

<sup>312</sup> Interview No. 15.

The ultimate threat of force by the military – be it through military power or through the exclusion from further economic opportunities that were important in a struggling economy like Afghanistan's – exemplifies the asymmetric partnership between the military and the implementing partners. In this hierarchical relationship, the donor-connected implementing partner, in this case the PRT, not only holds the financial power, but is directly connected and empowered through its direct involvement with the military.<sup>313</sup>

Whether CIMIC projects have actually been successful, especially with regard to their intended goal of gaining civilian acceptance and support for the military presence of coalition forces, is questionable and in most cases unverified. Similar to the development sector as a whole, monitoring mostly focused on results rather than impact, as described by the aforementioned German soldier in relation to post-implementation monitoring and reporting:

*"In principle, it's a kind of 'success monitoring' that takes place. The main focus is, of course, if the measure has been implemented as planned. That's the main goal. The further outcome is secondary at this moment. With projects like this, they say it's difficult to measure, especially in the military sector. Our position is that we're investing in the hope that we'll get information or that we at least achieve a good standing among the population. That's the main focus we have there. Have the funds been used appropriately? Has the goal been achieved? In other words: have we supplied the village with water or medicine, have we built a school? That was the main focus."<sup>314</sup>*

Whether the CIMIC projects succeeded in painting a more positive image of the international and German military not as an occupying force but as an infrastructure saviour remains questionable. The integration of development projects into the military toolkit led to a further blurring of the lines between development and the military — to the detriment of development actors themselves.

## 5. Increased targeting of foreign and Afghan development workers

The militarisation of humanitarian and development assistance and the resulting "blurred line" between military engagement and humanitarian work has been amply criticised by development aid organisations in Afghanistan.<sup>315</sup> In a briefing paper written by eleven NGOs operating in Afghanistan, the core critique of this overlap is: "It should be stressed that nothing can justify militant attacks against civilians or civilian organisations, which are prohibited absolutely under international law, but that the blurring of the civilian-military distinction has made such attacks more likely."<sup>316</sup> While the paper acknowledged that the distinction between civilians and military is generally blurred in Afghanistan, the "expansion of PRT activities and the

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<sup>313</sup> Wagner, Jürgen. 2008. "Lackmustrast Afghanistan: Der Hindukusch als Experimentierfeld für Zivil-militärische Aufstandsbekämpfung und Neoliberalen Kolonialismus." Informationsstelle Militarisierung (IM), No. 11. <https://www.imi-online.de/download/IMI-Studie-2008-11.pdf>, p. 29 (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>314</sup> Interview No. 25.

<sup>315</sup> Mitchell, David F. 2015. "Blurred Lines? Provincial Reconstruction Teams and NGO Insecurity in Afghanistan, 2010–2011." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4 (1): Art. 9, p. 4.

<sup>316</sup> Waldman, Matt. 2008. "Caught in the Conflict / Civilians and the international security strategy in Afghanistan. A briefing paper by eleven NGOs operating in Afghanistan for the NATO heads of state and government summit, 3-4 April 2009." Oxfam International. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/caught-conflict-civilians-and-international-security-strategy-afghanistan>, p. 17 (last accessed 12.12.2022).



use of heavily protected contractors to implement reconstruction projects have also contributed to a blurring of the civil-military distinction.”<sup>317</sup>

In 2004, following the establishment of the first PRTs in Afghanistan and the extensive use of development and humanitarian projects by armed forces, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) withdrew from Afghanistan. They said they were attacked because of the militarisation of aid, which affected otherwise independent aid organisations. In Badghis province, a clearly marked MSF vehicle was stopped and five staff were killed. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, justifying it by claiming that organisations like MSF were working for American interests.<sup>318</sup> MSF Secretary General Marine Buissonniere accused the US-backed coalition of “blurring of identities,” because they had “constantly sought to use humanitarian assistance and corrupt humanitarian assistance to be a support for its military and political ambitions.”<sup>319</sup> The withdrawal – though reversed when MSF returned to Afghanistan in 2009 – interrupted 24 years of continuous work in Afghanistan that the organisation had carried out during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the civil war and the first Taliban government in the 1990s.<sup>320</sup>

While aid workers and development agencies repeatedly criticised the co-optation of development and reconstruction by the military, there was a long debate about whether this apparent overlap of civil and military tasks fostered by the PRTs also led to an increase in violence against aid workers as a whole. Some observers argued that humanitarian activity is always political in nature, and that the shift of humanitarian groups towards human rights advocacy and democracy promotion placed them as promoting the values of the Afghan government and NATO in Afghanistan.<sup>321</sup>

The Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB), which has recorded major incidents of violence against aid workers since 1997, shows an overall increase in violence since the beginning of the millennium, when the war in Afghanistan began.<sup>322</sup> The total number of deaths globally among aid workers was 21 in 2001 and 88 in 2006, while it rose to 159 in 2013 and 141 in 2021. In 2021, of the 461 aid workers attacked, 141 were killed, 117 were abducted, and 203 wounded. In an overview for the Geneva Graduate Institute, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Vice-President Gilles Carbonnier pointed to several possible reasons. One reason for the increase could have been the booming humanitarian aid sector, which has led to an increased presence of humanitarian workers on the ground and increased media coverage and incident reporting. There has also been an increase in the fragmentation and decentralisation of non-state armed groups, which has made the maintenance of security agreements more difficult.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid, p.6.

<sup>318</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). 2004. “MSF Pulls out of Afghanistan.” <https://www.msf.org/msf-pulls-out-afghanistan> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>319</sup> Blua, Antoine. 2004. “Afghanistan: Doctors without Borders Pulls out of War-Torn Country.” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1054081.html> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>320</sup> Alas, Joel. 2009. “Five Years After Slayings: Doctors Without Borders Returns to Afghanistan.” Spiegel International. <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/five-years-after-slayings-doctors-without-borders-returns-to-afghanistan-a-654702.html> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>321</sup> Fast, Larissa A. 2010. ‘Mind the Gap: Documenting and Explaining Violence against Aid Workers’. *European Journal of International Relations* 16 (3): 365–89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066109350048>.

<sup>322</sup> Humanitarian Outcomes. “Aid Worker Security Database.” <https://aidworkersecurity.org> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

<sup>323</sup> Carbonnier, Gilles. 2019. “Humanitarians as Targets of Violence?” *Global Challenges*, No.5. <https://globalchallenges.ch/issue/5/humanitarians-as-targets-of-violence/> (last accessed 12.12.2022).

It is difficult to give a general reason for the increase in attacks on aid workers worldwide. Research on Afghanistan, in particular, has found that humanitarian and development workers were conflated with coalition forces and the Afghan government, which has led to an increase in attacks on humanitarian and development aid workers.<sup>324</sup> While humanitarian aid and development organisations tried to present a neutral and impartial image, they often provided the same services that governments would usually be obliged to provide. They therefore became “substitute providers of public goods.”<sup>325</sup> Violence against humanitarian aid and development workers “often stems from a deliberate strategy employed by combatants to undermine civilian support for the government.”<sup>326</sup>

Even more than the general alignment between the Afghan government, international military force and development actors, the PRTs have exacerbated the intertwining of the civilian and military spheres. This has further endangered development workers. A study examining all 34 provinces in 2010 and 2011 — the peak of PRT operations before the phase-out process began in 2012 - provides empirical evidence of the impact of the politicisation of humanitarian and development work in Afghanistan.<sup>327</sup> It demonstrates that the presence of PRTs was associated with a greater number of security incidents for NGOs in these provinces.

## **D. The business of sustainability: monitoring and evaluating ODA**

The following section analyses the closed-loop system of overseeing ODA-funded projects through “monitoring and evaluation” (M&E). M&E is not geared towards questioning the methodology used to measure “success” and “failure” and the indicators underlying these broad concepts. M&E comprises qualitative and quantitative instruments that aim to capture the intra-systemic documentation and assessment of data within the rationale of developmentalism and humanitarianism. It is not tailored to query what kind of military, economic, financial, intelligence and political work is needed in sites of intervention. M&E is not a policy evaluation system, but a means of evaluating efficiency and benefits in the business field of “sustainable development.”

The section focuses on the kinds of data collected and the hierarchical structures in existing monitoring and evaluation systems and how they are embedded in the wider M&E ecosystem of externally commissioned research. It highlights deadlocks that are elemental to internal monitoring mechanisms, as illustrated by the example of limited feedback loops. In addition, the section examines the lack of transparent, disaggregated data available to the public, including in light of the fact that the major donors for development and reconstruction projects were simultaneously part of the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

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<sup>324</sup> Narang, Neil, and Jessica A. Stanton. 2017. “A Strategic Logic of Attacking Aid Workers: Evidence from Violence in Afghanistan.” *International Studies Quarterly* 61 (1): 38–51.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>327</sup> Mitchell, David F. 2015. “Blurred Lines? Provincial Reconstruction Teams and NGO Insecurity in Afghanistan, 2010–2011.” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4 (1): Art. 9, p. 1–18.

## 1. More output than impact

As a common practice, organisations that implemented projects and programmes funded by German ODA were required to monitor their implementation and report back to donors. These internal and external reports were used to determine whether to continue funding, whether to extend, and how to structure the relationship between donor and implementing agency. The systems in place were modelled on corporate business strategy — both internally to the organisations that implemented the projects as well as so-called external evaluations through third parties. As a result, the reports were often less a measurement of social and infrastructural change but biased as their primary objective was justifying the spending and proving its success.<sup>328</sup> In this scenario, Anila Daulatzai asks in light of her ethnographic research on widows working in sites of neoliberal development in Kabul:

*“What potential harm ensues when Afghans, and widows in particular, are being sold the neoliberal dream – the doctrine of ‘pulling yourself up by your bootstraps,’ being self-sufficient and responsible for your own success or failure – in a space and place currently and historically beset by wars that have come from elsewhere?”<sup>329</sup>*

Within the M&E logic, failures and shortcomings could be explained as localised, and thus surmountable in a follow-up project, rather than systemic and caused by the NATO mission and associated development and reconstruction infrastructure.

While the M&E sector in Afghanistan was characterised by heterogeneity – each ministry, organisation, fund or NGO that received ODA had its own system – several cross-cutting characteristics can be identified. These include: a prevalence of output-oriented M&E structures within the implementing agency; the outsourcing of external evaluations to consultants and research companies contracted and paid by the implementing agency; the absence of independent research that can critically examine donor demands and behaviours; the privatisation of findings by legal agreements; and the extensive production of grey literature on Afghanistan that does not serve the Afghan public but supports donor interests in the country.

The NATO mission produced a variety of state-funded evaluation report formats among NATO member states geared towards audiences “back home.” A 2014 DEval meta-report looking at the BMZ’s evaluation reports found that in the way the oversight system was set up “conclusions can hardly be made [as] to what extent the overarching objectives of the GDC in Afghanistan have been achieved.”<sup>330</sup> Compared to other NATO member states in Afghanistan, Germany lagged behind in the systematic evaluation and transparency of its development and

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<sup>328</sup> Coburn, Noah. 2016. *Losing Afghanistan/An Orbital for the Intervention*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p.103-105.

<sup>329</sup> Daulatzai, Anila. 2015. “What Does Work Mean to Widows in Afghanistan?” Harvard Divinity Bulletin. <https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/what-does-work-mean-to-widows-in-afghanistan/> (last accessed 15.02.2023).

<sup>330</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. “Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan.” German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 02.05.2022). For BMZ’s response to this point see: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2014. “BMZ response to the DEval report: ‘A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan’.” BMZ. <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/19700/4dc15131875eaa899c0ee1eefd4e7ffc/bmz-response-a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan-data.pdf> (last accessed 15.02.2023).

reconstruction spending, as evidenced by the meticulous and detailed accounting of institutions such as SIGAR. When the BMZ finally commissioned a report, the “Systematic Review of Impact Evaluations of Development Aid in Afghanistan, 2008-2018,” it did so in an amalgamated way that made it impossible to determine Germany’s specific role. The report, for instance, argued that “aid was rarely an effective tool for stabilisation” and often rather “exacerbated intergroup tensions and attracted violence,” and that even flagship programmes such as the NSP – a programme also funded by German ODA – <sup>331</sup> had only a “very limited impact on objective measures of economic growth” or that “interventions aimed at improving gender equality were not effective.” <sup>332</sup>

Because these findings were not disaggregated but compiled from a variety of actors in donor states (including those administering German ODA), the report cannot serve as a basis for analysing how German development and reconstruction projects were implemented and evaluated. Presumably, a more thorough look at impacts would also have highlighted areas in which German funding had a more positive impact. The 10-year review, for instance, also points out achievements in the healthcare and education sectors as well as in the establishment of hydro-power systems. The German projects are included in this meta-review, but are not segregated in a way that would allow for a more in-depth evaluation of Germany’s involvement in development and reconstruction during the military operation.

Several German ministries funded economic development and humanitarian aid programmes in Afghanistan, with most funding allocated through the BMZ and the AA.

Monitoring and evaluation requirements were not standardised across the different donor ministries. <sup>333</sup> However, as donors they required regular reporting on the progress of projects and programmes, though the formats and forms of reporting varied. The BMZ and AA implemented projects mainly through German implementing agencies – GIZ and KfW Development Bank – and through NGOs registered in Germany. Most implementing agencies had their own monitoring and evaluation units that collected data on the implementation of their projects and reported to the donor agency. Most organisations had offices in Afghanistan and Germany, with interlocking structures.

As a general rule, the internal monitoring systems of organisations funded by Germany placed an emphasis on outputs rather than outcomes or impacts. This is unsurprising as donors are interested in how the money was spent and translated into goods and services delivered. Donor-funding cycles generally do not allow for post-project reviews and the main role of implementing

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<sup>331</sup> The NSP was the largest development program in Afghanistan financed by the WBG. The programme established so-called CDCs as an interface between the Afghan government and local population for implementing development and reconstruction projects, especially in Afghanistan’s rural areas.

<sup>332</sup> Zürcher, Christoph et al. 2020. “International Assistance to Afghanistan. Part 1: Systematic Review of Impact Evaluations of Development Aid in Afghanistan, 2008-2018.” BMZ. See: [https://christophzuercher.weebly.com/uploads/7/8/0/1/78016192/part\\_1\\_systematic\\_review\\_afghanistan\\_march\\_2020\\_0.pdf](https://christophzuercher.weebly.com/uploads/7/8/0/1/78016192/part_1_systematic_review_afghanistan_march_2020_0.pdf) (last accessed 15.02.2023).

<sup>333</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. “Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan.” German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 02.05.2022). For BMZ’s response to this point see: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2014. “BMZ response to the DEval report: ‘A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan’.” BMZ. <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/19700/4dc15131875eaa899c0ee1eefd4e7ffc/bmz-response-a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan-data.pdf>, p. 16 (last accessed 15.02.2023).

agencies is focused on monitoring functions rather than evaluation work. A former country director of an organisation implementing projects for BMZ and AA put it this way:

*"In each region – we had Balkh and then Sheberghan and Samangan, these were in the northern region – there was a local internal M&E team that looked at all the projects. They did mainly monitoring, you could say. Depending on the project, for example, if there was a distribution of cash for the 'cash for work' activity, the M&E team would be there to check the work. Each and every team had in general a couple of projects to look after [...] the output. The tangible effects of the project. The M&E team was not dealing with the long-term effect of the project. It was very much numbers and tangible items, and things that we did in the project."*<sup>334</sup>

Outputs are the services, products or other "deliverables" that a project produces. They can often be quantified. For instance: how many women participated in workshops, how many families received solar panels, or how many water pumps were installed. Keeping a record of outputs can offer a useful mechanism for tracking the tangible activities that have taken place as part of a project. However, the mere counting of outputs does not serve to monitor short- to medium-term outcomes, such as how participation in a workshop has affected the women who attended, whether solar panels have been used regularly to generate electricity, or whether the installation of a water point has led to community cohesion or fights over access.

The aforementioned DEval report from 2014 on the evaluations of German development and reconstruction projects in Afghanistan assessed the output-oriented evaluation work as being of "relatively good quality for the GDC portfolio"<sup>335</sup> and suggested that it offered a good base for decision making at the operational level of the implementing agency. However, the report criticised the lack of sector-level evaluations on the effectiveness of the work or the allocation of funds across sectors, which would be required for informed strategic decision-making at ministerial level. The DEval report pinpoints how these evaluations primarily focus on an output oriented monitoring which helps in the daily management of projects, but not in understanding the impact of the projects.

A recent SIGAR report explained the strong focus on results as "producing good news by achieving and reporting on quantitative outputs as quickly as possible." It added that, for the Americans, "in some cases it is clear that this dynamic greatly reduced programmatic efficacy." The pressure to quickly produce positive results (in a purely numeric sense) was also cited as a reason for the German preponderance of output-oriented evaluations. Funding for the next phase of a project often depended on the success of the first phase, which could be achieved by showing output-oriented "successes." The DEval report suggested that the political environment in both Germany and Afghanistan created "intense political pressure for quick development results," which "reinforced a focus in the evaluative work on outputs (rather than

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<sup>334</sup> Interview No. 21.

<sup>335</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. "Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan." German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 02.05.2022). For BMZ's response to this point see: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2014. "BMZ response to the DEval report: 'A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan'." BMZ. <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/19700/4dc15131875eaa899c0ee1eefd4e7ffc/bmz-response-a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan-data.pdf>, p. 34 (last accessed 15.02.2023).

on outcomes or impacts) at the project level (rather than on a more strategic sector or country level)."<sup>336</sup>

The DEval report, published around the time of the withdrawal of the ISAF troops in 2014, ends on a hopeful note by predicting that "the context for German cooperation in Afghanistan is expected to change" and that it is "anticipated that there will be less political pressure for quick results,"<sup>337</sup> providing a window of opportunity to recalibrate the evaluation work. By political pressure, it is mainly the domestic pressure in Germany that is meant, as it was expected that the general media attention would shift elsewhere after the ISAF troop withdrawal. While the political environment did indeed change, the same cannot be said about the general system of evaluation work. Rather, the fear of admitting failure intensified in a political environment where, with the rise of far-right parties after 2015, the existence and legitimacy of development spending was questioned from both ends of the political spectrum.<sup>338</sup> In the wake of the so-called "refugee crisis," pressure to portray an ameliorating situation in Afghanistan with progress on all fronts became pivotal, also to justify the deportation of Afghans. A former Afghanistan employee of the BMZ described it as follows:

*"You get the questions from parliament. It's about saving face...first and foremost you need to answer those requests with as much as necessary and as little as possible as not to get attacked [...] We always need to sell successes to the outside, which is normal, because we are also getting money for it. But this culminated in something like Afghanistan, where the actual moment to step back was missed. And if so, how should that have looked like? At some point it's 'too big to fail.'"*<sup>339</sup>

The interplay of a "saving face" attitude in accounting for all the money spent abroad, the strengthening of the far right and domestic pressure from all sides of the political spectrum exacerbated the trend towards intransparency and output-oriented definitions of success.

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<sup>336</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. "Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan." German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan> (last accessed 02.05.2022). For BMZ's response to this point see: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). 2014. "BMZ response to the DEval report: 'A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan'." BMZ.

<https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/19700/4dc15131875eaa899c0ee1eefd4e7ffc/bmz-response-a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan-data.pdf>, p. 16 (last accessed 15.02.2023).

<sup>337</sup> Kirsch, Renate, and Mary Beth Wilson. 2014. "Report. A Review of Evaluative Work of German Development Cooperation in Afghanistan." German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). <https://www.deval.org/de/publikationen/a-review-of-evaluative-work-of-german-development-cooperation-in-afghanistan>, p. 34 (last accessed 02.05.2022).

<sup>338</sup> Interviews No. 17 and No. 18.

<sup>339</sup> Interview No. 18.

## 2. “External” evaluations

Internal reporting was complemented by outsourced external evaluations. External reports were often commissioned as mid-term or end-term evaluations, showing either the progress of a project, or the changes brought about by the implementation and finalisation of programming. GIZ, for example, commissioned Project Progress Reviews (in German: Projektfortschrittskontrolle) and final reports (in German: Schlussberichte). The contracting of an external consultant was usually done through an open tender process in which the implementing agency decided on an individual consultant or a consulting firm. Interview partners of subcontractors of GIZ and KfW Development Bank as well as other NGOs referred to them as “local” research companies. The term “local” sounds like “Afghan” and “Afghan-owned,” but what was often meant was a foreign-owned research consultancy firm (such as Altai, Samuel Hall, etc.) that was registered in Afghanistan and used its social – including interpersonal and professional – network in country to evaluate the implementing agency’s respective projects.<sup>340</sup>

These external reports were part of the general grey literature produced in the field of development and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Grey literature are sources produced by organisations and institutions outside of academic peer-review and commercial publication practices. One advantage of this type of literature is its fast dissemination of findings, as this type of publication does not go through a lengthy process of external review. This, however, is also why the standard and quality can vary considerably, as there is no peer review system as with academic or commercial publications. Some of the reports have been published informally or non-commercially and are available online; many others remain unpublished and are only available with the permission of the organisation that commissioned them.

While the consultants were technically external to the organisation, they were integrated into the structures of the implementing agency through the process of preparing and approving the final version of a report, as one former implementing partner of BMZ-funded projects explained:

*“They [the consultants] would collect a number of Focus Group discussions, interviews - structured or semi-structured - whatever they had planned. We provided platform access to all the documents, project documentation, the monitoring reports and evaluations that our [internal] M&E teams did. They talked to the staff and the beneficiaries. Reports were done carefully, that it was all done truly correctly. Like, for example, if a male consultant was coming over to interview women to do it correctly through a female interpreter. We looked up the consultants like this. We guided them as well a little bit, but tried not to influence, obviously, the results because they had to be as objective as possible [...] A draft came to the [internal] M&E. These local M&E teams also had an M&E person who worked as the head office in Kabul. So that person will review the report. And from there, to be fair, I think there's some information back and forth. Then the consultant would present the findings and the reports to the management team in the country. And we sent it to BMZ. Without changing, obviously, we sent it to BMZ.”<sup>341</sup>*

The structure of commissioning and responsibilities for feedback and amendments – the “back and forth” – are crucial and may explain why the latter interviewee had to state that reports were sent “unchanged.” Even though these evaluations were described as “external,” they

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<sup>340</sup> Interviews No. 8, No. 14, and No. 16.

<sup>341</sup> Interview No. 21.

depended on the approval by the implementing agency — with full payment often only being made after the report has been approved by the implementing agency. The “back and forth” between the implementing agency and the research consultant could at best complement each other and eliminate misunderstandings that developed in the research process, but it could also lead to the dilemma that the consultants had to bend to the will of the implementing agency (which paid the consultancy fee) and could thus influence the results and their presentation. A former GIZ employee recounted it thus:

*“External evaluations are of course always good, but there is always a tendency to worry that things are too critical. Well, I always disliked that, the fact that you always tended to try when an external evaluation was very critical, you have to “water it down” again [auswaschen], so to speak, until it's no longer so critical, as maybe it should be. So this whole question about the fear of failure because of the political pressure and because of the bulk of the budget that went to Afghanistan over the many years, I thought, was also a spoiler for doing things right, in many respects. Some evaluations should perhaps have been a bit more honest, were then celebrated as external evaluations, but ended up not being as objective or neutral as they should be.”<sup>342</sup>*

The embedding of so-called “external” reports in the operational structure of the implementing agencies led to all kinds of potential distortions in the organisation’s operations. It constituted a relationship of dependency, as the evaluation report had to be approved by the implementing agency. This is not to say that it could not contain sections reflecting problems, or that the reporting was not useful for the implementing agency or their donors, but a thought-provoking accounting and evaluation of the impact of projects funded by German ODA did not lead to the transformative processes that would entail questioning the logic within which M&E operates in the first place. At best, the picture was incomplete; at worst, it was entirely distorted.

In the last decade of official German development and reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan, the BMZ has increasingly conducted sectoral and inter-institutional reviews and evaluations in Afghanistan. One example of this is the BMZ’s cooperation with the Research Centre (SFB) 700 (in German: Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) 700) “Governance in areas of limited statehood” at the Free University Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin).<sup>343</sup> As part of this cooperation with a group of researchers over the course of eight years, several research projects were conducted, including the aforementioned meta-review of evaluations in Afghanistan. While the meta-review was useful for researchers looking at the development and reconstruction sector as a whole, it was not focused on German ODA and was therefore of limited value for an evaluation of German assistance in particular.

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<sup>342</sup> Interview No. 17.

<sup>343</sup> Zürcher, Christoph et al. 2020. “International Assistance to Afghanistan. Part 1: Systematic Review of Impact Evaluations of Development Aid in Afghanistan, 2008-2018.” BMZ. See: [https://christophzuercher.weebly.com/uploads/7/8/0/1/78016192/part\\_1\\_systematic\\_review\\_afghanistan\\_march\\_2020\\_0.pdf](https://christophzuercher.weebly.com/uploads/7/8/0/1/78016192/part_1_systematic_review_afghanistan_march_2020_0.pdf) (last accessed 15.02.2023).



Also worth mentioning are the final report for the BMZ on assessing the impact of DC in north-eastern Afghanistan<sup>344</sup> and the SFB-Governance Working Paper.<sup>345</sup> Both are laudable for highlighting that independent research on development and reconstruction in Afghanistan was possible and could have been pursued more. However, their main focus remained on the development of opinions of Afghan civilians and their impressions of aid delivery, while failing to provide a more integrated assessment of the impact of development projects on socio-economic factors and class dynamics. The research project, as described in the reports, assumes that

*"[...] measuring the cumulative impact of development aid in conflict zones (areas threatened by, in the midst of, or recovering from serious organised violence) is imperative, because the planning and implementation of effective strategies to strengthen stability in conflict zones must be based on valid impact assessments."*<sup>346</sup>

The reports use a mix of methods such as village and district profiles, qualitative case studies to explain outliers, and household surveys in nearly 80 villages in four districts in Northeast Afghanistan over four years (2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013). The main focus of these studies is on "general attitudes toward foreign intervention, on the legitimacy of the Afghan state, and on perceived security threats."<sup>347</sup> For the BMZ-funded survey only heads of households were interviewed, who were predominantly male.<sup>348</sup> The surveys thus suffered from two major flaws: they placed the entire burden of measuring impact on a notoriously fickle indicator like public perception and implied that only men's opinions counted — and were counted.

Research conducted within the structures of the M&E ecosystem by Afghanistan-based organisations such as the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) funded by international organisations and donors, also proved that qualitative research that reveals different vantage points is possible — but only as long as it does not challenge or counteract the donor logic that funds it.

An extensive "monitoring and evaluation" infrastructure existed, both within implementing agencies and outside (albeit embedded in the organisational structure). Evaluations were conducted on a regular basis. What was missing, however, was an independent and critical accounting of the impact of these interventions. Regular reporting was output-oriented and the so-called "external reviews" were linked to the implementing agencies in the life cycle of the project. This led to a situation in which "publicly there [was] no accounting for or acceptance of responsibility or cost for failed action, particularly outside the immediate life cycle of a project or programme."<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Böhnke, Jan R., Koehler, Jan and Christoph Zürcher. 2015. "Development Cooperation in Conflict Zones. Assessing the Impact of Development Cooperation in North East Afghanistan 2007-2013. Final Report." Bonn/Berlin: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. <https://www.urban-response.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/afghanistan-impact-assessment-ii-en.pdf> (last accessed: 13.08.2022).

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid, p.3.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, p.15.

<sup>349</sup> Sabaratnam, Meera. 2017. *Decolonising Intervention: International Statebuilding in Mozambique*. London; Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd, p. 84.

### 3. Development as performance

Projects and programmes were not only evaluated using the mechanisms of the so-called M&E system. Site visits by donors and donor-funded events also played a role in evaluating the performance of “success.” Infrastructure projects, in particular, were visited and offered opportunities for affirming the success of a project, as an employee of KfW Development bank suggested with regard to the first decade of the intervention:

*“Having a robust German embassy present in Afghanistan where counsellors, different people responsible for different aspects of development, culture, even the ambassador, could visit projects in Herat, Balkh, Kabul particularly and see the work firsthand. I think that also was very important.”<sup>350</sup>*

With the security situation deteriorating over the course of the twenty-year war in Afghanistan, not only project implementation but also M&E became and remained a challenge for organisations. Donors were often not allowed to leave the heavily fortified areas of town and compounds, if they were present in Afghanistan at all. Foreign staff had to adhere to the organisation’s security guidelines when moving around the country and visiting implementing partners and project sites. GIZ staff were increasingly prevented from visiting implementation sites in person. Due to employment contracts, they were obliged to stay on the premises unless they were given permission to visit implementation sites. After the bombing of the German consulate in Mazar-e Sharif in 2016 and the Zanbaq Square attack that also hit the German embassy in Kabul in 2017, foreign staff were completely removed from the country. National NGOs and INGOs funded by German ODA maintained their offices in-country, with different security parameters for local and foreign staff.

KfW Development Bank, which subcontracted its projects to implementing partners, remained in Dubai and flew in project partners for consultation.<sup>351</sup> It also promoted an approach to “monitoring project implementation from a distance.” This included a combination of Remote Management Information Systems (RMIS) for projects such as the “Stabilisation Programme for Northern Afghanistan (SPNA)” and the “Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF),”<sup>352</sup> as well as the use of drones to replace field visits. Taking the concept of remote monitoring to the extreme, drones were used in monitoring urban rehabilitation projects like the “Revitalization Chihilisitoon Garden,” a 12-hectare historical cultural park rebuilt in cooperation with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC). The progress of the project was visually documented through the use of a drone. The monitoring of the site by drone was complemented by a monitoring consultant who was the interface between the implementing agency and the donor.

A former BMZ employee who was stationed in Kabul argued that the limited ability to visit sites did not impinge on controlling the quality of the projects:

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<sup>350</sup> Interview No. 19.

<sup>351</sup> Interviews No. 8 and No. 19.

<sup>352</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 2020. “Smart Prevention/Digital approaches in the peace and security sector of development cooperation.” GIZ. [https://resiliencefund.globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Smart-Prevention\\_engl\\_Web.pdf](https://resiliencefund.globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Smart-Prevention_engl_Web.pdf) (last accessed 12.08.2022).

*"If one said that the implementers wouldn't do a proper job when a BMZ representative is not there and controls their work — that's not true. It is being monitored and evaluated, and they [the ones implementing] were making small videos, etc."*<sup>353</sup>

However, the BMZ employee also conceded that they were hardly ever able to get out of the compound.<sup>354</sup> When site visits did take place, they were highly staged events to celebrate a particular project and provide an opportunity for implementers and donors to take photos. The description of a Dutch implementer about the staged setting in which many of these site visits to Afghanistan took place can also be applied to the situation of the German implementing agencies:

*"That's why I say, when there were VIPs, they would visit. There was a school there, there were happy students there. Always a bit of a show was put on. I mean, yes, there were also fake elements. Whenever a VIP would come, I tell the teachers, you better make them sit, and there are some women working in the field. They'd be there and everyone would be happy [...] In 2013/ 2014, someone at the French Embassy asked me for my input, because I think the French Minister of Development assistance was coming over to visit a school. And I was a bit baffled by the whole discussion and by the end I said, what is this about? Is this about actually the development effort or is this about a photo opportunity? And she looked at me and she went, "photo opportunity, of course". Like I was totally stupid that I had not actually clicked that there was the purpose."*<sup>355</sup>

While one could argue that any donor engagement in public is a performative act – no matter whether this takes place in Kabul, Washington or Berlin – in Afghanistan the performance of donor visits intersected in crucial ways with security parameters and implementation choices. In a discussion with an Afghan former ministerial employee who had coordinated German ODA financed projects, he recalled negotiations with German donors about the place of implementation:

*Interviewee: "This project was actually for two provinces, Herat and Balkh."*

*Interviewer: "And, if I may ask, why were these two provinces chosen?"*

*Interviewee: "This was a question that we have asked so many times from the Germans. Because most of the projects, they go to Herat and Mazar-e Sharif because these are the two major cities where they could implement the project successfully because of the security situation and also the culture of the people who were very supportive. And the major problem for this was the German government was very much interested in the north and northeast part of the country."*<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> Interview No. 18.

<sup>354</sup> Interview No. 18.

<sup>355</sup> Interview No. 6.

<sup>356</sup> Interview No. 10.

The German preference for the northern region and urban centres was based on the fact that this was Germany's "theatre of warfare" assigned by NATO.<sup>357</sup> The interviewee described that the preference of "the German Bundesregierung" to showcase projects to donors in these regions was related to accessibility, as donors were interested in implementing projects in urban areas because "they can show it to the donors, because the donors could travel only to the big cities or places that are near to a big city."<sup>358</sup> However, in his view, this concentration on certain project areas also became a problem for the Afghan government in its attempt to distribute development projects evenly:

*"A lot of the donor community used to visit this area because it was a safe area. There was no threat of incidents. That area became a problem for the [Afghan] government, that [said] "why are you implementing all these projects in Jibril [area in Herat province]? You only support this community". And what they [international donors] said was that "we are relaxed here. If you train them, they get training. They come on their own time. They implement the project. They are not corrupt." So that's why they do not want to send them to very far districts where they do not have security as well. They did not feel safe. So in Mazar-e Sharif, you have the same situation."*<sup>359</sup>

The necessity to show results, in this case quite literally as in the field visits, affected the project not only on the day of the visit itself, according to the interviewees, but at a much deeper level of planning: who received "assistance" in the first place was more a question of geographic accessibility for the respective NATO member state assigned to the region and for the implementing partners than a question of equitable distribution of resources.

#### 4. *Decontextualisation and institutional constraints*

A salient issue, not only for the analysis of programme design, is the question in which institution or organisation they are developed and who develops them. It is also crucial where the programmes are developed and to what extent the place of intervention and its specificities have influenced the development. For the analysis it is equally important to look at the people involved in the development of the programmes, i.e. their regional knowledge, their training, but also their social, economic and political background knowledge.

There were several approaches to developing programmes for Afghanistan. Most programmes were designed at headquarters in Germany, particularly those programmes that were based on templates used to address similar problems in several locations around the world. An Afghan ministry official involved in the administration of German ODA saw this lack of context in project

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<sup>357</sup> Theatre in military wording describes the space, on land, sea or in air, where military operations take place. The term "Kriegstheater" was theorised in reference to modern states and warfare by the Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz. For the English translation, see: Clausewitz, Carl von. 1874/2006. *On War*. Project Gutenberg. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1946/1946-h/1946-h.htm> (last accessed 16.02.2023). For standardised definitions of the US Department of Defense and NATO, including the terms "theatre of operations" or "theatre of war," see: Department of Defense. 2001. "Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (As Amended Through April 2010)." Joint Publication 1-02. See: [https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1\\_02-april2010.pdf](https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp1_02-april2010.pdf) (last accessed 16.09.2022). For the Bundeswehr's use, see e.g.: Deutsche Bundeswehr. 2022. "The Bundeswehr On Operations." <https://www.bundeswehr.de/en/operations> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>358</sup> Interview No. 10.

<sup>359</sup> Interview No. 10.

design as a key reason for the “failure” of official German development and reconstruction spending:

*“If you analyse the current situation in Afghanistan at this moment, it shows that nothing happened in that country. It is because of these programmes that they made or designed in other foreign countries and then implemented in Afghanistan. They brought the concept from Germany. In Berlin they said let’s do some ‘cash for work’ programmes and the people get money. It was easy for them to say that ‘cash for work and the people are working.’ But in practice it was not possible. It was difficult because the Afghan context was not really analysed and brought to the table how the concept to Afghans is not similar to that of the German people.”<sup>360</sup>*

This critique also emerged in an interview with a young male recipient of Cash for Work. He had grown up and been educated in Iran, came to Germany in 2015 and attended vocational school (in German: Berufsschule) there, but was deported to Afghanistan in early 2021 with no savings and no financial resources. Although he was given access to short-term accommodation through staff of a local NGO funded by GIZ, and also access to work (manual and physically demanding work for the community on a day labour basis) for 45 days (the duration of “cash for work”) to earn money for food, transport and rent for the next month, he had no prospect of finding a job in Afghanistan afterwards, certainly not to finance the costs of a university education he was seeking.

Conversations with recipients of “cash for work” point to systemic problems reinforced by neoliberal development: the programme is not geared to maintain “sustainable” work conditions for the poor, but offers short-term solutions to existential problems.

Some projects, however, did emerge from negotiations processes between implementers and donors.<sup>361</sup> Although this was intended to take into account aspects of what are often referred to as “local realities,” in practice this has not worked accordingly either. Despite joint programme development, the language of negotiations was steeped in loaded buzzwords and cross-cutting issues such as gender, capacity building, good governance, etc. The fit into these pre-defined categories were ultimately more decisive for access to funding. NGOs had to apply for funding through a tendering process whose parameters were already set in the interest of the donor side. This also gave rise to the job profile of proposal writers or grant developers as well as technical writers savvy with the liberal vocabulary that donor agencies wanted to see to fund newest trends in development and reconstruction.

Some foreign aid workers explained the mainstreaming-oriented development and reconstruction sector as blind spots in the organisations and institutions toward work on the ground. Others, like a German former GIZ staff member, described the lack of sustainability in the areas of operation as a structural problem:

*“Development work is a business and has really little to do with development [...] it is about the interests of the Federal [German] Republic in a country. And if it is a long-term interest then there always will be development aid.”<sup>362</sup>*

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<sup>360</sup> Interview No. 10.

<sup>361</sup> Interviews No. 2 and No. 21.

<sup>362</sup> Interview No. 14.

In a similar tone, a civil servant referred to the link between business and development and argued “a bit of honesty would treat the business well, but that does not suit the business of politics.”<sup>363</sup> The former GIZ employee reasoned that the whole system felt self-referential due to a lack of in-depth knowledge about the existing social and historical anchoring and the hiring of staff without any development training:

*“We enter a country without any contextual knowledge on the particular area of expertise. I did a fact-finding mission in 2010 and I proceeded how it is always done, and I realised it again in the programme check [Programmprüfung] — you enter and see: this is missing, that is lacking, this is not there. And then you go and act accordingly. For example, in the education sector, equipment is missing and it lacks demand-driven professions, etc. Then, in principle, you go and make a programme out of that [...] without seeing what is actually already there in the country.”<sup>364</sup>*

For this particular employee, the realisation that certain sectors of society were not structured as he had expected was the trigger for a “ten year long learning process,” at the end of which he explained: “I learned to look at what was actually there.”<sup>365</sup> After ten years of professional experience, he had learned to “reconstruct what is present.” He explained that the “copy-paste approach” to which he was bound did not work.<sup>366</sup> The official highlighted that many BMZ, GIZ and KfW Development Bank staff lack not only contextual background knowledge about Afghanistan, but also knowledge about the people on the ground who are already working in the areas where the programmes and projects are to be implemented.<sup>367</sup> Individuals who point out the institutional and organisational deadlocks they have encountered through their work in these systems and who seek to challenge existing approaches tend to be the exception in the development-humanitarian sector.

In particular, former GIZ staff as well as subcontractor staff emphasised that the actors in Eschborn had no intention of promoting any form of evaluation that did not tell a “success story”. Subcontractors were tasked with replicating the desired success story and developing content for platforms such as the startfinder website. Internal evaluations were to confirm that the programmes were running and working — even if empirical evidence on the ground showed the opposite, such as the “work for cash” programmes that were enforced on precariously positioned Afghans, particularly deportees and returnees. A German-Afghan lawyer, frustrated by the extent of law-bending, stated that in practice “politics is above the law” because internal reports were created to justify the policy direction, regardless of the actual impact on the ground.<sup>368</sup>

Within the ecosystem of M&E, individual implementers commissioned additional academic studies (and also published findings as academic publications) and in some rare cases this engagement led to revisions of programmatic approaches. However, M&E in Afghanistan was not constructed as a tool of inquiry to bring about institutional framework change or mechanisms to enable learning curves or honest assessments that could have resolved the discrepancy between pre-conceived notions informed by a decontextualized interpretation of the environment and the multiple realities on the ground.

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<sup>363</sup> Interview No. 18.

<sup>364</sup> Interview No. 14.

<sup>365</sup> Interview No. 14.

<sup>366</sup> Interview No. 14.

<sup>367</sup> Interview No. 18.

<sup>368</sup> Interview No. 16.

The sample of expert interviews reveals the internal system logic of M&E and the obstacles to any sort of internal attempts to modify or even transform it from within. The cases that attempted to deviate from the way development and reconstruction projects were usually conceptualised, implemented and evaluated were people who had been working on the ground in Afghanistan for about a decade in comparison to the average time of 6 to 12 months and were able to revise their approach and way of thinking about the sector they were working in. Overall, however, there was no broader institutional willingness to change decision-making processes from the top down.<sup>369</sup>

Afghan interviewees who worked for German DC suggested that this was perpetuated by elite politics: the role of the Afghan political elite was to reply to the demands of their foreign partners. Other Afghans who were themselves actors in formal political arenas of foreign, development and military policy saw German actors (like foreign development actors as a whole) as biased and limited in their approach to learning about the country, as noted by an Afghan who implemented German ODA-funded projects:

*"First of all, those who are coming to Afghanistan from these countries – I don't know what the qualification of these people is, but – the first thing they do is they are trying to negotiate with local (structures in) Afghanistan. They reach the first person who is around them or in that office and that person has a very crucial influence on them. So let's say the first impression that a foreigner gets from that person is creating a gap between the way of thinking of that international staff in that office and the government. The local staff of the NGOs of these donors are saying 'there is no capacity within the government.' Second, 'the minister or the deputy minister has personal intentions'. And the third one is, that 'we cannot work with the government,' So when I'm talking with the head of UNHCR, if I ask them that we need such a kind of project in that particular area, he's thinking, 'well, he's corrupt, he doesn't have capacity because whatever he is saying is for his own personal interest. If he was a qualified person, why would he be working with the government?' That's one of the problems."<sup>370</sup>*

These calculations and interactions led to a situation in which Germany's institutions and actors were sometimes seen as biased towards particular political factions, regions and actors. Representatives, on the other hand, assessed Germany's civil-military operations in Afghanistan positively. A high-ranking Afghan interviewee from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Ashraf Ghani administration emphasised the centuries-long bilateral relationship and distinguished Germany's work as such from that of the US after 2001. He spoke about Germany's history of "civil assistance" in Afghanistan and argued that the Germans "have the experience of working effectively." He suggested that the interest of other governments was "seasonal," while "the commitment of Germany" was "deeply rooted." At the same time, he emphasised that Germany's "contribution in Afghanistan" after 2001 had a different character, as Germany was part of "the US coalition efforts in Afghanistan" and based on a "strategic partnership with Germany." These formal agreements ensured that the civil-military NATO mission officially looked like an "Afghan-owned" and -sanctioned mission.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> Interview No. 6.

<sup>370</sup> Interview No. 10.

<sup>371</sup> Interview No. 11.

In the German development and reconstruction mission, the pool of Afghans whose input was sought was limited. With regard to the circle of Afghans who served as interlocutors for the German DC, a former GIZ employee described the situation this way:

*"Sometimes input was sought, but usually this was in the form of direct consultation of implementers such as Afghan directors of organisations that were subcontracted to implement projects or ministers responsible for an area of intervention. However, the purview rarely went further than the immediate circle of donor, implementer and directly contracted evaluation team."*<sup>372</sup>

They also point out that the limited outreach was due to the fact that people and institutions in Afghanistan, who could have offered alternative perspectives, insights or critiques, were not included:

*"I believe that after five or six years of German intensified development cooperation in Afghanistan since the end of the first Taliban, there would have been certain capacities in Afghanistan among national colleagues that would have been sufficient to do something like this more often [...] at GIZ, many people had absolutely no overview of the kind of institutions that could potentially offer something [like this] in Afghanistan. There was no [awareness of] any landscaping at all, that there could be actors who could do this. So you just didn't have a complete picture of the potential that was out there, because the people were very much in their bubble, due to the security situation overall. And such a mapping, which think tanks or which institutions could have implemented, I got the impression, was not given at all."*<sup>373</sup>

In the closed and often internal feedback loop that M&E promoted, the need for independent, competent external evaluations to critique particular projects and programmes is as obvious as its absence. However, it was also clear from the interviews that the feedback loops were never intended to effect strategies for rebuilding Afghanistan's political economy beyond neoliberal development logics.

## 5. State-sanctioned evaluations of the civil-military mission in Afghanistan

The national comparison of NATO countries that have funded Afghanistan's development and reconstruction shows that countries have taken different paths in evaluating their participation and the impact of their projects and programmes. Angela Merkel's fourth cabinet of SPD and CDU/CSU (2018-2021) responded a few days before the German federal election on 26 September 2021 to a brief inquiry (a question from a parliamentarian to the executive limited to a few points, in German: kleine Anfrage) by the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen parliamentary group on "Reappraisal of Evaluations, Decisions and Measures before and after the power take-over by the Taliban in Afghanistan" (in German: Aufarbeitung der Einschätzungen, Entscheidungen und Maßnahmen vor und nach der Machtübernahme der Taliban in Afghanistan)<sup>374</sup> and to the brief

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<sup>372</sup> Interview No. 17.

<sup>373</sup> Interview No. 17.

<sup>374</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 19/32505. 20.09.2021; Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 19/32274. 03.09.2021.



inquiry of the FDP about the “German engagement in Afghanistan” (in German: Das deutsche Engagement in Afghanistan)”<sup>375</sup> with a reference to reports by SIGAR for further information.<sup>376</sup>

More than a decade before the respective German parties’ eager interest to evaluate the civil-military operation in Afghanistan, the office of SIGAR was established in the USA by the US congress in 2008 “to provide independent and objective oversight of Afghanistan reconstruction projects and activities.”<sup>377</sup> SIGAR conducted audits, inspections, investigations and special projects to track the use of taxpayers’ money in the US “war on terror”. Quarterly reports were submitted to the US congress summarising SIGAR’s audits and investigative activities. Beyond regular audit and oversight, SIGAR’s Investigations Directorate conducted criminal and civil investigations to uncover waste, fraud and abuse.<sup>378</sup> No comparable oversight body has been established in Germany for a comprehensive analysis of development and reconstruction expenditure. Instead, the German Federal Government published a series of progress reports on Afghanistan from 2010 to 2014 and in 2018 (in German: Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan).<sup>379</sup>

These reports were developed by the German government for the purpose of briefing the Bundestag. The ministries involved in the writing of the report included the BMI, the AA, the BMVg and the BMZ. The government provided a narrative overview of Germany’s participation and role in the areas of security, governance and state-building, as well as reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. In contrast to SIGAR’s reporting, these progress reports provided only selective data on planned spending rather than expenditure overviews. The reports also did neither distinguish between the different ministries and state-owned implementing agencies, such as GIZ, nor offer a breakdown of spending across sectors and the drivers behind the shifting logics of budget allocation. This means that information on Germany’s total expenditure and the disaggregated expenditure in the different sectors of development and reconstruction was rather opaque — despite the government’s advice to check the OECD data for the budget allocation breakdown.

The 2014 report (“Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan 2014”) includes an additional interim assessment of the Afghanistan engagement by Dr. Michael Koch, the German government’s Special

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<sup>375</sup> Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 19/32643. 04.10.2021.

<sup>376</sup> The parliamentary group DIE LINKE abstained from the vote on the motion of the parliamentary groups SPD, CDU/CSU, Bündnis 90/DIE Grünen and FDP (Drucksache 20/2352) on the establishment of the 1st Committee of Inquiry of the 20th parliamentary term, because it was “excluded from the process of drafting the enquiry mandate,” as the document was drafted between the parliamentary groups of the coalition (SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and FDP) and with the CDU/CSU. See: Deutscher Bundestag-Drucksache 20/2553. 05.07.2022; Drucksache 20/2352.

<sup>377</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. “About SIGAR.” SIGAR.

<https://www.sigar.mil/about/index.aspx?SSR=1> (last accessed 13.08.2022).

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

<sup>379</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2010. “3. Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Umsetzung des Aktionsplans ‘zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung.’” Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/217528/298e42ef13563f1b5b3a4e3355925f70/aktionsplan-bericht3-de-data.pdf> (last accessed 12.11.2022); Die Bundesregierung. 2014. “Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan 2014 einschließlich einer Zwischenbilanz Afghanistan-Engagements verfasst vom Sonderbeauftragten der Bundesregierung für Afghanistan und Pakistan, Dr. Michael Koch, zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags, auch über den Abschluss der Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte am Einsatz der Internationalen Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe in Afghanistan (“ISAF-Abschlussbericht”).” Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/250822/7e778863db3c698185562904e87daea5/141119-fortschrittsbericht-afg-2014-data.pdf> (last accessed 21.04.2022); Die Bundesregierung. 2018. “Bericht der Bundesregierung zu Stand und Perspektiven des deutschen Afghanistan-Engagements zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags.” Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/1787152/c23bcd183458dd556bb159b0c97bce20/180315-perspektivbericht-data.pdf> (last accessed 17.02.2023).

Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The report is particularly noteworthy because it simultaneously covered the reporting obligation for the conclusion of German participation in the ISAF mission.<sup>380</sup> Koch argues in the introduction to the supplementary section that a strictly national assessment was not meaningful, as the contributions of the German Bundesregierung were consistently embedded in multilateral agreements: "for the engagement in Afghanistan in particular, it is true that only everyone can and will be successful together – or nobody."<sup>381</sup>

The report focuses mainly on the amount of expenditure and on outputs, i.e. the number of school buildings and students, rather than on outcomes or impacts, and ignores the actual interlinkages of different donor funding in the areas in which the German Federal Government focused ODA.<sup>382</sup> For example, many problems in the police sector were already known in 2014 — but none of them were discussed or mentioned. The report remained a success story of how Germany helped build a civilian police force, even though they were deployed in a highly militarised environment in US counter-insurgency missions alongside the Afghan army. Instead of addressing aspects such as the paramilitary character of the Afghan police, the report focuses on the number of police officers trained at the German-funded police academy and the number of seminars offered.<sup>383</sup>

The reports present German ODA spending in purely quantitative terms and therefore do not provide a basis for discussing the impact of German ODA-funded programmes. Shortcomings in programme implementation are usually blamed on the Afghan government or explained by geopolitical developments that try to circumvent the structures that the German Bundesregierung helped create in Afghanistan in the name of "sustainable development." This applies, for example, to the negative economic effects of the troop withdrawal in 2014 for Afghanistan, in the course of which many DC organisations also withdrew and which, among other things, led to high unemployment in a country that was largely aid dependent.<sup>384</sup> Aspects that are said to explain the lack of economic development include "weak entrepreneurial thinking, a lack of legal certainty, corruption and nepotism, and a lack of confidence, even among Afghan elites, in the long-term stability of the country."<sup>385</sup> The reasons for poor project results are located in the lack of skills of the Afghans and not in the effects of the military invasion, and the neoliberal restructuring of Afghanistan's economy.

In some respects, reports from NATO countries such as Norway and the USA go into more detail about German involvement than the German reports.<sup>386</sup> This is the case, for example, with Norway's report on its involvement in the "peace process," in which it explicitly compares its own

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<sup>380</sup> Die Bundesregierung. 2014. "Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan 2014 einschließlich einer Zwischenbilanz Afghanistan-Engagements verfasst vom Sonderbeauftragten der Bundesregierung für Afghanistan und Pakistan, Dr. Michael Koch, zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags, auch über den Abschluss der Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte am Einsatz der Internationalen Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe in Afghanistan ("ISAF-Abschlussbericht")." Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/250822/7e778863db3c698185562904e87daea5/141119-fortschrittsbericht-afg-2014-data.pdf>, p. 4 (last accessed 21.04.2022).

<sup>381</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>386</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence. 2016. "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014." Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2016: 8. <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/09faceca099c4b8bac85ca8495e12d2d/en-gb/pdfs/nou201620160008000engpdfs.pdf> (last accessed 17.02.2023).

actions with Germany's involvement in establishing the Doha office for the Taliban. Similarly, SIGAR's comparison of US and German approaches to police training contrast the different approaches, funding volumes and shortcomings of the approaches.<sup>387</sup> While both the SIGAR and Norwegian reports remain intra-systemic and system-affirming, they offer more transparency and accountability than the German reporting.

## ***E. The liberal "peace process"***

Germany became involved early on in the perennial and often performative "peace process" in Afghanistan. Shortly after the US-led invasion in 2001, Germany hosted the Bonn Conference, which set the parameters for the post-Taliban Afghan state. Later, Germany brokered backchannel contacts with the Taliban leadership and funded attempts at intra-Afghan dialogue. In the end, however, Germany could not prevail against the overwhelming influence of the USA, not only in the process of state-building of the Afghan state, but also in the conduct of the war and the manner of troop withdrawal. The result was the marginalisation of the Afghan government and the full takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban.

This section looks at the language and methodology of "peace building" in Afghanistan. A recurring feature of peace building over the two decades of NATO's deployment were workshops that taught Afghans about human rights, women's emancipation and the promotion of democracy in the spirit of "liberal peace." However, these training workshops, conducted by governmental agencies and NGOs were only oriented towards donor interests, while ignoring the concerns of the Afghan population regarding the security situation and demands on the community level. The sources in this section are predominantly from government actors and affiliated mediators as well as media actors, who were permitted to enter this elite political arena and who were responsible for crafting the hegemonic narratives of the peace process, which set up the conditions for the military withdrawal and formal end of the NATO's war.

The negotiations between the Taliban and the USA also took place bypassing the Afghan government, which was made public by the national security adviser Hamdullah Mohib in March 2019. He was subsequently ostracised by US officials and institutions.<sup>388</sup> In October 2019, a document published by Tolonews outlined the Ghani administration's "7-Point 'Peace Plan,'" which was built on securing Afghanistan's nominal sovereignty through negotiating conditions of peace with the NATO states, primarily the Taliban, Pakistan, regional actors and supranational organisations, and eventually at the local level.<sup>389</sup> The peace talks became a cover for the US withdrawal and constructed a formal political arena away from where the war played out. The

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<sup>387</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2022. "Police in Conflict. Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." SIGAR. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-22-23-LL.pdf>, p.44-50 (last accessed 09.12.2022).

<sup>388</sup> Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. 2019. "Afghan Official Warns of U.S. Deal With Taliban 'That Doesn't End in Peace.'" New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/14/world/middleeast/afghanistan-us-taliban-negotiations-.html> (last accessed 27.02.2023); Nordland, Rod and Mujib Mashal. 2019. "Afghan National Security Chief Is Sidelined in His Own War." New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/30/world/asia/afghanistan-hamdullah-mohib-zalmay-khalilzad.html> (last accessed 27.02.2023); Landay, Jonathan. 2019. "U.S. freezes out top Afghan official in peace talks feud: sources." Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan/u-s-freezes-out-top-afghan-official-in-peace-talks-feud-sources-idUSKCN1QZ2OU> (last accessed 27.02.2023).

<sup>389</sup> Tolonews. "Ghani Proposes 7-Point 'Peace Plan.'" Tolonews. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/ghani-proposes-7-point-%E2%80%98peace-plan%E2%80%99> (last accessed 27.02.2023).

following section reviews key steps in this spectacle with a focus on German ODA spending in the pursuit of a “peace” on US terms.

## 1. Exclusion of the Taliban, inclusion of the warlords

The dynamics of the so-called “peace process” need to be viewed in light of the victory of the Northern Alliance, the USA and its allies over the Taliban, and the 2001 Bonn Agreement, which offered the framework for the cessation of hostilities and conflict management. The Bonn Conference at the Petersberg in Germany, which set the political framework for the interim government, was flawed in some key aspects. The most salient point for NATO on peace and conflict management was the exclusion of the Taliban as the defeated party and the inclusion of the Northern Alliance *mujaheddin* which had fought alongside the USA against the Taliban. The USA and its allies saw no need to include the former Taliban government as they had been branded terrorists for having hosted Al-Qaeda on their soil.<sup>390</sup> However, the former Northern Alliance *Jihadi* leaders who had devastated Afghanistan’s urban infrastructure during the civil war in the 1990s (1992-1995) were granted amnesty for war crimes committed during that period — and even during the takeover of Afghanistan from the Taliban.<sup>391</sup>

One example of the inclusion of war criminals in the post-2001 political order is General Dostum. The leader of a prominent militia allied with the USA in the fight against the Taliban, is known to be responsible for the killing of 250 to 2,000 Taliban prisoners using gruesome methods such as suffocation in shipping containers in December 2021.<sup>392</sup> Whether NATO was aware of the so-called *Dasht-i Leili* massacre at the time is unclear, though reports indicate that the US government tried to impede investigations into these events in 2002.<sup>393</sup> Committing these war crimes did not stop General Dostum from becoming Minister of Defence in the new Afghan government and, in 2014, Vice President of Afghanistan under President Ghani. It was only in 2017 that he left Afghanistan and sought refuge in Turkey after being accused of arranging the rape of a political opponent.<sup>394</sup> However, not only was he allowed to return to Afghanistan, but in 2020 he was promoted to the highest military rank of field marshal as part of an agreement to end electoral turmoil between Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, and President Ghani.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Strick van Linschoten, Alex and Felix Kuehn. 2014. *An enemy we created: The myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda merger in Afghanistan*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

<sup>391</sup> The informal amnesty was later on conferred into law through an amnesty law that was passed by the Afghan parliament in 2007 and signed by President Karzai in 2010. See: Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2010. “Afghanistan: Repeal Amnesty Law/ Measure Brought into Force by Karzai Means Atrocities Will Go Unpunished.” HRW <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/03/10/afghanistan-repeal-amnesty-law> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>392</sup> Harding, Luke. 2002. “Afghan Massacre haunts Pentagon.” *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/sep/14/afghanistan.lukeharding> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>393</sup> Physicians for Human Rights. 2009. “President Obama Orders National Security Team to Investigate Dasht-e Leili Massacre and Alleged Cover-up.” Physicians for Human Rights. <https://phr.org/news/president-obama-orders-national-security-team-to-investigate-dasht-e-leili-massacre-and-alleged-cover-up/> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>394</sup> BBC News. 2017. “Afghan Vice-President Dostum flies to Turkey amid torture claims.” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39984639> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>395</sup> Feroz, Emran. 2020. “Afghan Warlord’s Promotion Highlights the Bankruptcy of America’s Longest War.” *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/17/afghan-warlord-abdul-rashid-dostum-power-sharing-war/> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

The fact that Germany, together with other international donor countries, tolerated the active involvement of the warlords in the negotiations turned a blind eye to the war crimes committed by men like Dostum and others. Abdul Rashid Dostum, Atta Mohammad Noor, or Mohammad Mohaqqiq, became an integral part of the state, partly because they already had extensive networks and economic and social resources. Partly it was also because they had worked with the USA, which had made the overthrow of the Taliban possible in the first place.<sup>396</sup> The rules of the game established by the US government, with the tacit approval of the international community, created a transactional approach to nation-building that was riddled with internal contradictions. Consequently, by including the warlords while strictly rejecting the Taliban, the US government missed a crucial opportunity to provide more stable political conditions.

The details of this missed opportunity raise some difficult questions given the situation of Afghanistan today. In early December 2001, then interim-President Hamid Karzai met with a Taliban delegation led by Mullah Obaidullah, who had been appointed as a negotiator by Mullah Omar, former leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan and as such head of state of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.<sup>397</sup> The Taliban delegation told Karzai that they wanted to cease fighting and hand over their weapons. Karzai announced the Taliban's surrender via international press agencies but, as journalist Bette Dam reports based on interviews with Karzai, "a few hours after his announcement of the surrender, a furious Rumsfeld had phoned him and ordered him to rescind the agreements made with the Taliban in public. For the US, the Taliban and Mullah Omar were as much of an enemy as Al Qaeda, said Rumsfeld. With that phone call, Rumsfeld effectively derailed this local peace initiative."<sup>398</sup> A policy of considering official communication or negotiation with the Taliban as a no-go area meant that the window of opportunity for negotiation with the Taliban was missed at a time when they were in a position of weakness.<sup>399</sup> Taliban leaders and soldiers were hunted while warlords were placed into positions of power, such as governor Abdul Raziq Achakzai in Kandahar, who had been credibly accused of rampant extrajudicial killings and torture.

## 2. Talks – with or without the Afghan government

It was not until the mid-2000s that the possibility of talks with the various insurgent groups was considered again. Under the Bush administration, negotiations were politically unacceptable. However, this changed after the Obama administration took control of the White House in 2009. Even as Obama expanded the war with the so-called "surge" (a deployment of more than 100,000 troops around its peak in 2011 and an intensified drone campaign against Taliban leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistani border areas), an awareness developed that victory against the insurgents was impossible without negotiations with them.<sup>400</sup> As the US softened its

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<sup>396</sup> Malejacq, Romain. 2020. *Warlord Survival*. United States: Cornell University Press; Mukhopadhyay, Dipali. 2014. *Warlords, strongman governors, and the state in Afghanistan*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>397</sup> Gopal, Anand. 2014. *No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company, p. 49-50; Dam, Bette. 2021. *Looking for the Enemy - Mullah Omar and the Unknown Taliban*. Uttar Pradesh: Harper Collins.

<sup>398</sup> Dam, Bette. 2014. "Hoe de Amerikanen in 2001 de vredesdeal met de taliban onder het vloerleed veegden." *Vrij Nederland*. <https://www.vn.nl/hoede-amerikanen-in-2001-de-vredesdeal-met-de-taliban-onder-het-vloerleed-veegden/> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>399</sup> Wörmer, Nils. 2012. "Exploratory talks and peace initiatives in Afghanistan: Actors, demands, Germany's role as mediator." *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) Comments*, No. 44. [https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2012C44\\_wmr.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2012C44_wmr.pdf) (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>400</sup> Kurzleben, Danielle, 2016. "How the U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan have changed under Obama." *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2016/07/06/484979294/chart-how-the-u-s-troop-levels-in-afghanistan-have-changed-under->

negotiation position, various countries such as Norway, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, China and international organisations such as the UN and the EU attempted to establish communication between the Taliban and the Afghan government. In this new push for peace, Germany acted as a facilitator and self-appointed mediator.

In the effort to negotiate with the Taliban, a crucial point of contention emerged early on: the group, now in a stronger negotiating position, did not want to back down from its insistence on excluding the Afghan government. The “international community” dutifully agreed. In the final negotiations between the USA and the Taliban, which eventually led to the 2020 Doha Agreement (under which the US withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan was conditional on Taliban security assurances that Afghan territory would not be used as a launch pad by al-Qaeda or Islamic State for attacks against the USA), it was clear that the Afghan government had been completely left out. But as early as 2007, there were indications that the international community was sidestepping the Afghan government in their attempts to persuade the Taliban to engage in peace talks. In a scandal in December 2007, two senior diplomats – Michael Semple, the deputy of the EU special representative for Afghanistan, and Mervyn Patterson, a UN official – were expelled from the country for allegedly talking to the Taliban and paying money to the group.<sup>401</sup>

Other talks straddle a grey area of recognition through the Afghan government, such as three meetings organised by Afghan businessmen in the Maldives in 2010 between the Taliban, Hezb-e Islami<sup>402</sup> and representatives of the Afghan government. These included Afghan government representatives but were rejected by President Karzai. They took place at a time when the official US line was still not to negotiate with the Taliban, and the Afghan government was not involved in the preparation of the meetings. Other early attempts at negotiations included a Saudi invitation (2008/2009) from King Abdullah under the guise of breaking the fast together during Ramadan. These talks, requested by the Afghan government and supported by the British government, were attended by the President’s elder brother, Qayum Karzai, the second talks by the former foreign minister of the previous Taliban government, Mulla Ahmad Wakil Mutawakil and the former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Mulla Abdul Salam Zaeef. At the third talks, Hezb-e Islami was represented by Ghairat Bahir, the son-in-law of its leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and the Taliban by Mulla Agha Jan Mutassim, a son-in-law of Mulla Omar and former chairman of the Rahbari Shura (political committee of the Taliban leadership council). The talks did not lead to a formal process, but showed that different sides had an interest in bringing the conflict partners to the negotiation table.<sup>403</sup>

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[obama](#) (last accessed 16.09.2022); Purkiss, Jessica and Jack Serle. 2017. “Obama’s covert drone war in numbers: Ten times more drone strikes than Bush.” The Bureau of Investigative Journalism. <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2017-01-17/obamas-covert-drone-war-in-numbers-ten-times-more-strikes-than-bush> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>401</sup> Fox, David. 2007. “Expelled EU, U.N. officials leave Afghanistan.” Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghan-expulsion-idUSSP28534320071227> (last accessed 16.09.2022); Boone, Jon. 2007. “Envoys expelled for ‘talks with Taliban.’” Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/a311138c-b3b0-11dc-a6df-0000779fd2ac> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>402</sup> Hezb-e Islami was one of the Western-funded tanzims that fought the Soviet-backed communist government in the 1980s. It was founded in 1976 and led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and is discussed in the next section.

<sup>403</sup> Further attempts by Norway are listed in the national report on Norway’s engagement in Afghanistan, see: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence. 2016. “A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014.” NOU 2016: 8. <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/09faceca099c4b8bac85ca8495e12d2d/en-gb/pdfs/nou201620160008000engpdfs.pdf>, p.161-171 (last accessed 17.02.2023).

From the end of 2009, Germany actively sought contact with the Taliban through the BND as part of the so-called "Qatar Process."<sup>404</sup> A first meeting took place in spring 2010 in Doha with Tayeb Agha, Mullah Omar's former personal secretary. In November 2010 and May 2011, the BND brought Tayeb Agha to Munich, where he held direct talks with an American delegation from the State Department and the intelligence services, mediated by the AA.<sup>405</sup> The talks concluded with agreements for prisoner exchanges and the establishment of a Taliban liaison office in Doha.<sup>406</sup> President Karzai was angered by the exclusion of the Afghan government from the process and demanded that the office be used only as a venue for peace negotiations and not as an embassy with a flag, which the Taliban initially accepted but then opened the office. After the flag was raised and named after the Islamic Emirate, Karzai rejected the Taliban's symbolic claim to be a national actor. He furthermore boycotted talks with the Taliban unless the process was Afghan-led.<sup>407</sup>

### 3. *Afghan government initiatives: High Peace Council and integration of HIG*

With the establishment of the High Peace Council (HPC) in 2010, Afghanistan began building institutions to conduct negotiations with the insurgents. While the HPC was sidelined in the talks between the USA and the Taliban, it played an important role in another peace initiative with another insurgent group, namely Hezb-e Islami.

Although the war in Afghanistan is often described as a conflict between the Afghan government, its Western supporters and the Taliban, other transnational actors were also involved in the insurgency: Hezb-e Islami and the Haqqani network.<sup>408</sup> In later years they were joined by Daesh/ISIS-K.<sup>409</sup>

The Afghan-led negotiation process and the re-integration of Hezb-e Islami into the political arena offers a revealing comparison to the US-led "peace process" with the Taliban, in which the German Federal Government was involved through ODA-funded projects. While in the latter, the Afghan government was sidelined, negotiations with Hezb-e Islami were led and conducted by the Afghan government itself. The negotiations took place between 2007 and 2016 and ended with the return of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to Kabul on 4 May 2017.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> Wörmer, Nils. 2012. "Exploratory talks and peace initiatives in Afghanistan: Actors, demands, Germany's role as mediator." Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) Comments, No. 44. [https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2012C44\\_wmr.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2012C44_wmr.pdf), p.4 (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>406</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence. 2016. "A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001-2014." NOU 2016: 8. <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/09faceca099c4b8bac85ca8495e12d2d/en-gb/pdfs/nou201620160008000engpdfs.pdf>, p. 158 (last accessed 17.02.2023).

<sup>407</sup> BBC. 2013. "Afghan President Karzai to boycott talks with Taliban." BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22973111> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>408</sup> The Haqqani networks is a Pakistan-based militant organisation founded during the anti-Soviet war.

<sup>409</sup> Giustozzi, Antonio. 2018. *The Islamic State in Khorasan: Afghanistan, Pakistan and the New Central Asian Jihad*. London: Hurst Publishers.

<sup>410</sup> BBC. 2017. "Afghan warlord Hekmatyar returns to Kabul after peace deal." BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39802833> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

Hekmatyar had fought Afghan governments since the 1970s, including the communist PDPA governments, the Mujaheddin government and the Taliban.<sup>411</sup> Hezb-e Islami was one of the Western-funded *tanzims* that fought the Soviet-backed communist government in the 1980s.<sup>412</sup> While Germany did not supply weapons to the resistance groups, it supported them indirectly: Hekmatyar was a guest of the AA in the 1980s and Bonn sent “large sums of uncontroversial humanitarian assistance to the refugee camps in Pakistan, which they were fully aware would also benefit the resistance groups.”<sup>413</sup> Gulbuddin Hekmatyar later on earned the nickname “the butcher of Kabul” due to his indiscriminate shelling of urban infrastructure in the civil war after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989.<sup>414</sup>

After being excluded from the 2001 Bonn Conference, which was dominated by Hekmatyar’s arch rival Jamiat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (JIA), which received many of the important cabinet positions in the interim government, Hezb-e Islami opposed the internationally supported Afghan government.<sup>415</sup> Hezb-e Islami operated from Pakistani territory and in eastern Afghanistan.<sup>416</sup> It was responsible for large-scale attacks against the international military presence and high-level Afghan targets. In 2003, Hekmatyar was classified as a “Global Terrorist” by the US State Department and placed on the UN Security Council sanctions list.<sup>417</sup>

This did not mean, however, that Hezb-e Islami was not part of Afghanistan’s political milieu: senior Hezb-e Islami members approached President Karzai to join the government in the early 2000s, and in 2005 Hezb-e Islami was registered as a political party, leading to a split with Hekmatyar, who “publicly disowned” it.<sup>418</sup> Despite the split, the existence of an official Hezb-e Islami party meant that members of the group now had an alternative means of participation in Afghan politics that went beyond violence.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> Münch, Philipp. 2018. ‘Forces of Heresy versus Forces of Conservation: Making Sense of Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan’s and the Taleban’s Positions in the Afghan Insurgency.’ *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 29 (4): 709–34.

<sup>412</sup> Coll, Steve. 2005. *Ghost Wars: the Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

<sup>413</sup> Jahn, Thaddeus Caspar Boyd. 2020. Responding Responsibly: West Germany’s Relations with the *Mujahideen* During the Soviet-Afghan War, 1979–1987, *The International History Review*, 42:4, 755-773.

<sup>414</sup> Rasmussen, Sune Engel. 2017. “Fear and doubt as notorious ‘butcher of Kabul’ returns with talk of peace.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/04/afghan-warlord-gulbuddin-hekmatyar-returns-kabul-20-years-call-peace> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>415</sup> Münch points out that it was advantageous for Jamiat-e Islami that the United Nations continued to recognise Burhanuddin Rabbani, the leader of the JIA, as acting president under the 1992 Peshawar Agreement. See: Münch, Philipp. 2018. ‘Forces of Heresy versus Forces of Conservation: Making Sense of Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan’s and the Taleban’s Positions in the Afghan Insurgency.’ *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 29 (4): 709–34, p. 719.

<sup>416</sup> A USIP report details a Hezb-e Islami presence in Kunar, Nangarhar, Laghman, Logar, Wardak, Kapisa, Baghlan and a smaller presence in Farah and Helmand. Johnson, Casey Garret. 2018. “The political deal with Hezb-e Islami/What it means for talks with the Taliban and Peace in Afghanistan.” United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw\\_139\\_the\\_political\\_deal\\_with\\_hezb\\_e\\_islami.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw_139_the_political_deal_with_hezb_e_islami.pdf), p. 12 (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>417</sup> Johnson, Casey Garret. 2018. “The political deal with Hezb-e Islami: What it means for talks with the Taliban and Peace in Afghanistan.” United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw\\_139\\_the\\_political\\_deal\\_with\\_hezb\\_e\\_islami.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw_139_the_political_deal_with_hezb_e_islami.pdf), p. 12 (last accessed: 16.09.2022).

<sup>418</sup> Münch, Philipp. 2018. ‘Forces of Heresy versus Forces of Conservation: Making Sense of Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan’s and the Taleban’s Positions in the Afghan Insurgency.’ *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 29 (4): 709–34, p. 724.

<sup>419</sup> Rüttig, Thomas. 2010. Gulbuddin ante portas – again”. Afghanistan Analysts Network. See: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/war-and-peace/gulbuddin-ante-portas-again-2/> (last accessed 16.09.2022).



The first contact between Hekmatyar and the Afghan government was established in 2007,<sup>420</sup> and initial trust-building measures between the two sides took place in 2009, when Karzai released Hekmatyar's imprisoned son-in-law.<sup>421</sup> Preliminary non-public negotiations took place, with the National Security Council advisor, Mohammad Haneef Atmar, as the main interlocutor.<sup>422</sup> After this initial stage of secret talks, formal negotiations were conducted by the office of the HPC, which was established in 2010. The negotiation team on the Afghan side included deputies from the rival parties of Hezb-e Islami such as Jamiat-e Islami, Junbish-i Milli as well as one women's rights activist, Habiba Sarabi. Hezb-e Islami's negotiating team also included Hekmatyar's son-in-law, Ghairat Baheer, and supporters from France (Karim Amin) and Germany (Atiqullah Safi), who had financed Hezb-e Islami for many years.<sup>423</sup> Reportedly, the negotiations were rocky, not least due to the historical rivalry of the parties, and the peace agreement had to be revised 37 times, even after the negotiation teams had reached an agreement.<sup>424</sup>

While Hezb-e Islami had originally made the full foreign withdrawal of troops a prerequisite for a peace agreement, the end of the ISAF mission and the shift to a post-2014 training mission in the RSM provided an opening to reformulate the demand for the withdrawal of all combat forces.<sup>425</sup> The deal that was ultimately struck between Hezb-e Islami and the Afghan government stipulated the release of Hezb-e Islami prisoners, an outline to recruit eligible commanders from Hezb-e Islami into the Afghan National Security Forces, the support of refugee returns, and a request to remove Hezb-e Islami leaders from the UN sanctions list. Commanders of Hezb-e Islami were not disarmed and their leaders were granted immunity. In return, Hezb-e Islami agreed to cease fighting and adhere to Afghanistan's constitution.

Reflecting on the process, it can be seen that the negotiations – like the later “peace process” between the US government and the Taliban – did not lead to an accountable peace process for the Afghan people. The fighters and leaders, like all other war criminals in Afghanistan, were granted full judicial immunity. However, the process was led by the Afghan government, which decided whom to include and in which ways.

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<sup>420</sup> Johnson, Casey Garret. 2018. The political deal with Hezb-e Islami: What it means for talks with the Taliban and Peace in Afghanistan." United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw\\_139\\_the\\_political\\_deal\\_with\\_hezb\\_e\\_islami.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw_139_the_political_deal_with_hezb_e_islami.pdf), p. 13 (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>421</sup> Münch, Philipp. 2018. 'Forces of Heresy versus Forces of Conservation: Making Sense of Hezb-e Islami-Ye Afghanistan's and the Taleban's Positions in the Afghan Insurgency.' *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 29 (4): 709–34, p. 726.

<sup>422</sup> Rahim, Mushtaq Muhammad. 2019. "Peace Prevails: A Review of the Process of Peace and Reconciliation between the Afghan Government and the Hezb-e Islami." Berghof Foundation, Transitions Series No.13, p. 9.

<sup>423</sup> Johnson, Casey Garret. 2018. "The political deal with Hezb-e Islami/What it means for talks with the Taliban and Peace in Afghanistan." United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw\\_139\\_the\\_political\\_deal\\_with\\_hezb\\_e\\_islami.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw_139_the_political_deal_with_hezb_e_islami.pdf), p. 14 (last accessed 16.09.2022); Rahim, Mushtaq Muhammad. 2019. "Peace Prevails: A Review of the Process of Peace and Reconciliation between the Afghan Government and the Hezb-e Islami." Berghof Foundation, Transitions Series No.13, p. 9-10.

<sup>424</sup> Rahim, Mushtaq Muhammad. 2019. "Peace Prevails: A Review of the Process of Peace and Reconciliation between the Afghan Government and the Hezb-e Islami." Berghof Foundation, Transitions Series No.13, p. 11.

<sup>425</sup> Johnson, Casey Garret. 2018. "The political deal with Hezb-e Islami: What it means for talks with the Taliban and Peace in Afghanistan." United States Institute of Peace (USIP). [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw\\_139\\_the\\_political\\_deal\\_with\\_hezb\\_e\\_islami.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/pw_139_the_political_deal_with_hezb_e_islami.pdf), p. 14 (last accessed 16.09.2022).

#### 4. *Involvement of German NGOs in negotiations with the Taliban*

Around the time when the negotiations with Hezb-e Islami were in full swing, the AA started funding projects geared towards supporting “peace” and “reconciliation” processes in Afghanistan through capacity building and mediation initiatives. A Berghof Foundation project entitled “Afghanistan: support to resilient and sustainable peace” was largely funded by the AA as of October 2016 (and is still ongoing). The Berghof Foundation is an NGO established in 1971 that is active in the field of “conflict transformation.” Initially focused on the arms race during the Cold War, its focus shifted to “ethno-political” conflicts.<sup>426</sup>

In the early years of the AA funded project, which overlapped with the negotiations with Hezb-e Islami, the focus was on evaluating the context, governance structures and power dynamics that could facilitate potential peace agreements. This meant that although the project overlapped in time with Afghan negotiations with Hezb-e Islami, it had no direct impact on these negotiations. Embedded in the ecosystem of the liberal ideology on reconciliation and peace building, the project aimed at establishing “sustainable and resilient peace by strengthening their individual and collective capacity to design and implement nonviolent conflict transformation as a self-owned and self-led process.”<sup>427</sup> The work focused on supporting dialogue and mediation support, the establishment of local peacebuilding mechanisms and “infrastructures for peace”, as well as the establishment of a “constructive dialogue between key Afghan actors and relevant peers in the region.”<sup>428</sup>

In close cooperation with the HPC in Kabul, the project took participants, particularly members of the HPC itself and other policymakers involved in the overall process, to workshops in Berlin (2017), and study visits to Indonesia (2017) and Nepal (2018). During these visits, participants were expected to learn from experts from other contexts who have played key roles in peace processes in other countries such as the Philippines, Nepal, Tunisia, Colombia, and Thailand.<sup>429</sup> These approaches aimed to develop the capacity among local actors to “own” liberal frameworks for reconciliation and peacebuilding. In the case of Afghanistan, the script could not be applied given that the process was entirely determined by the Taliban and the US government, and the Afghan government was sidelined.

In addition to these capacity building measures, the Berghof Foundation also worked alongside the German Bundesregierung in the Doha track of negotiations with the Taliban. Part of the negotiations was the preparation of the intra-Afghan dialogue that was hosted by the German and Qatari governments in July 2019. The so-called “Intra-Afghan Conference for Peace” was attended by representatives of the Afghan government, political opposition groups and representatives of civil society as well as the Taliban. The meetings behind closed doors were moderated by the Berghof Foundation. The high-profile intra-Afghan talks were the only time the Afghan government and members of Afghanistan’s political sphere met face to face with the Taliban. The negotiations otherwise took place exclusively between the US government and the Taliban and were kept secret.

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<sup>426</sup> Berghof Foundation. “History.” Berghof Foundation. <https://berghof-foundation.org/about/history> (last accessed 01.03.2023).

<sup>427</sup> Berghof Foundation. “Current Project. Afghanistan: Support to resilient and sustainable peace.” Berghof Foundation. <https://berghof-foundation.org/work/projects/afghanistan-fostering-peace-negotiations> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

In these negotiations the Berghof Foundation took on an intermediary role on behalf of the AA. An Afghan ministry official who was privy to the dynamics between the different actors in the “peace negotiations” described how this interplay led to coordination and communication problems between German actors with different mandates and political influence:

*“[The embassies’] mandate was to take care of development projects, take care of bilateral issues...So there was the embassy which was not very involved in the peace talks. But then you have the Berghof Foundation with direct contact with the institutions in Germany. They received enough resources [...] You had an embassy in Kabul, the US ambassador sat there, then you had Zalmay Khalilzad with a different agenda, with different priorities. Sometimes he was just running over the embassy mandate, same as Germany. So that was the big problem. Not just for the Germans but for the US, for the Brits, I can say for some countries it created lots of problems. First of all for themselves between the embassy and the team who are involved in the peace talks with the Taliban – to give them a platform, to provide them with the resources – and in the meantime with us, because we didn't know who is doing what when it comes to the diplomatic field.”<sup>430</sup>*

Although the negotiations were very complex because of the array of actors involved, the basis for decisions was simple. An Afghan ministry official put it succinctly: “Regardless of what western countries were saying, at the end of the day it was the US that made the last decision.”<sup>431</sup> This meant that not only the Afghan state but also Western allies involved in the negotiations were often excluded from the decision-making process:

*“When President Trump, after 19 years of war with the Taliban, picked up the phone and talked for 50 minutes with Mulla Baradar [deputy to the supreme leader of the Taliban and chief of Taliban’s political office in Doha], their close allies and friends, including Germany, they didn't know what's going on.”<sup>432</sup>*

The example shows a general disregard for opinions of supposed allies — and of the people whose future was being negotiated. While the Afghan President offered unconditional peace talks in February 2018 with the recognition of the Taliban as a political party and amnesty for its fighters, the Taliban refused and began direct talks with American diplomats in July 2018.<sup>433</sup> The US government appointed a Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, who held initial meetings with the Taliban in October 2018. Bilateral talks began in late January 2018 and lasted for nine rounds, culminating in an agreement between the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban” and the US.”<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Interview No. 11.

<sup>431</sup> Interview No. 11.

<sup>432</sup> Interview No. 11.

<sup>433</sup> Semple, Michael, Raphael, Robin L., Shams Rasikh. 2021. “An independent assessment of the Afghanistan peace process June 2018-May 2021.” Political Settlements Research Programme (PSRP). <https://www.politicalsettlements.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/An-independent-assessment-of-the-Afghanistan-peace-process.pdf> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>434</sup> United States, State Department. 2020. “Agreement for bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America.” <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

The agreement was nominally about “peace” but almost exclusively focused on the conditions for the withdrawal of NATO troops and member states as well as measures to ensure the security of NATO countries. Armed groups should be prevented from using Afghanistan as a base for attacks against the USA and its allies - this did not mean that they were prevented from using it as a base against Afghan targets or countries in the region. A second declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the USA, on the other hand, laid down the commitments of both sides with regard to the “peace process.”<sup>435</sup> Due to divergences between the two agreements, both the Afghan government and the Taliban could later “rightly say that they did not directly agree to terms that the other now expects them to keep.”<sup>436</sup>

Peace negotiations never took place directly between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. The way the US-Taliban negotiations were handled undermined the prospects of intra-Afghan negotiations. The political mission of the Taliban in Doha was experienced in interacting with diplomats and their ability to participate in international forums — such as the Moscow dialogues (5-6 February 2019) — gave them the status of a government in waiting.<sup>437</sup> From direct negotiations between the US and the Taliban, they derived their claim to power in relation to the Afghan government, while rejecting the Afghan government as NATO-appointed.

By withdrawing, the US gave up negotiation leverage and fully gave in to the Taliban’s core concern, dictating furthermore terms for Afghanistan in engagement with the Taliban (such as the prisoner exchange). Germany participated in the negotiations on the withdrawal of foreign troops and the political settlement by funding projects on mediation and capacity building for Afghan participants, who were mainly politicians and members of the HPC. While German ODA funded the only intra-Afghan talks, the spectre of Afghan participation to interweave liberal notions of reconciliation and peacebuilding remained unrealised as all power to negotiate and dictate terms stayed with the US and the Taliban. Germany supported a process that sidelined the Afghan government it had supported to install.

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<sup>435</sup> The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America & The United States of America. (2020). *Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan*. [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02\\_29\\_20-US-Afghanistan-Joint-Declaration.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02_29_20-US-Afghanistan-Joint-Declaration.pdf) (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>436</sup> Threlkeld, Elizabeth. 2020. “Reading between the Lines of Afghan Agreements.” Lawfare Institute. <https://www.lawfareblog.com/reading-between-lines-afghan-agreements> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

<sup>437</sup> Higgins, Andrew and Mujib Mashal. 2019. “In Moscow, Afghan Peace Talks without the Afghan Government.” New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/04/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-russia-talks-russia.html> (last accessed 16.09.2022).

## PART II

### *B. The politics of military withdrawal and evacuation*

In February 2020, the USA and the Taliban signed an agreement on the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan. In April 2021, NATO foreign and defence ministers decided to pull all NATO forces out of Afghanistan within a few months. In August 2021, after the collapse of the Afghan government and the Afghan defence and security forces, NATO member states evacuated Afghans and their families who had worked for them.<sup>438</sup> NATO stated that in sum more than 120,000 people were evacuated from Kabul International Airport in the so-called airlift.<sup>439</sup>

In a 2014 progress report, the German Bundesregierung had stated the following with regard to local staff (in German: Ortskräfte): "The federal government is aware of its duty of care. The federal government offers every local worker who is individually endangered the opportunity to be admitted to Germany with their nuclear family [translation by authors]."<sup>440</sup> However, despite the larger responsibility and duty of care, according to the Bundeswehr, only 5,347 people were evacuated from 16 to 26 August 2021, who came from at least 45 nations, also including German nationals as well as local forces and their families and others in need of protection.<sup>441</sup>

The 1st Investigation Committee of the 20th legislative period of the German Bundestag was established by the German Bundestag on July 8 2022. According to the Bundestag resolution, the Committee investigates the events surrounding the withdrawal of the Bundeswehr from Afghanistan and the evacuation of German personnel, local staff and other affected persons. It will look at the period from 29 February 2020 – the conclusion of the so-called Doha Agreement between the US government under former President Donald Trump and representatives of the Taliban – to the end of the mandate for military evacuation from Afghanistan on 30 September 2021. The committee's function is to obtain an overall picture of the decisions and actions of the German Bundesregierung, including the federal agencies and intelligence services involved, as well as the interaction between German and foreign actors. It also needs to be clarified to what extent the German Bundesregierung influenced the implementation of the Doha Agreement and the shaping of the troop withdrawal by the USA.

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<sup>438</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). 2021. 'NATO Supports Afghan Evacuees'. NATO. <https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2021/nato-supports-afghan-evacuees.aspx> (last accessed 24.04.2023).

<sup>439</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). 2022. "NATO and Afghanistan." NATO. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_8189.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm) (last accessed 02.03.2023).

<sup>440</sup> In German: "Die Bundesregierung ist sich ihrer Fürsorgepflicht bewusst. Jeder individuell gefährdeten Ortskraft bietet die Bundesregierung die Aufnahme in Deutschland zusammen mit ihrer Kernfamilie an", see: Die Bundesregierung. 2014. "Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan 2014 einschließlich einer Zwischenbilanz Afghanistan-Engagements verfasst vom Sonderbeauftragten der Bundesregierung für Afghanistan und Pakistan, Dr. Michael Koch, zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestags, auch über den Abschluss der Beteiligung deutscher Streitkräfte am Einsatz der Internationalen Sicherheitsunterstützungstruppe in Afghanistan ("ISAF-Abschlussbericht)." Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/250822/7e778863db3c698185562904e87daea5/141119-fortschrittsbericht-afg-2014-data.pdf>, p. 25 (last accessed 21.04.2022).

<sup>441</sup> Deutsche Bundeswehr. 2021. "Evakuierung aus Afghanistan 2021." <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/aktuelles/meldungen/evakuierung-afghanistan> (last accessed 03.03.2023).

While the media attention focused on the obligations of the Bundesregierung towards evacuating Afghan local employees, Afghan refugees were still deported from Germany to Afghanistan until the beginning of August on the grounds that Afghanistan was categorised as a safe country of origin – and this despite the fact that the Taliban had advanced in key provinces and taken over major cities in the country. On 11 August 2021, Federal Minister of the Interior Horst Seehofer (CSU) stated that Germany will not proceed with deportations to Afghanistan.<sup>442</sup> Four days later, military evacuations from Afghanistan to Germany began when the Taliban took over Kabul on 15. August 2021. Furthermore, the initial Bundeswehr military withdrawal, which was complete on 29 June 2021, had focused on the relocation of German military personnel and their material assets rather than on Afghan local staff. The Bundeswehr also made negative headlines with how it flew out “65,000 beer cans out of Afghanistan, but just 7 people on an evacuation flight.”<sup>443</sup>

In 2022, more than 17,556 Ortskräfte (this includes family members) were brought to Germany, according to media reports.<sup>444</sup> The federal admission programme (Bundesaufnahmeprogramm) is a site of contradictions: while the AA and BMI promised officially to evacuate 1000 at-risk Afghans per month on October 17, 2022, it has remained unclear how many - if any - Afghans have been evacuated as the institutions remain opaque about their progress.<sup>445</sup> The so-called civil society organizations that operate as “authorised agencies” and which had furnished the lists for the government, have remained unclear whether the programme is only processing Afghans who had been in the system prior to and from 2021 or whether newly added cases are actually processed in this programme. Thousands of Afghans who had worked in German ODA-funded projects – either for federally owned implementing agencies of GIZ and KfW Development Bank or for their numerous sub-contractors — remained in hiding in Afghanistan or in third countries at the time of writing one year later. Despite a formal amnesty by the Taliban for Afghans who had worked for foreign forces or the Afghan government before 2021, countless cases of persecution, torture and killings of Afghans surfaced.<sup>446</sup> Former local Afghan staff have filed claims for visas to be issued by the AA before the Berlin Administrative Court in February 2022. The demand is that former staff members of a GIZ police project be recognised as local staff and promised admission.

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<sup>442</sup> Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (BMI). 2021. “Rückführungen nach Afghanistan zunächst ausgesetzt.” BMI. [https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2021/08/aussetzung-abschiebung.html?sessionid=DC9DB577DF68D5F60C43DD493DCDC46C.2\\_cid340?nn=9390260](https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2021/08/aussetzung-abschiebung.html?sessionid=DC9DB577DF68D5F60C43DD493DCDC46C.2_cid340?nn=9390260) (last accessed 06.03.2023).

<sup>443</sup> Hume, Tim. 2021. “Germany flew 65,000 beer cans out of Afghanistan, but just 7 people on an evacuation flight.” Vice News. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/n7bmng/only-7-people-made-it-out-on-germanys-first-evacuation-flight-from-kabul> (last accessed 06.03.2023).

<sup>444</sup> ZDF Heute. 2022. “Deutschland im EU-Vergleich vorn: Mehr als 17.556 Ortskräfte aufgenommen.” ZDF. <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/afghanistan-ortskraefte-aufnahme-deutschland-100.html> (last accessed 06.03.2023).

<sup>445</sup> Bauer, Wolfgang, 2023. Ein deutsches Ehrenwort. Zeit Online. <https://www.zeit.de/zustimmung?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.zeit.de%2F2023%2F39%2Fafghanistan-bundesaufnahmeprogramm-annalena-baerbock-kabul-taliban> (last accessed 16.10.2023).

<sup>446</sup> Hassan, Sharif. 2021. “Dozens of former Afghan Security Forces dead or missing.” New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/30/world/asia/taliban-revenge-killings-afghanistan.html> (last accessed 06.03.2023); Marcolini, Barbara, Sohail, Sanjar and Alexander Stockton. 2022. “Taliban promised them amnesty. Then they executed them.” New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/04/12/opinion/taliban-afghanistan-revenge.html> (last accessed 06.03.2023); Pro Asyl. 2022. “Keine Änderung in Sicht: Regierung ignoriert bis heute tausende Ortskräfte.” <https://www.proasyl.de/news/keine-aenderung-in-sicht-regierung-ignoriert-bis-heute-tausende-ortskraefte/> (last accessed 06.03.2023).

The stipulation is that Germany has a duty to protect persons who were working on behalf of Germany in Afghanistan.<sup>447</sup>

The decision on who to evacuate was based on threat and vulnerable population assessments conducted by the involved countries. Some of the NATO member states evacuated Afghans who were considered at risk for having worked with US and other NATO forces. Other NATO member states including the USA, UK and Germany who were at Kabul International Airport – which became a frontline – set different ad hoc criteria and quotas for the number of Afghans they would allow to leave. In retrospect, several aspects of these ad hoc decision-making processes stand out: (1) the orchestrated chaos around Kabul International Airport that set the parameters for who could physically enter the airport (2) the role of passport elites as intermediaries between Afghans and the German state, and (3) the hierarchisation of vulnerability as well as the Eurocentric definition of the vulnerable nuclear family.

### 1. *Orchestrated chaos and its implications for evacuations*

The German Federal Government has acknowledged its role and responsibility toward Afghans who have worked for German ODA funded projects in the course of the 20 years of NATO mission until the military evacuation in 2021. Since 2013, there has been a so-called local staff procedure (in German: Ortskräfteverfahren). This is an individual procedure which is supposed to determine whether a person is sufficiently endangered by their connection to foreign armed forces to justify their entry into Germany. A person at risk in Afghanistan had to report to their German institution that they were endangered. The employer then passed the report on to the responsible ministry for examination. When they decided the employee was sufficiently at risk, the BMI would give a letter of acceptance, requiring the applicant to travel outside Afghanistan (as there were no longer any German consular services in Afghanistan accepting visa applications from Afghans — Afghans had to register for appointments in New Delhi, India and Islamabad, Pakistan) to reach a German embassy and apply for a German visa.<sup>448</sup>

This convoluted system could have been overhauled and simplified, especially as the security situation reached fever pitch in 2020-2021. In April 2021, Pro Asyl proposed a programme to the responsible ministries (AA, BMI, BMVg, BMZ) to admit local staff including their family members (not only the nuclear family), to grant them a visa upon arrival, and to expand the definition of Afghan local staff to include implementing agencies and political foundations.<sup>449</sup> But instead of implementing the programme and thus an orderly exit, Hamid Karzai Airport became a bottleneck for sorting and channelling applicants who wanted to leave the now Taliban-ruled country. The first images reaching the international media showed densely loaded C17 US military aircrafts flying to Doha, carrying mostly men and occasionally women, elderly, infants and children. In the following days, pictures of overloaded planes and of people falling off the wheels of the planes went around the world. They showed young men trying to board a plane with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Young Afghans were so desperate to leave that they clung to the

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<sup>447</sup> Pro Asyl. 2022. "Klage eingereicht: Deutschland muss Ausbilder der afghanischen Polizei als Ortskräfte schützen." <https://www.proasyl.de/pressemitteilung/klage-eingereicht-deutschland-muss-ausbilder-der-afghanischen-polizei-als-ortskraefte-schuetzen/> (last accessed 06.03.2023).

<sup>448</sup> Pro Asyl. 2022. "Aufnahme von Ortskräften aus Afghanistan ist kein Gnadenakt, sondern Pflicht!" <https://www.proasyl.de/news/aufnahme-von-ortskraeften-aus-afghanistan-ist-kein-gnadenakt-sondern-pflicht/> (last accessed 06.03.2023).

<sup>449</sup> Pro Asyl. 2021. "Programm zur Aufnahme afghanischer Ortskräfte." <https://www.proasyl.de/wp-content/uploads/Afghanische-Ortskraefte-Paper-26.04.21.pdf> (last accessed 06.03.2023).

planes, like the young footballer Fida Mohammad Amir, who fell from one of the planes during take-off.<sup>450</sup>

Meanwhile, the USA and NATO member states regained military control over Kabul International Airport. As a result, images of people boarding the planes became more orderly, the queues got longer and calmer, and Afghans, dual nationals and foreigners boarded the C17 planes in the back. However, while some queued to get on the planes, others struggled to approach the airport or pass through the gates with their papers (that might not be recognised by the Talib or US soldier in charge). There are witness accounts of shots fired by both sides at approaching civilians.

On the ground and on digital platforms, the fall of Kabul mobilised state, military and civilian actors who tried to secure passage for Afghans pass through despite state restrictions. In their attempt to escape through access to military aircrafts, Afghans risked their lives by climbing walls, standing thigh-high in sewers and queues, encountering Taliban at checkpoints or being killed by suicide bombings. Access was possible for those who were able to walk, run and hide, wait for long hours and fight their way through crowds of hundreds and thousands of people who had gathered. It depended not only on digital visas and passports – although people were also able to board planes with national identity cards (tazkiras) and birth certificates – but also on coincidence and having the right contacts.

## 2. *The intermediaries*

In the midst of this orchestrated chaos, individual ability to use contacts was crucial for exit and admission to third countries or final host countries. In the process, each host country imposed specific requirements on visa applicants (such as so-called risk letters or declarations of ‘vulnerability’) and offered different ways of applying, whether via e-mail to foreign authorities or online portals. Instead of a simple interaction between Afghans and authorities of host countries, the visa application and exit process evolved into a complicated system in which intermediaries acted as a hinge between their respective (or other foreign) government(s) and the Afghan applicant, such as under the US Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) programme, in which foreign project staff wrote letters of recommendation for Afghan colleagues. Access was personalised.

The German evacuation for “Afghans at Risk” which was already closed in August 2021, functioned similarly. It was compiled by private individuals, non-governmental organisations and initiatives newly founded especially for this purpose, who collected private information from Afghan contacts such as employment, passport data or birth certificates in order to recommend them for evacuation.

Volunteers with Afghan or other nationalities, including journalists, humanitarian workers, academics and foreigners sympathetic to the Afghans, provided their skills to access available knowledge and information online and organise virtually with humanitarian aid workers during the two-week evacuation phase to gather information for visa applications and changing circumstances on the ground (e.g. checkpoints) and facilitate evacuations. The difference of getting onto “lists” or being left out could now be delineated through knowing a foreigner with English-language (near) native competency or other foreign languages (German, French, Dutch, etc.) to write letters of support and emails to their governments pleading a case or making calls on their behalf. Belonging and association to NATO member states has long played a

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<sup>450</sup> Al Jazeera. 2021. “Afghans Cling to Moving US Air Force Jet in Desperate Bid to Flee.” Al Jazeera. 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/16/afghans-cling-to-plane-defining-image> (last accessed 07.03.2023).



gatekeeping role in Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy, because it particularly enabled access to funds, aid projects and positions. This was mostly signified through passports from donor states and the elevated position of English as a language of access. Most supporters did not work for governments in this process, but tried to enable as many Afghans as possible to leave the country by getting them laissez-passer papers or visas to go to the airport and seats on a plane. The outcome of this was that it often mattered more whether someone had a particular contact to a foreign intermediary than necessarily all prescribed documents.

### 3. "Vulnerability" defined by NATO-member states

Another contentious aspect regarding support for applications for entry was the definition of categories of vulnerability by the states willing to receive them. "Vulnerability" as a selection criterion was not clearly defined: in August 2021, a spreadsheet template circulated and was filled out by societal and organisational actors who were retrospectively described on the AA and BMI's official website as "meldeberechtigte Stellen."<sup>451</sup> Entries onto these lists had to be justified on scales of vulnerability that reflected states' own hierarchies and logics, which stemmed from an evaluation of an individual's usefulness and a sense of reciprocity for services rendered to the occupying force.

Similar to the visa regulations of the USA, the German Bundesregierung also introduced a visa category "local staff." It applied to Afghans who had worked as a local force for either the Bundeswehr or the GIZ during the years of the NATO mission, or who had worked for German state organisations at some point from 2013 onwards. The group of people who were entitled to support from the German government remained legally undefined as "local staff who have worked for German state organisations since 2013, as well as Afghans who the Federal Government has promised to be admitted to Germany due to their particular individual risk."<sup>452</sup> Many Afghans who had worked for subcontractors of GIZ and KfW Development Bank – which worked almost exclusively with subcontracting companies and organisations in Afghanistan – were excluded from this category. An analysis of the German Institute for Human Rights (Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte) concluded that "Germany has only evacuated a few particularly vulnerable Afghans and brought them to safety."<sup>453</sup>

These "local allies" were defined as "vulnerable" because they had rendered services to various nations. One line of argument to evacuate this group was a kind of moral debt ("we owe it to them, because they supported us in our mission"). Another line of argument related to rationales of future interventions ("who would ever want to work with Western coalition of occupying states again if they knew that they would not be taken care of when targeted for their allegiance?"). Most of these were expressed in terms similar to the military ethos of comradeship ("no man left behind").

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<sup>451</sup> Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (BMI) and Auswärtiges Amt (AA). 2022. "Bundesaufnahmeprogramm für Afghanistan." BMI and AA. <https://bundesaufnahmeprogrammafghanistan.de/bundesaufnahme-de> (last accessed 15.12.2022).

<sup>452</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA). 2022. "Fragen und Antworten: Unterstützung bei der Ausreise aus Afghanistan." AA. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/afg?openAccordionId=item-2479404-0-panel> (last accessed 30.12.2022).

<sup>453</sup> Cremer, Hendrik and Catharina Hübner. 2022. "Grund- und menschenrechtliche Verantwortung nach dem Abzug aus Afghanistan. Zu den Schutzpflichten Deutschlands für besonders schutzbedürftige Afghan\*innen." Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte. [https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Analyse\\_Studie/Analyse\\_Grund\\_und\\_menschenrechtliche\\_Verantwortung\\_nach\\_dem\\_Abzug\\_aus\\_Afghanistan.pdf](https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Analyse_Studie/Analyse_Grund_und_menschenrechtliche_Verantwortung_nach_dem_Abzug_aus_Afghanistan.pdf), p. 19 (last accessed 07.03.2023).

"Vulnerability" entailed work practices that complied with ideals such as gender justice, freedom of the press or democracy. In the German scales of vulnerability, a human rights defender, a journalist, a judge, a former security personnel, a member of the former Afghan government or a woman who had taken a public role were considered particularly vulnerable. The focus on political connections to NATO member states, as well as links to organisations and institutions and professional careers, led to a particular attention being paid to Afghan leaders and senior government officials during the rescue.

The pattern of working with certain categories such as "vulnerable" and "in need of rescue" in Afghanistan is not new.<sup>454</sup> Within the overall NATO mission and accompanying DC measures, Afghan women were classified as in need of rescue and support and became the subject of "liberal peacebuilding" programmes.<sup>455</sup> Some types of vulnerability were more visible than others, and therefore merited more being "saved." For example, low-wage workers, including development workers, journalists or foot soldiers, who served the Afghan government and/or foreign states were not primarily subject to military evacuation and had to find ways to leave in coordination with foreign volunteers. Although the population in Afghanistan continues to be subjected to multiple forms of violence, the criteria to fall under the category "at risk," and thus be evacuated, was a matter of knowing foreigners with some form of leverage as well as luck. Despite their contribution to peacebuilding as envisioned by liberal organisations and institutions of NATO member states for example as attorneys, defence lawyers, social workers or judges, to private sector growth as entrepreneurs and managers, or in the humanitarian sector as project managers, accountants and data enumerators educated and working women did not per sé become subjects of evacuation. Some, however, such as Afghanistan's women's football teams, had people with leverage, military, media and civilian contacts, processing their outward movement during the military evacuation.

The issue of vulnerability also extended to the question of who was vulnerable and threatened and if this regarded only former employees of the NATO military or of foreign civil society institutions. The German definition of "nuclear family" (in German: Kernfamilie) only includes spouses and children, which corresponds to a Eurocentric understanding of family. In Afghanistan, people usually live together in extended families that are connected spatially and by association. As one of the interviewees explains:

*"I wrote an application to them saying 'Look, I have been working with you, GIZ, and your requirements and basically the GIZ has accepted to assist each employee of the GIZ with the core family. The problem with me, my core family, my wife and two kids, they already lived in the UK, so they are British and my wife is a German citizen. So my core family was never in Afghanistan when I was working for the GIZ. But I was living with my parents and my sister who is not married. So, in my case your core family definition will not work. Can you advise me what to do? Can you please help me? I have been living with them when I was travelling to my office at the GIZ and every day I was commuting, coming back to them. It has basically put my family at risk'; so far I haven't gotten a response (from GIZ or the German government)."*<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013.

<sup>455</sup> Daulatzai, Anila. 2008. 'The Discursive Occupation of Afghanistan'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (3): 419–35; Musawi Natanzi, Paniz. 2021. "Frauen als Legitimation für den "Krieg gegen den Terror?"" heise online. <https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Frauen-als-Legitimation-fuer-den-Krieg-gegen-den-Terror-6254923.html> (last accessed 19.12.2022).

<sup>456</sup> Interview No. 5.

For another interviewee, who had worked as a translator for the German Bundeswehr, the situation was even worse, as he explained:

*"It is a big problem for me and for all the staff of the German forces that the meaning of the family in Afghanistan is not wife and children. Mother, father, brother, ancestors are also called core family in Afghanistan. For example, when I was in Afghanistan, I was under threat, my wife was under threat, my children. But now today my brother, my sister, my father and my mother are in Afghanistan and are at risk [...] Our families are hiding in Afghanistan. For example, my father's brothers, all, they left Balkh province and they came to another province and they live in hiding. But I don't know how much they can continue like this [...] I think as I was under threat, they were too."*<sup>457</sup>

The AA stated in September 2021 that "in principle, only members of the so-called nuclear family can be considered for a departure to Germany. In very special exceptional cases, a hardship test is possible to take other family members into account, which must always consider the special individual circumstances of the individual case, taking into account the narrow principles of interpretation of the relevant German case law."<sup>458</sup> In June 2022, the "Action Plan (for) Afghanistan" stated that consideration of local realities was still being negotiated between the different ministries: "A family definition adapted to the reality of life on site with a view for the admission programme is being coordinated between the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Foreign Office."<sup>459</sup> Two years after the hand-over of power to the Taliban it is unclear to involved civil society actors to what extent the Action Plan is even continuing.

### C. Post-2021 humanitarianism

With the NATO-withdrawal, access to private funds for Afghans was drastically restricted and private and commercial actors lost access to the international banking system alongside the Taliban. "The work of the banks has been reduced only to pay the customer's money."<sup>460</sup> The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the US central bank, froze USD 7.76 billion of the funds lent to Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), the central bank of Afghanistan, with the withdrawal of the US and NATO forces in mid-August 2021. Another USD 2 billion was held in banks in Germany, Switzerland, the UK and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).<sup>461</sup> Since then, DAB has faced liquidity problems and could not pay out the deposits of the commercial banks. In order to re-enter the international financial market, the DAB would need to reinstall "a stable exchange rate" and "to pay the deposit of commercial banks placed in DAB," which included the state-owned banks Pashtany Bank, Bank-e Millie Afghan and the New Kabul Bank.<sup>462</sup> The economic and financial implications for Afghan citizens with personal deposits in banks played out in front of banks in urban places:

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<sup>457</sup> Interview No. 7.

<sup>458</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA). 2021. "Weitere Themen und Fragen." AA. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/-/2479450?openAccordionId=item-2479460-8-panel> (last accessed 08.03.2023) (last accessed 30.12.2022).

<sup>459</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA). "Halbjahresbilanz zum 'Aktionsplan Afghanistan.'" AA. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2538718/e82b2fa9e8558c6460d8e77cbd2e9ef8/220623-afg-bilanz-pdf-data.pdf> (last accessed 08.03.2023).

<sup>460</sup> Interview No. 26.

<sup>461</sup> Congressional Research Service (CRS). 2022. "Afghanistan Central Bank Reserves." CRS. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12052> (last accessed 08.03.2023).

<sup>462</sup> Interview No. 26.

*"If you want to withdraw from Azizi bank, besides the limited withdrawal you have to register yourself 24 hours prior to visiting any branch. Then you may wait for hours for your turn. There is no confirmed statistic on which bases DAB is paying commercial bank's deposits."*<sup>463</sup>

Until late 2021, there were hours-long queues to withdraw a maximum of USD 200 (in local currency *Afghani*, as foreign exchange reserves were not sufficiently liquid), without access to private savings and without clarification of if and when access would be restored.

While access to private funds for Afghans was drastically restricted in August 2021, the transfer of funds for humanitarian purposes by INGOs and supranational organisations changed but did not stop. To circumvent the central bank, now under the governance of the Taliban, the multilateral financing architecture in coordination with the private international finance sector was used to transfer humanitarian funds. As such "humanitarian funding has continued to flow throughout 2021, but with added scrutiny and compliance"<sup>464</sup> - which prevails until today. This was in line with Markus Potzel's<sup>465</sup> call, shortly before the end of his term as Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan in UNAMA: speaking to the "international community" he called upon all not to "dwell on the past," but to focus on "the interests of all Afghans" in a "sustained dialogue between the Taliban, other Afghan stakeholders, the wider region and the international community."<sup>466</sup>

The UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) for Afghanistan states that the UN system will focus on "three strategic priorities" for 2022,<sup>467</sup> providing an estimated USD 8.071 billion "while the UN system adapts to the new realities in Afghanistan and until conditions are conducive for a multi-year development cooperation framework."<sup>468</sup> Priorities included providing "life-saving

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<sup>463</sup> Interview No. 26.

<sup>464</sup> United Nations (UN). 2022. "The United Nations Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) for Afghanistan." UN. [https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/UN\\_Transitional\\_Engagement\\_Framework\\_Afghanistan\\_2022.pdf](https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/UN_Transitional_Engagement_Framework_Afghanistan_2022.pdf) (last accessed 18.08.2022).

<sup>465</sup> On 17 June 2022, UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Markus Potzel as his new Deputy Special Representative for political issues on Afghanistan in UNAMA. See: United Nations Secretary-General. 2022. "Mr. Markus Potzel of Germany - Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Political) for Afghanistan in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)." United Nations Secretary-General. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/personnel-appointments/2022-06-17/mr-markus-potzel-of-germany-deputy-special-representative-of-the-secretary-general-%28political%29-for-afghanistan-the-united-nations-assistance-mission> (last accessed 18.07.2022).

<sup>466</sup> Potzel, Markus. 2022. "Briefing by Acting Special Representative Markus Potzel to the Security Council." United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). <https://unama.unmissions.org/briefing-acting-special-representative-markus-potzel-security-council> (last accessed 08.03.2023). On 2 September 2022, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Roza Otunbayeva from Kyrgyzstan as his new Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). See: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). 2022. "Secretary-General Appoints Ms. Roza Otunbayeva of Kyrgyzstan as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA." UNAMA. <https://unama.unmissions.org/secretary-general-appoints-ms-roza-otunbayeva-kyrgyzstan-special-representative-afghanistan-and-head> (last accessed 04.09.2022).

<sup>467</sup> From December 2020 to December 2021, the German government contributed a total of USD 112,425,150 to the Humanitarian Fund for Afghanistan, a multi-partner trust fund of UNDP. This was the second highest contribution after the total contribution from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in 2020 and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCO) in 2021. For the financial report, see: United Nations MPTF Office Partners Gateway. 2022. "Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund." <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/haf10> (last accessed 08.03.2023).

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

assistance," maintaining "essential services" and sustaining "social investments and community-level systems essential to meeting basic human needs."<sup>469</sup>

The costs of the TEF were pooled from bilateral ODA funds and the core funds of the UN agencies for Afghanistan, such as the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund and the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan.<sup>470</sup> The Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund (AITF) and the ARTF were part of the financing infrastructure established with the former Afghan government. Germany funded these along with Japan, the UK, the USA and NATO's ANA Trust Fund to the AITF and the Ministry of Finance of the former government managed these together with the ADB.<sup>471</sup> While the AITF remained suspended, the ADB announced in January 2022 that it had approved USD 405 million in grants for humanitarian services as part of its "Sustaining Essential Services Delivery Project (Support for Afghan People)" to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNDP.<sup>472</sup>

The ARTF was officially "paused" when the UN published the TEF.<sup>473</sup> In March 2022, the WBG announced "The World Bank expanded approach (Approach 2.0)," which authorised the on-lending of "more than USD 1 billion in funds from the ARTF in the form of recipient-executed grants to select United Nations agencies and international NGOs."<sup>474</sup> In June 2022, the WBG had announced that the ARTF Management Committee and the WBG had "approved three projects totalling USD 793 million that will provide urgent and essential food, livelihood, and health services to the people of Afghanistan". These projects were to be implemented by UN agencies and NGOs.<sup>475</sup> This parallel financing architecture circumvents the Afghan state to fund humanitarian programming: while the used funds remain "outside the control of the Taliban transitional administration," they circulate within the financial infrastructure built and perpetuated by

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

<sup>471</sup> The Asian Development Bank (ADB) was established in 1966 as a financial development actor to "promote economic growth and cooperation in the Asia and Far East region" and to "contribute to the acceleration of the economic development process of developing member countries in the region, both collectively and individually". Germany is one of the non-regional founding members. For the ADB statutes, see: The Asian Development Bank. 1965. "Agreement Establishing the Asian Development Bank (ADB Charter)." <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/32120/charter.pdf> (last accessed 14.07.2022).

<sup>472</sup> The Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2022. "\$405 Million in ADB Grants to Support Food Security, Health, and Education in Afghanistan through United Nations." ADB. <https://www.adb.org/news/405-million-adb-grants-support-food-security-health-education-afghanistan-united-nations> (last accessed 14.07.2022).

<sup>473</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2022. "UNDP Welcomes ADB's US\$ 5 Million Funding for Economic Assessments and Project Monitoring to Ensure Effectiveness and Impact of Aid for Afghans." UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/afghanistan/press-releases/undp-welcomes-adb%E2%80%99s-us-5-million-funding-economic-assessments-and-project-monitoring-ensure-effectiveness-and-impact-aid> (last accessed 08.03.2023).

<sup>474</sup> Grants from recipient-executed trust funds (RETF) are based on a grant agreement between the WBG and the recipient actors with an operational function — in this case, INGOs and supranational bodies of the UN. See: The World Bank (WB). 2022. "Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund Approves Two Emergency Projects for Afghanistan." WB. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/06/03/afghanistan-reconstruction-trust-fund-approves-three-emergency-projects-for-afghanistan> (last accessed 23.07.2022); The World Bank (WB). 2022. "World Bank Announces Expanded Approach to Supporting the People of Afghanistan." WB. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/03/01/world-bank-announces-expanded-approach-to-supporting-the-people-of-afghanistan> (last accessed 23.07.2022).

<sup>475</sup> The World Bank (WB). 2022. 'Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund Approves Two Emergency Projects for Afghanistan.' WB. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/06/03/afghanistan-reconstruction-trust-fund-approves-three-emergency-projects-for-afghanistan> (last accessed 23.07.2022).

institutional and organisational practices of liberal states and its allies that evolved through neoliberal development policy and prevail since the take-over of the Taliban.

At the same time as this financial architecture was operating under the previous government, the authors of a World Bank policy report noted that “Afghanistan’s fiscal situation is unsustainable” due to high security sector spending and dependency on grants to finance the public sector, and a massive current account deficit driven by the aid sector.<sup>476</sup> To promote “inclusive economic growth” in Afghanistan, they suggest “maintaining debt at reasonable levels, controlling inflation, and ensuring relative exchange rate stability.”<sup>477</sup> The authors of the WBG report do not consider NATO’s military intervention and the neoliberal development policies it engendered in Afghanistan as a reason for the “unsustainable” fiscal situation that the nominally sovereign government could not solve.

Despite the military withdrawal and the hand-over of power to the Taliban, the economic framework continues to be determined by the former NATO intervening states. Since August 2021, NGOs and supranational organisations, including UN agencies, have therefore been the main hinges for political influence. GIZ did never halt its work in Afghanistan either.<sup>478</sup> In 2022 there were adjustments to the new political circumstances: there has been the agreement in Washington and beyond to not pose for photos with the Taliban while work continues under their government. Furthermore, still in 2021, the AA presented the cornerstones of future support, not only in terms of accelerating evacuation, but also in terms of humanitarian intervention for the civilian population, the so-called Afghanistan Action Plan.<sup>479</sup>

## The social and economic implications of Germany’s financial withdrawal

The consequences of the international withdrawal from Afghanistan and the political-economic isolation after the Taliban took over of the government affected all sectors of society. With the freezing of bank assets, many Afghan organisations and institutions that had worked with Germany and other donor countries found themselves in a financial vacuum. As the visible interface between foreign donors and Afghan staff and contractors, they had to bear the sudden cut in funding with all its consequences.

The decision to continue funding projects in Afghanistan entailed lengthy negotiations between NGOs and the funding ministries. The director of an NGO registered in Germany, which had received funding for projects in Afghanistan through the BMZ for many years, describes the situation after the Taliban came to power and the negotiations in which the German Bundesregierung was involved to decide how to keep working in Afghanistan as follows:

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<sup>476</sup> The World Bank (WB). 2020. “2020 Policy Notes: Priorities for Inclusive Development in Afghanistan.” WB. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/8033eefca38ca8af7b653869a3469087-0310012021/original/Policy-Notes-report-Jan-12-2021-Final-version-2.pdf>, p. 18-21 (last accessed 08.08.2022).

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.

<sup>478</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 2022. “GIZ unterstützt Bevölkerung in Afghanistan.” GIZ. <https://www.giz.de/de/mediathek/112320.html> (last accessed 08.08.2022).

<sup>479</sup> Auswärtiges Amt (AA). 2021. “Aktionsplan Afghanistan.” AA. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/afghanistan-node/aktionsplan-afghanistan/2503582> (last accessed 08.08.2022).

*"All spending and funds have been stopped for private carriers [after the Taliban takeover]. Until February the following year, we didn't know whether we could continue to work in Afghanistan, legally or financially."*<sup>480</sup>

A distinction was made between projects that had already been largely implemented and were in the closing phase and projects that were in the initial phase. The projects that had been largely implemented still received the rest of their funding after the Taliban took over. However, the project implementers had to describe the changed parameters of the projects as well as how they would handle the transfer of funds while most channels for transactions were closed. While communication with the BMZ donor ministry took four to six months, it was made clear that these projects would continue to be funded until they were completed.

For organisations that initiated projects after 2021 required governmental approval - a process formalised through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). However, this was difficult to achieve as the German government officially does not entertain relations with the Taliban government. Since German involvement in Afghanistan, e.g. by the BMZ, is described as "far from the government" (in German: *regierungsfern*) and the German government "does not conduct government negotiations with the Taliban government," and "no financial commitments are made to the Taliban regime: the BMZ only uses its funds outside the Afghan state budget, the Taliban have no influence on project locations, target groups or partners."<sup>481</sup> With this definition and approach, the BMZ hoped to continue working in Afghanistan "without contributing to the legitimacy of the Taliban regime."<sup>482</sup>

Organisations that tried to continue their projects found themselves in a grey zone. The director of a German NGO that has been working in the Afghan education sector for ten years, funded by BMZ and private sources, described the difficulties and risks associated with this approach:

*"We did this at our own risk, sending money through hawalas. The BMZ turned a blind eye. But using these financial channels could also be viewed by the ministry of finance as embezzling donations, which in turn endangers our non-profit status. Many German organisations didn't take the risk and stopped their projects."*<sup>483</sup>

The grey zone and risk were only removed a year after the initial Taliban takeover. In August 2022, it was decided that informal financial transfers were acceptable as long as they were not sent from Germany. *Hawala*, a predominantly informal system of international money transfer, such as the UAE or Australia, were considered acceptable.<sup>484</sup>

Things became paradoxical, for example, when it came to the question of whether local partner organisations should pay the obligatory four per cent tax. The BMZ requested the German organisation to instruct its local Afghan partners not to pay tax, as this would be tantamount to a direct payment to the Taliban government. However, if the organisation does not pay the tax, this leads to the revocation of its title as an NGO that is allowed to work in Afghanistan — a quandary that puts Afghan implementing organisations in a bind. While the BMZ decided to continue

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<sup>480</sup> Interview No. 22.

<sup>481</sup> Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ). "Länder Afghanistan." BMZ. <https://www.bmz.de/de/laender/afghanistan> (last accessed 03.08.2022).

<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Interview No. 22.

<sup>484</sup> Choudhury, Nafay. 2022. "Order in the Bazaar: The Transformation of Non-State Law in Afghanistan's Premier Money Exchange Market." *Law & Social Inquiry* 47 (1), p. 292-330.

funding projects in present-day Afghanistan, which is ruled by the Taliban, some implementing actors decided to fully cut ties with projects in Afghanistan because of the complex situation. This in turn had major repercussions for the Afghan workforce implementing the projects on the ground.

The case of an Afghan KfW Development Bank subcontractor that had worked with KfW Development Bank on large infrastructure projects in several cities in Afghanistan illustrates the consequences of the sudden drop in funding. It also demonstrates the extent to which Afghan workers were economically and financially dependent on donor states that withdrew with the end of the NATO mission:

*"I believe that KfW cut and run and left us out to hang, so to speak [...] we felt abandoned. We felt that in a very difficult time when we should have taken a very different approach on how to suspend or close the project, their approach was overnight: stop spending, give us back all the money, immediately."<sup>485</sup>*

The financial relationship with KfW Development Bank ran through loans that were transferred to the implementing organisation in Afghanistan. The money would then be used to buy materials, pay workers and implement the project. While the subcontractor expressed that he understood the position of a Western lender after the Taliban took over the government not to spend any more money on new constructions, he pointed out that they were more concerned with seizing work at the local level:

*"The liabilities we had were more than a million euros, which means, I'll be specific: contractors, suppliers that we hadn't paid, at least a month salary of 1,600 laborers that we hadn't paid, one month salary of 80 professional staff that we hadn't paid. And also the whole process, the HR process of making people redundant. We require three months. So the liability, in fact, for the staff was three months of salaries, and then also payments because of notices, also payments in lieu of pension. So overall, the liabilities were more than 1.2 million at that moment. And so to be told, give us back all the money, stop all work, and you have to absorb these liabilities as a small organisation, we felt like we were hung out to dry, and then we then had to sit around and talk to our staff and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of employees and contractors and tell them, sorry, we can't pay you."<sup>486</sup>*

The subcontractor argued that the liabilities related to paying the people the organisation had to dismiss were not Taliban-related. The workers had undergone rigorous vetting, including due diligence in background checks connected to terrorism financing, he said:

*"The liabilities have nothing to do with paying the Taliban. The liabilities have to do with paying the people that have worked on this project [...] They're not new people I hired. They're people that have been on this project for two years, three years by that time, right? So what's wrong with paying them? What's wrong with doing the right thing when it comes to them, the labourers?"<sup>487</sup>*

Apart from the financial burden of assuming liabilities and outstanding payments, the implementing actor also felt a sense of potential insecurity for the local team that managed the project and recruited precarious Afghan labour:

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<sup>485</sup> Interview No. 19.

<sup>486</sup> Interview No. 19.

<sup>487</sup> Interview No. 19.



*"Now our contractors or our employees, they can't forcefully take the money from KfW or the German government or the banks, but they can take out their anger on us, on my staff, on my people. They can take out their anger on our offices, which are very well known. They can't take out their anger on the project site. They can go and ruin our reputation by saying, you guys owe us money. Ultimately, if you don't pay us, you've stolen from us."*<sup>488</sup>

Non-state actors implementing projects based on ODA had to convey to Afghan workers who needed to feed their families and often had debts that the Germans had left and taken their funds with them. While these are cross-cutting issues that many organisations in Afghanistan faced after the NATO withdrawal, there are also aspects that are specific to infrastructure development and the construction sector. *"This isn't just like leaving the house, turn off the lights, close the door, and it's going to be okay. There's a period that's required,"* the subcontractor stressed. He explained that construction sites need to be demobilised so that they do not become a health and safety hazard:

*"My impression was, if you're telling us not to spend a penny more on an active construction site which is in the middle of construction, how do we ensure health and safety? [...] How do we make sure that it's winterized properly so that in the coming winter, in four months, all of the work and effort and all of the million Euros we'd spent on the site and components and different aspects is not destroyed. So in a normal process of a project, what you would do is you would mobilise a project, and then if you had to stop the project in the middle, you would demobilise the project, which means there's a series of activities that requires three to six months that you have to do. So, let's say, put the project to sleep in a safe way, in a way that it doesn't hurt the public. Because sometimes on projects, you have scaffolding, you have people working, you have a situation where if you leave it like that, there's a health and safety risk to people. We were told essentially to abandon our staff and to abandon the project."*<sup>489</sup>

The costs of demobilising the site were again borne by the implementing company that had relied on German funding and partnership. When asked about the possible background for these decisions, the subcontractor suggested that the fear of violating the sanctions under which Afghanistan had been placed had motivated KfW Development Bank's actions. However, he pointed out that this behaviour had only been observed with loans from Germany, while US donors had allowed the settlement of outstanding bills and the demobilisation of construction sites:

*"One of the things that we understood later that was a concern for the compliance department of KfW, were international sanctions as a bank. If the US has decided that there should be no more funding in Afghanistan and we're spending funding, then we're open to being a target of international US sanctions. In fact, and this I think is an important fact, the US government did the exact opposite. We had funding from the US government and they told us, continue to spend until the end of the year. They said, don't do new work, but pay your staff, demobilise the project. The US government gave us six months until December 2021 to demobilise our project. And I brought this up to KfW and I sent them the official documents saying, look, you're concerned about sanctions by the US, but the US government literally has allowed us that time. They have that foresight to say, you can't just close."*<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> Interview No. 19.

<sup>489</sup> Interview No. 19.

<sup>490</sup> Interview No. 19.

At the time of the interview – almost one year after the NATO withdrawal – the subcontractor said that they were still in negotiation with KfW Development Bank whether they would be reimbursed for the funds they had absorbed. He was hopeful that a German state-owned development bank would eventually own up to its responsibilities: *“It's ongoing. It's been a year. We haven't been able to resolve it. I think the German government actually bears that responsibility, both morally, professionally and also economically, financially. And so we're still in the process of negotiating.”*<sup>491</sup>

On one hand, he suggested there had been a lack of an exit plan in place for situations like this, especially when it comes to paying liabilities. However, he was also aware of the fact that some situations are new and a lender cannot be prepared for all eventualities. Nonetheless, he said that he would have expected a different approach even in such a situation:

*“You can never be prepared for everything, ever. Things will happen that you cannot be prepared for. And the thing that also is a bit disappointing for me is that once something happens that you're not prepared for, then you also have a moral obligation to look at that situation and say, we weren't prepared, but we're still going to do the right thing, and this is important. So if you're not prepared, you still then have an obligation to do the right thing morally.”*

The surprise of Afghans at the sudden military and financial withdrawal shows that they did not believe that Germany would retrieve funds the way it did. Afghans working in institutions and organisations funded by NATO member states, had perceived Germany as less ignorant and more solution-oriented than its US ally. In work-related meetings and conversations, Afghans in NGOs or private firms thought Germans were reliable.

Anila Daulatzai and Sahar Ghumkhor discussed the surprise of Afghans and foreigners at the decision of the US and NATO allies, including Germany, to withdraw financial assets with the end of the military occupation. They stated: *“To be surprised means to believe the great liberal fantasy that America's revenge war in Afghanistan was ‘the good war,’”* and that there are “lessons” to be “learned” from an imperialist war. *“The ritual of surprise here is symptomatic of a delusional attachment to the idea of humanitarianism itself. Faced with the nakedness of imperial theft, commentators fumbled to explain the callousness before them.”*<sup>492</sup>

While the German government and other NATO members often framed their presence in Afghanistan as a mission for “peace,” “stabilisation,” and “support of their Afghan allies,” the report reveals the extent to which these discourses and justifications were intertwined with their own interests, both on a national and global scale. The critique of German ODA in Afghanistan presented here, underscores that occupying forces did not serve the well-being of Afghans. This is evident, for instance, in the links between German development and migration policy in Afghanistan aimed at controlling refugee inflows and formalising labor migration. With the military withdrawal in 2021, Germany's involvement in Afghanistan is poised to continue in the form of humanitarian assistance.

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<sup>491</sup> Interview No. 19.

<sup>492</sup> Daulatzai, Anila and Sahar Ghumkhor. 2022. “It Is Hardly Surprising the US Stole Afghan Money.” Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/3/14/it-is-not-surprising-empire-stole-afghan-money> (last accessed: 08.03.2023).

During the two-decade period from autumn 2001 to autumn 2021 Germany consolidated the architecture of civil and military institutions and organisations. The in-depth examination of the historical evolution of ODA as a tool of neoliberal development policy, coupled with its critical analysis of German ODA administration in Afghanistan, underscores the implications of such policies on uneven development, the creation of dependencies and parallel governance structures. In light of the human costs of the war, the report calls for a critical assessment of the political underpinnings of the current government's commitment to expand "future" military and developmental interventions through multilateral systems. A focus on human well-being highlights the need for transnational mobilisation and organising on issues of ecological and political repair for Afghans and Afghanistan.

## II. Annex: Timeline

# Timeline of Events

## AFGHANISTAN

## GERMANY / EUROPE / ABROAD OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

2001

**07.10.2001**  
Begin of US-led attack on Afghanistan ("Operation Enduring Freedom" OEF) together with the Northern Alliance which leads to toppling of the Taliban.

- 11.09.2001**  
Attack on World Trade Center in the United States.
- 12.09.2001**  
Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD) declares in German parliament his solidarity with the USA. Article V invoked for first time in NATO's history (mutual defense clause). UN Article 51 of individual and collective self defense.
- 27.11.-05.12.2001**  
Afghanistan Conference at the Petersberg/Bonn, concluded with 'Bonn Agreement' on the establishment of an interim government. Participants: Northern Alliance (11 delegates), Rome-Group (11 delegates), Peshawar Group (5 delegates), Cypress Group (5 delegates).

11.2001

Murat Kurnaz was detained in Pakistan and sold for a bounty of 3.000 USD to US forces in Afghanistan. In January 2001 he was transferred to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and classified as 'enemy combatant'. His innocence was already known in 2002 and the US offered to release him. Germany refused to take him and he was kept detained and tortured another 5 years until his release 24.08.2006.

2002

**12.01.2002**  
First German soldiers in Kabul.

**10.-19.06.2002**  
Loya Jirga with 1.670 delegates elects Hamid Karzai as interim leader as well as interim members of government.

- 20.12.2001**  
Establishment of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by the UN Security Council through Resolution 1386. Geographic focus initially: Kabul and its surroundings.
- 22.12.2001**  
German parliament agrees to sending a maximum of 1200 German forces in support of resolution 1386 (2001).
- 21.01.-22.01-2002**  
Donor Conference in Tokyo. Pledges for 4.5 billions in aid for the next 5 years. Germany is designated as responsible for rebuilding Afghanistan's police forces.
- 15.02.2002**  
German Air Force takes the 'Strategic Air Transport Base Termez' into operation in Termez (Uzbekistan). All Bundeswehr troop and supply transports stopover via this base.
- 28.03.2002**  
UN Security Council Resolution 1401 to create the 'United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan' (UNAMA).
- 14.06.2002**  
German parliament decides to prolong the mission of the German armed forces in ISAF-Mission.
- 20.11.2002**  
ISAF-Mandate prolonged through UN-Security Council Resolution 1444.
- 02.12.2002**  
Second Afghanistan Conference at the Petersberg, Bonn.
- 20.12.2002**  
Speech of Peter Struck, German minister of defense, on the continued participation of German soldiers in ISAF contingent: "In order to make clear what is really at stake, I said that our security is also being defended on the Hindu Kush."

2003

**11.08.2003**  
NATO takes over command of ISAF-Mission (which was led before by individual countries in rotation).

- 13.10.2003**  
ISAF Mandate extended over all of Afghanistan through UN Security Council Resolution 1510.
- 24.10.2003**  
German parliament decides to prolong the mission of the German armed forces in ISAF-Mission and agrees to extend the German ISAF contingent's geographic scope from Kabul to include Kunduz.

2004

**04.01.2004**  
Loya Jirga adopts new constitution, pronounced on January 26.

- 31.03.-1.04.2004**  
International Afghanistan Conference in Berlin, 'Berliner Erklärung', pledges of 56 states of around 7.4 billion Euro.
- 26.06.2004**  
ISAF Troop contingent increased from 6.500 to 10.000.
- 30.09.2004**  
German parliament decides to prolong the mission of the German armed forces in ISAF-Mission.
- 01.10.2004**  
First phase of extension of ISAF completed through extension in northern Afghanistan.

2005

**09.10.2004**  
Presidential Elections, Karzai elected.

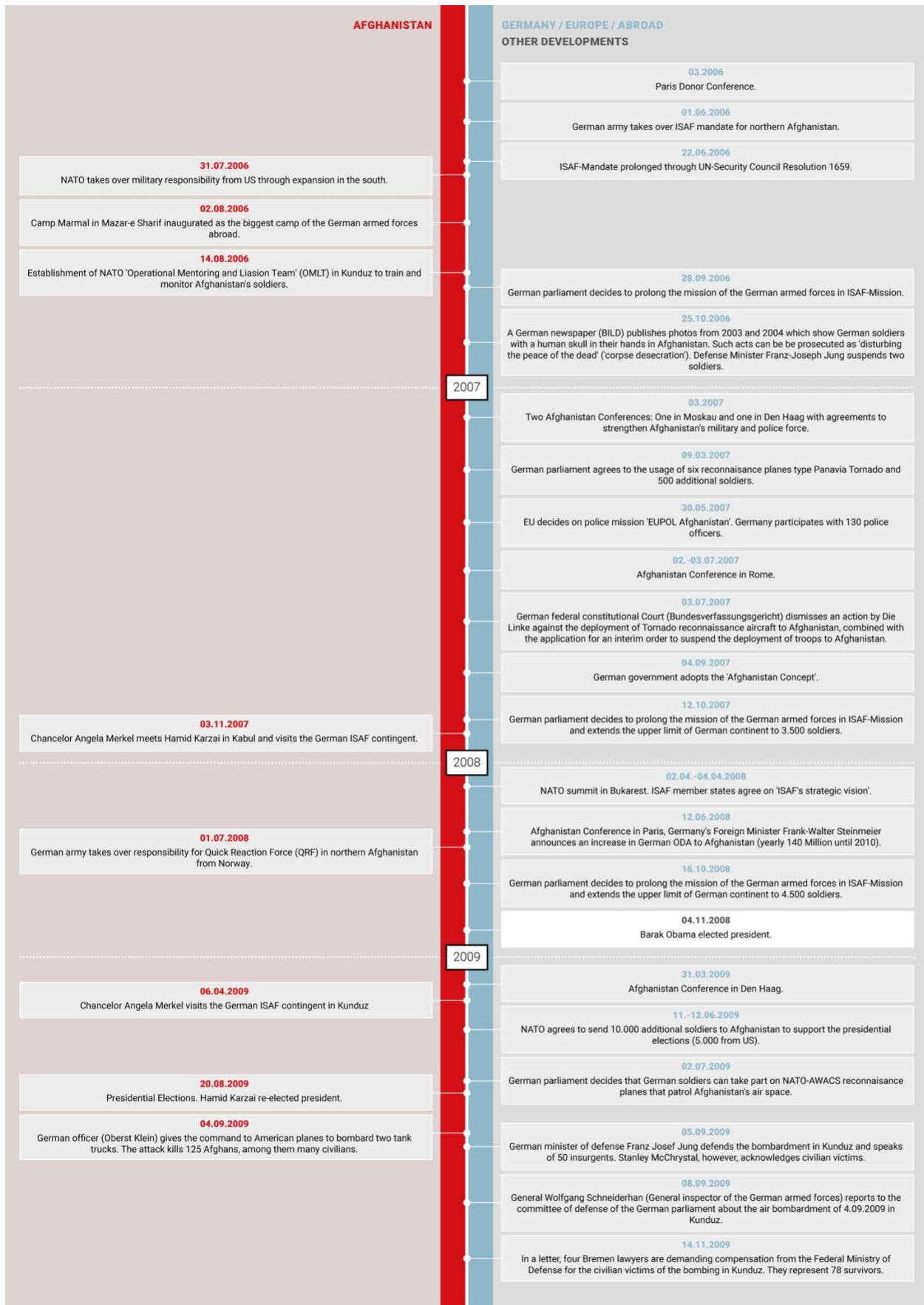
**18.09.2005**  
Parliamentary Elections.

**19.12.2005**  
Ceremonial opening of Afghanistan's first parliament, which concludes the 'Petersberger Process' agreed upon in 2001.

- 28.09.2005**  
German parliament decides to prolong the mission of the German armed forces in ISAF-Mission and extends the upper limit of German contingent to 3.000 soldiers. German soldiers can be deployed all over Afghanistan now.
- 22.11.2005**  
Angela Merkel voted in as German chancellor, 'big coalition' of CDU/CSU and SPD.

2006

- 31.01.-01.02.2006**  
London Conference on Afghanistan. 'Afghanistan Compact' as the guideline of the next reconstruction phase in Afghanistan.



AFGHANISTAN	GERMANY / EUROPE / ABROAD OTHER DEVELOPMENTS
	<p><b>30.11.2009</b> German Federal Minister of Labor Franz Josef Jung resigns after it becomes known that he had failed to inform the German public about the attack on the two tank trucks when he was in his previous position as a minister of defense.</p> <p><b>02.12.2009</b> German parliament decides to institute an investigative committee (Untersuchungsausschuss) on the attack in Kunduz.</p> <p><b>03.12.2009</b> German parliament decides to prolong the mission of the German armed forces in ISAF-Mission.</p> <p><b>16.12.2009</b> The investigative committee (Untersuchungsausschuss) on the 'Kunduz Affair' begins its work.</p>
	<b>2010</b>
<p><b>02.04.2010</b> Three German soldiers killed in Kunduz. German soldiers kill 'accidentally' six Afghan soldiers as they did not identify their allies correctly.</p> <p><b>02.-04.06.2010</b> Peace-Jirga. Agreement for instituting the 'Kabul Process' which will supersede the 'Afghanistan Compact' from 2006.</p> <p><b>20.07.2010</b> International Afghanistan Conference in Kabul. Decision to hand over ISAF responsibility to Afghanistan's forces until 2014.</p> <p><b>18.09.2010</b> Parliamentary Elections.</p> <p><b>18.12.2010</b> Chancellor Angela Merkel meets Hamid Karzai and visits the German ISAF contingent in Kunduz and Mazar-e Sharif.</p>	<p><b>28.01.2010</b> Second London Conference on Afghanistan.</p> <p><b>26.02.2010</b> German parliament decides to prolong the mission of the German armed forces in ISAF-Mission and extends the upper limit of German contingent to 5.350 soldiers.</p> <p><b>31.05.2010</b> Resignation of Horst Köhler from his position as president due to critique of his remarks after a visit to Afghanistan in which he connected the German army's presence with economic interests.</p> <p><b>25.07.2010</b> Wiki-Leaks Drop, nearly 92.000 Documents on the Afghanistan mission.</p> <p><b>08.2010</b> The German armed forces pays 3800 Euro to each of the 86 families affected by the bombing in Kunduz.</p> <p><b>23.09.2010</b> Defense Minister Guttenberg orders withdrawal of Tornado reconnaissance planes.</p> <p><b>19.-20.-11.2010</b> NATO summit in Lisbon. New strategy concept for Afghanistan. Decision to withdraw all ISAF troops until 2014.</p> <p><b>01.12.2010</b> The German government publishes the 'Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestages'.</p>
	<b>2011</b>
	<p><b>01.05.2011</b> Bin Laden killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan.</p> <p><b>22.06.2011</b> Obama announces troop drawdown, acknowledges preliminary talks with the Taliban leadership. UN Security Council splits sanctions list between members of Al Qaeda and the Taliban to make it easier to add/remove people.</p> <p><b>05.12.2011</b> International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn, 'Petersberg II' Conference.</p>
	<b>2012</b>
<p><b>12.03.2012</b> Chancellor Angela Merkel visits the German ISAF contingent.</p> <p><b>09.10.2012</b> German army field camp in Faizabad, Badakhshan, handed over to the Afghan national police.</p>	<p><b>01.2012</b> Taliban open office in Qatar.</p> <p><b>20.-21.05.2012</b> At a meeting in Chicago NATO decides withdrawal until end of 2014.</p> <p><b>08.07.2012</b> International Afghanistan Conference in Tokyo.</p> <p><b>06.11.2012</b> Founding of the German institute to evaluate development cooperation 'Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit' (Deval)</p>
	<b>2013</b>
<p><b>18.05.2013</b> Chancellor Angela Merkel visits the German ISAF contingent in Kunduz and Mazar-e Sharif.</p> <p><b>15.06.2013</b> OP-North outpost in Baghlan is transferred to Afghan security forces as part of the Afghan army take over of all military and security operations from NATO forces.</p> <p><b>06.10.2013</b> PRT Kunduz transferred to Afghan security forces, which ends the German army's engagement in Kunduz province.</p> <p><b>24.11.2013</b> Former translator of the German armed forces, Dschawad Wafa, beheaded by the Taliban in Kunduz.</p>	<p><b>11.12.2013</b> A lawsuit filed by two Afghan families against the Federal Republic of Germany for compensation for losses in connection with the air raid in Kunduz beyond the compensation already received, is dismissed.</p>
	<b>2014</b>
<p><b>14.06.2014</b> Presidential Elections.</p>	

